



Access 3 Geography

Draft National Course Specification



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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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Course outline

Course title: Access 3 Geography

SCQF: level 3 (18 SCQF credit points)

Course code: to be advised

Mandatory Units

Geography: Physical Environments (Access 3)	6 SCQF credit points
Geography: Human Environments (Access 3)	6 SCQF credit points
Geography: Global Issues (Access 3)	6 SCQF credit points

Recommended entry

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ Access 2 Social Subjects Course, Access 2 Science in the Environment Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ Access 3 People and Society Course or relevant component Units

In terms of prior learning and experience, relevant experiences and outcomes may also provide an appropriate basis for doing this Course. Further information on relevant experiences and outcomes will be given in the *Course Support Notes*.

Progression

This Course or its components may provide progression to:

- ◆ Geography Units and Course at National 4
- ◆ other qualifications in social subjects
- ◆ further study, employment and/or training

Further details are provided in the Rationale section.

Equality and inclusion

This Course Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information please refer to the *Course Support Notes*.

Rationale

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles

The Geography Course builds upon the principles and practices for social studies and will be developed primarily from the 'people, place and environment' organiser within the social studies experiences and outcomes. It also builds upon the science principles and practices and on selected experiences and outcomes from the science curriculum area.

This Course will encourage learners to develop important attitudes, including: an open mind and respect for the values, beliefs and cultures of others; openness to new thinking and ideas; and a sense of responsibility and global citizenship.

Through the study of Geography and the acquisition of techniques of geographical analysis, learners develop an understanding of aspects of the contemporary world of concern to all citizens. Learners are enabled to develop the 'four capacities'.

Geography encourages learners to develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities in many respects. For example, learner's horizons are extended and they are challenged to look at the world in new ways. Their confidence can grow as they begin to understand more about their sense of identity and learn about different countries and cultures.

Learners will build up a framework of geographical knowledge and understanding with which to understand and respond to global issues which can help them develop a sense of responsible citizenship.

The investigative and critical thinking activities in this Course give learners important experience in contributing to group work and also working on their own. Learners will acquire attributes which will be important for their life and work.

Through the skills and content of this Course, learners will develop an increased understanding of the environment, sustainability and the impact of global issues. The practical and multidisciplinary nature of Geography will help to develop citizenship. The emphasis on the use of sources, including maps, will develop thinking skills. Learners will progressively develop skills in literacy and numeracy.

Purpose and aims of the Course

The Geography Course opens up for learners the physical environment around them, and the ways in which people interact with this environment.

The purpose of this Course is to develop the learner's understanding of our changing world and its human and physical processes. Opportunities for practical activities, including fieldwork, will be encouraged, so that learners can interact with their environment.

The contexts for study are local, national, international, and global. Geography draws upon the social and natural sciences: interdisciplinary learning is therefore fundamental to geographical study and encourages links with other disciplines.

In the 21st century, with growing awareness of the impact of human activity upon the environment and scarce resources, the study of Geography fosters positive life-long attitudes of environmental stewardship, sustainability and global citizenship. This qualification will furnish learners with the knowledge and skills to enable them to contribute effectively to their local communities and wider society.

The main aims of Geography are to enable learners to:

- ◆ appreciate the ways in which people and the environment interact in response to physical and human processes at local, national, international and global scales
- ◆ be aware of spatial relationships and develop an understanding of the changing world in a balanced, critical and sympathetic way
- ◆ acquire a geographical perspective on environmental and social issues
- ◆ develop an interest in, and concern for, the environment and sustainable development
- ◆ develop a range of geographical skills and techniques

This Course can help create informed and active citizens by helping learners develop a greater understanding of the human and physical processes which have an impact on their environment. Learners will develop skills which are transferable to other areas of study and which they will use in everyday life.

Information about typical learners who might do the Course

The Geography Course is appropriate for a wide range of learners including those who wish to achieve a greater understanding of the environment and their place in it as well as learners who wish to progress to more specialised training or further education or employment.

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, it may be beneficial for a learner studying this Course to have the skills and knowledge developed through relevant experiences and outcomes from the broad, general education or equivalent qualifications.

All Courses in this suite will take account of the needs of all learners and provide sufficient flexibility to enable learners to achieve in different ways and at a different pace.

Through the successful completion of this Course, important skills for learning, life and work are developed. These skills include the use of basic information from a limited range of sources; using routine techniques to interpret basic geographical phenomena; using a limited range of basic maps and other data to organise and communicate geographical information; and research, including routine fieldwork skills.

