



Advanced Higher Modern Studies

Draft National Course Assessment Specification



Valid from August 2015

This edition: December 2012, draft version 1.0

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

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Course outline

Course title:	Advanced Higher Modern Studies
SCQF level:	7 (32 SCQF credit points)
Course code:	to be advised
Course assessment code:	to be advised

The purpose of the Course Assessment Specification is to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the Course assessment and the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed.

Course assessment structure

Component 1 — question paper	100 marks
Component 2 — project	50 marks
Total marks	150 marks

This Course includes eight SCQF credit points to allow preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course.

Equality and inclusion

This Course Assessment Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html.

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment of this Course is provided in the *Course Support Notes*.

Assessment

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all of the Units as well as the Course assessment. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

Course assessment

SQA will produce and give instructions for the production and conduct of Course assessments based on the information provided in this document.

Added value

The purpose of the Course assessment is to assess added value of the Course as well as confirming attainment in the Course and providing a grade. The added value for the Course will address the key purposes and aims of the Course, as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge, or application.

In this Course assessment, added value will focus on the following:

- ◆ challenge — requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
- ◆ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This added value consists of:

- ◆ Drawing on, extending and applying the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired during the Course. This will be assessed by a question paper and a project.
- ◆ Demonstrating depth of knowledge and understanding and application of skills in the question paper. This will sample knowledge and understanding from the mandatory content of the Course and will require the application of skills.
- ◆ Demonstrating challenge and application through independent research related to an appropriate topic or issue in the project.

Grading

Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

The Course assessment is graded A–D. The grade is determined on the basis of the total mark for all Course assessments together.

A learner's overall grade will be determined by their performance across the Course assessment.

Grade description for C

For the award of Grade C, learners will have demonstrated successful performance in all of the Units of the Course. In the Course assessment, learners will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course.

Grade description for A

For the award of Grade A, learners will have demonstrated successful performance in all of the Units of the Course. In the Course assessment, learners will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course.

Credit

To take account of the extended range of learning and teaching approaches, remediation, consolidation of learning and integration needed for preparation for external assessment, six SCQF credit points are available in Courses at National 5 and Higher, and eight SCQF credit points in Courses at Advanced Higher. These points will be awarded when a Grade D or better is achieved.

Structure and coverage of the Course assessment

The Course assessment will consist of two Components: a question paper and a project.

Component 1 — question paper

The purpose of this question paper is to demonstrate application of skills and depth of knowledge and understanding from across the Course.

This question paper will give learners an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ describing, explaining and analysing in order to demonstrate factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding and the ability to make international comparisons
- ◆ evaluating, analysing and synthesising a wide range of evidence to demonstrate complex skills
- ◆ critically evaluating a range of social science research methods

The question paper will have 100 marks.

The question paper has two Sections.

Learners will answer questions from one Section: **either** Political Issues and Research Methods **or** Social Issues and Research Methods.

Section 1: Political Issues and Research Methods

In this Section, learners will answer two essay questions worth 30 marks each from a choice of three. They will also answer questions on Research Methods worth 40 marks in total. These questions will require a mixture of extended and short responses. Learners will:

- ◆ demonstrate skills, knowledge and understanding of a range of complex political issues
- ◆ make international comparisons
- ◆ critically evaluate a range of social science research methods

Section 2: Social Issues and Research Methods

In this section there is a choice of context, either Law and Order or Social Inequality. In their chosen context, learners will answer two essay questions worth 30 marks each from a choice of three. They will also answer questions on Research Methods worth 40 marks in total. These questions will require a mixture of extended and short responses. Learners will:

- ◆ demonstrate skills, knowledge and understanding of a range of complex social issues
- ◆ make international comparisons
- ◆ critically evaluate a range of social science research methods

Component 2 — project

The purpose of this project is to demonstrate challenge and application by demonstrating skills, knowledge and understanding within the context of a complex Modern Studies topic or issue.

This project will give learners an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ identify an appropriate complex contemporary issue for research
- ◆ use information from a wide range of complex sources
- ◆ use appropriate academic conventions including the referencing of sources
- ◆ structure findings to address a complex contemporary issue
- ◆ evaluate, analyse and synthesise evidence
- ◆ draw well-reasoned conclusions based on evidence

The project will have 50 marks.

Setting, conducting and marking of assessment

Question paper

This question paper will be set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. Learners will complete this in 3 hours.

Controlled assessment — project

This project is:

- ◆ set by centres within SQA guidelines
- ◆ conducted under some level of supervision and control

Setting the assessment

The assessment will be set by centres within SQA guidelines.

Conducting the assessment

The production of evidence for assessment will be conducted:

- ◆ in time to meet a submission date set by SQA
- ◆ independently by the learner

Marking the assessment

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

Further mandatory information on Course coverage

The following gives details of mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Advanced Higher Modern Studies Course. Course assessment will involve sampling the skills, knowledge and understanding. This list of skills, knowledge and understanding also provides the basis for the assessment of Units of the Course.

Learners will study one of two contexts; **either**:

Political Issues and Research Methods

or:

Social Issues and Research Methods

Political Issues and Research Methods

Within this context, learners will study a range of complex political issues in the United Kingdom (including Scotland). Throughout their study, an international comparative approach should be adopted. Learners will be required to answer questions on Research Methods **and** from two of the other areas of study below. Appropriate social science research methods should be studied in this context.

Areas of study:

A. Power and Influence

Interest groups and their impact on the political process
Media and its influence on the political process
Political parties and elections

B. Living Political Ideas

Political theories, thoughts and ideas
The relationship between political ideas and ideologies
The contemporary relevance of political ideas

C. Political Structures

Constitutions and political systems
Branches of government and their influence in the political process
Relationships between levels of government

D. Research Methods

Research methodology and related moral and ethical issues

Social Issues and Research Methods

Within this context, learners will study a range of complex social issues in the United Kingdom (including Scotland). Throughout their study, an international comparative approach should be adopted.

Within the Social Issues and Research Methods, centres/learners may choose one from two broad areas of study; **either** Law and Order **or** Social Inequality.

Learners will be required to answer questions on Research Methods **and** from two of the other areas of study below. Appropriate social science research methods should be studied in this context.

Areas of study:

Law and Order

A. Understanding the criminal justice system

Individual human rights and liberty in relation to criminal justice

Judicial framework

Current criminal justice issues

B. Understanding criminal behaviour

The nature and extent of criminal behaviour

Evaluation of theories of criminal behaviour

The social and economic effects of criminal behaviour

C. Responses by society to crime

Theories and explanations of responses to crime

Current responses to crime

Evaluation of responses to crime

D. Research Methods

Research methodology and related moral and ethical issues

Social Inequality

A. Understanding social inequality

The nature and extent of social inequality

Theories and explanations of social inequality

Evaluation of theories and explanations of social inequality

B. Impact of inequality

The social and economic impact of inequality on individuals and groups in society

The social and economic impact of inequality on aspects of society

Current inequality issues

C. Responses to social inequality

Theories and explanations of responses to social inequality

Current responses to social inequality

Evaluation of responses to social inequality

D. Research Methods

Research methodology and related moral and ethical issues