



Access 3 Modern Studies

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 Modern Studies

SCQF: level 3 (18 SCQF credit points)

Course code: to be advised

Mandatory Units

Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom
(Access 3) 6 SCQF credit points

Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom
(Access 3) 6 SCQF credit points

Modern Studies: International 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 or relevant component Units
- ◆ Access 2 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:

- ◆ Modern Studies Units and Course at National 4
- ◆ other qualifications in modern studies or related areas
- ◆ 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 Modern Studies Course builds upon the principles and practices for social studies and will be developed primarily, although not exclusively, from the 'people in society, economy and business' organiser within the experiences and outcomes in the social studies 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.

Modern Studies develops in learners a greater understanding of the contemporary world and their place in it. By studying this Course, learners are enabled to develop the four capacities in many respects. For example, learners' 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 place in the contemporary world. Learners will build up a framework of social, political and economic knowledge and understanding 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 democratic political system and their place in it. Through this, and its focus on social and economic understanding, learners will develop citizenship. The emphasis on the evaluation of sources and decision-making will develop thinking skills. Learners will also progressively develop skills in literacy and numeracy.

Purpose and aims of the Course

Modern Studies opens up the world of contemporary society for learners.

The purpose of this Course is to develop the learner's knowledge and understanding of contemporary political and social issues in local, Scottish, United Kingdom and international contexts. In these contexts, learners will develop an awareness of the social and political issues they will meet in their lives. This purpose will be achieved through successful study of the Course Units which focus on the democratic political system in the UK, social issues in the UK, and international issues.

Through this Course, learners will undertake a coherent study of contemporary society with concepts and themes being revisited and built upon across Units. It will develop the skills to help learners understand and participate in the social and political processes they will encounter now and in the future.

This Course makes a distinctive contribution to the curriculum by drawing on the social sciences of politics, sociology and economics and where appropriate, associated ideas from other social subjects. It thereby adopts a multi-disciplinary approach.

The main aims of Modern Studies are to enable learners to:

- ◆ develop a range of evaluating and research skills
- ◆ understand and respect basic human and legal rights and responsibilities
- ◆ understand the main features of democracy and the ways in which people are informed about, and participate in, society
- ◆ have an awareness of social issues at local, Scottish, national and international levels
- ◆ be aware of different views about the role of government
- ◆ be aware of the ways societies deal with conflict

The Course contributes to general education and the wider curriculum. It will help create informed and active citizens by helping learners to develop a greater understanding of democratic political and social institutions and processes. 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 Modern Studies Course is appropriate for a wide range of learners, from those who wish to achieve a greater understanding of contemporary society and their place in it, to 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 the learner to have the skills and knowledge developed by relevant experiences and outcomes from the broad, general education or equivalent qualifications.

successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen, effective contributor

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.

Important skills for learning, life and work are developed through the successful completion of this Course. These skills include: using a limited range of basic information on contemporary issues; using basic information in order to detect accuracy and bias; making decisions, and drawing conclusions; constructing basic arguments showing an awareness of alternative views; and communicating views, opinions, decisions and conclusions.

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

Access 3 Modern Studies 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. It encourages active learning in the process of developing an understanding of contemporary society. Learners will acquire and apply relevant knowledge. Through using a limited range of sources of information they will develop skills in the use of information in order to understand political and social issues.

By undertaking this Course, learners will develop a wide range of important and transferable skills, including using a limited range of basic information on contemporary issues; using basic information in order to detect accuracy and bias, making decisions, and drawing conclusions; constructing basic arguments showing an awareness of alternative views; and communicating views, opinions, decisions and conclusions.

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

This 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.

Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom (Access 3)

In this Unit, learners will develop routine skills by using basic sources to identify accuracy and bias. Learners will develop a basic knowledge of aspects of the political system and democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom. Learners will then have a choice to study aspects of the Scottish or United Kingdom political system in greater depth.

Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom (Access 3)

In this Unit, learners will develop routine skills by using basic sources to make decisions. Learners will develop a basic knowledge of aspects of social issues in the United Kingdom. Learners will have a choice to study aspects of social inequality or crime and the law in the United Kingdom.

Modern Studies: International Issues (Access 3)

In this Unit, learners will develop routine skills by using basic sources to draw conclusions. Learners will develop a basic knowledge of aspects of international issues. Learners will have a choice to study socio-economic and political aspects of a significant world power or a recent world issue.

Conditions of award

To achieve the Access 3 Modern Studies 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 basic sources of information to identify and explain accuracy and bias in familiar political contexts
- ◆ use basic sources of information to make and justify a decision in familiar social contexts
- ◆ use basic sources of information to draw and support valid conclusions about familiar international issues
- ◆ use knowledge and understanding of the main features of democracy in Scotland and the UK by giving basic, factual descriptions and brief explanations
- ◆ use knowledge and understanding of the main features of a major social issue in Scotland and the UK by giving basic, factual descriptions and brief explanations
- ◆ use knowledge and understanding of the main features of an international issue relating to a significant world power or recent international issue by giving basic, factual descriptions and brief explanations

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:

Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom (Access 3)

The learner will be required to give evidence of:

- ◆ ability to use a limited range of basic sources of information to identify and explain accuracy and bias in a familiar context drawn from political issues in Scotland and the UK
- ◆ basic descriptions and brief explanations demonstrating knowledge and understanding, which is mainly factual, of a political issue in the UK drawn from a Scottish and/or UK wide context

Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom (Access 3)

The learner will be required to give evidence of:

- ◆ ability to use a limited range of basic sources of information to make and justify a decision in familiar contexts about a social issue in the UK
- ◆ basic descriptions and brief explanations demonstrating knowledge and understanding, which is mainly factual, of a social issue the UK drawn from either the context of social inequality in the UK or crime and the law in the UK

Modern Studies: International Issues (Access 3)

The learner will be required to give evidence of:

- ◆ ability to use a limited range of basic sources of information to draw and justify a valid conclusion in familiar contexts about an international issue
- ◆ basic descriptions and brief explanations demonstrating knowledge and understanding, which is mainly factual, of an international issue drawn from either the study of a significant world power or recent international 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
- 1.2 Writing

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

Published: October 2011 (version 1.0)

Superclass: to be advised

History of changes to National Course Specification

| Course details | Version | Description of change | Authorised by | Date |
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