Learners will also develop an awareness of a limited range of basic geographical information systems through ICT or alternative means.

Geography Units and Courses are offered from SCQF level 3 to SCQF level 7. Vertical progression is possible through the levels of Geography qualifications and lateral progression is possible to other qualifications in the Social Studies suite of Courses and selected Courses in the Sciences.

Access 3 Geography qualifications are recognised as entry qualifications to employment, training, and further education. This Course is a preparation for a diverse range of occupations and careers.

Course structure and conditions of award

Course structure

This Course develops a range of cognitive skills. Geography Courses encourage active learning, including fieldwork, in the process of developing an understanding of geographical issues. The theme of sustainability will permeate this Course as appropriate. Learners need to acquire and apply basic knowledge and skills in the collection and use of information, at an appropriate level, in order to understand geographical issues.

By undertaking this Course, learners will develop a wide range of important and transferable skills, including the use of basic information from a limited range of sources; using routine techniques to interpret basic geographical phenomena; using a limited range of basic maps and other data to organise and communicate geographical information; and research, including routine fieldwork skills.

Learners will have the opportunity to develop an awareness of a limited range of basic geographical information systems through ICT or alternative means.

The skills listed above will be developed and applied over a range of geographical contexts in the following Units. Each Unit also offers opportunities for learners to focus on particular skills.

The Course has three mandatory Units.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a number of ways.

Geography: Physical Environments (Access 3)

In this Unit, learners will develop routine mapping skills in geographical contexts. Learners will draw upon a basic knowledge of key aspects of landscape types and weather in the United Kingdom.

Geography: Human Environments (Access 3)

In this Unit, learners will develop routine research skills in geographical contexts. Learners will draw upon a basic knowledge of key aspects of developed and developing countries.

Geography: Global Issues (Access 3)

In this Unit, learners will develop routine skills of using sources of numerical and graphical information. Learners will draw on a basic knowledge of key aspects of global geographical/environmental issues.

Conditions of award

To achieve the Access 3 Geography Course, learners must pass all of the required Units. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section.

Access 3 Courses are not graded.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Full skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course will be given in the *Course Support Notes*. A broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be covered in the Course is given in this section.

This covers:

- ◆ use routine mapping skills in familiar contexts
- ◆ use routine research skills in familiar contexts
- ◆ use routine numerical and graphical information in familiar contexts
- ◆ use basic knowledge and understanding to give brief, factual descriptions and explanations of key aspects of the physical environment of the United Kingdom
- ◆ use basic knowledge and understanding to give brief, factual descriptions and explanations of key aspects of human environments of developed and developing countries
- ◆ use basic knowledge and understanding to give brief, factual descriptions and explanations of key aspects of global geographic/environmental issues

Skills, knowledge and understanding to be included in the Course will be appropriate to the SCQF level of the Course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level (www.sqa.org.uk/scqf).

Assessment

Further information about assessment for the Course will be included in the *Course Support Notes*.

Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the Unit Specification.

They can be assessed on a Unit-by-Unit basis or by combined assessment.

They will be assessed on a pass/fail basis within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgments are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows:

Geography: Physical Environments (Access 3)

The learner will be required to provide evidence of:

- ◆ routine mapping skills in familiar contexts in the United Kingdom
- ◆ brief descriptions and explanations demonstrating basic geographical knowledge and understanding, which is mainly factual, of key aspects of weather and two landscape types drawn from UK contexts

Geography: Human Environments (Access 3)

The learner will be required to provide evidence of:

- ◆ routine research skills in familiar contexts relating to a developed and a developing country
- ◆ brief descriptions and explanations demonstrating basic geographical knowledge and understanding which is mainly factual, of key aspects of a developed and developing country

Geography: Global Issues (Access 3)

The learner will be required to provide evidence of:

- ◆ the use of a limited range of basic numerical and graphical sources of information to demonstrate routine interpreting skills in familiar contexts relating to a global issue
- ◆ brief descriptions and explanations demonstrating basic geographical knowledge and understanding, which is mainly factual, of key aspects of a global issue

Exemplification of possible assessment approaches for these Units will be provided in the *National Assessment Resource*.

Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

(Note: The information given below reflects the initial thinking on significant opportunities for development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. These may be subject to change as the development process progresses.)

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Course. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Course are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities.

1 Literacy

1.1 Reading

2 Numeracy

2.3 Information handling

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

4.6 Citizenship

5 Thinking skills

5.2 Understanding

5.3 Applying

Amplification of these skills is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the Course is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

Administrative information

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Superclass: to be advised

History of changes to National Course Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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