Group Award Specification for:

GK22 47   **PDA in History**
GK23 47   **PDA in Politics**
GK24 47   **PDA in Psychology**
GK25 47   **PDA in Sociology**

GK26 48   *PDA in History (Advanced)* *
GK27 48   *PDA in Politics (Advanced)* *
GK28 48   **PDA in Psychology (Advanced)**
GK29 48   *PDA in Sociology (Advanced*)*

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Contents

1 Introduction

This document was previously known as the Arrangements Document. The purpose of this document is to:

- assist centres to implement, deliver and manage the ualification
- provide a guide for new staff involved in offering the qualification
- inform course managers teaching staff, assessors, learners, employers and HEIs of the aims and purpose of the qualification
- provide details of the range of learners the qualification is suitable for and progression opportunities

1.1 Rationale

1.1.1 Title

SCQF level 7	SCQF level 8
PDA in History	*PDA in History (Advanced)*
PDA in Politics	*PDA in Politics (Advanced)*
PDA in Psychology	PDA in Psychology (Advanced)
PDA in Sociology	*PDA in Sociology (Advanced)*

1.1.2 Purpose

These eight Social Science Professional Development Awards may be undertaken for a variety of reasons:

- to widen participation in the Social Sciences
- to develop further their interest in and knowledge of one of the social sciences disciplines
- to acquire a qualification which may well enhance their employment or promotion opportunities
- to acquire qualifications which could enable them to progress into an HNC or HND Social Sciences award or into a degree level programme
- to develop links between school and college provision to enhance the Senior Phase in schools

1.1.3 Target Groups

The awards are intended for a range of learners:

- the PDAs would be particularly relevant to part-time study and the evening class market many candidates can be adult returners, some of whom are vulnerable, can come from deprived sections of the community and/or who have experienced social exclusion
- they would be aimed particularly at those who are not in a position to commit to a full HN programme, for example, asylum seekers whose status can change
- they could be undertaken by 6th year school candidates
- employees seeking to improve their CPD might choose to study them

Each social science subject has value in its own right. Candidates would receive credit for in-depth knowledge in a subject specific area. The PDA would recognise the importance of subject content and the development of specialist skills.

Types/range of learners

Learner Group					
Markets aimed at:		**Who product is for:**		**Who will deliver product:**	
Widening participation	**X**	Adult returners	**X**	FE Colleges	**X**
Workforce development	**X**	Employees	**X**	Schools	
16–19	**X**	School candidates	**X**	Private training providers	
Skills for Life and Work	**X**	FE candidates	**X**	HE	
Engaging employer		HE candidates		Adult and Community	**X**
		Volunteers	**X**	Prisons	**X**

1.2   Place of PDAs within Progression Opportunities

The PDA would provide progression from Access programmes (eg SWAP) and National Qualifications at SCQF levels 5 and 6. It would be a subset of the HNC Social Sciences award. The award would also provide progression towards Open University programmes.

SCQF level	Qualification	Subject Area
1	Access 1/National 1	**Social Subjects** Units
2	Access 2/National 2	**Social Subjects** Units/Course
3	Access 3/National 3	**History** Units/Course **Modern Studies** Units/Course
4	Intermediate 1/National 4	**History** Units/Course **Modern Studies** Units/Course **People and Society** Units/Course
5	Intermediate 2/National 5/ National Certificate	**History** Units/Course **Modern Studies** Units/Course **Psychology** Units/Course **Sociology** Units/Course **Social Sciences** National Certificate
6	Higher/National Certificate	**History** Units/Course **Modern Studies** Units/Course **Politics** Units/Course **Psychology** Units/Course **Sociology** Units/Course **Social Sciences** National Certificate
7	Advanced Higher/ HNC/ Degree Year 1	**History** Units/Course **Modern Studies** Units/Course **Sociology** Advanced Higher Units **Social Sciences** HNC
8	HND/Degree Year 2	**Social Sciences** HND
9	Degree Year 3	**Social Sciences**
10	Degree Year 4	**Social Sciences**

1.3   Employment Opportunities

Market research continues to show that employers, in both the public and private sector, accept the relevance of the HNC and HND in Social Sciences. Skills such as communication, time management and the ability to work with others were said to be fundamental to a candidate's employment prospects.

The PDAs also support the development of other higher order skills that are useful in many employment situations. Skills such as data handling, critical analysis and complex thinking skills are developed and achieved through the complexity of the material being covered as well as the activities inherent in the delivery and assessment of the subject matter. The PDAs require a learner to go beyond the basic knowledge and understanding to analysis and evaluation of conflicting theories. Skills such as problem solving, research skills and reaching conclusions are advantageous in many occupations. These are transferable skills, not specific to one situation but adaptable for a variety of situations. It is these skills that employers want their staff to demonstrate. The PDAs support the growth of these competences.

Candidates who have progressed into employment, or were in employment while studying for the Group Awards, confirm their usefulness to employment prospects. This is illustrated further under Subject Related (Specific) Aims of the Group Awards as well as the General Aims.

2   Qualifications structures

These Professional Development Awards are made up of 3 SQA Unit credits. They comprise 24 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7 or at level 8 in the case of the Advanced PDAs. A mapping of Core Skills development opportunities is available in Section 5.2.

2.1   Structure

2.1.1 SCQF level 7 PDAs

Unit Code	Unit title	SQA credit	SCQF credit points	SCQF level
HISTORY PDA				
FK7V 34	History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period	1	8	7
J02X 34*	History B: Analysing Topics within a Historical Period	2	16	7
POLITICS PDA				
J032 34*	Politics A: An Introduction to Political Theories of the State	1	8	7
J0H0 34*	Politics B: The United Kingdom and Scotland	2	16	7
PSYCHOLOGY PDA				
FK8D 34	Psychology A: History and Development of Psychology	1	8	7
J030 34*	Psychology B: Explanation and Research of Psychological Topics	2	16	7
SOCIOLOGY PDA				
FK8R 34	Sociology A: Introduction to Sociology	1	8	7
J031 34*	Sociology B: Applying Sociological Theories and Studies to Sociological Topics	2	16	7

2.1.2 SCQF level 8 PDAs (Advanced)

Unit Code	Unit title	SQA credit	SCQF credit points	SCQF level
HISTORY (ADVANCED) PDA				
J0LS 35*	*History C: Evaluating Topics within a Historical Period*	*2*	*16*	*8*
FK7T 35	*History D: Specialist Study*	*1*	*8*	*8*
POLITICS (ADVANCED) PDA				
J0NB 35*	*Politics C: The United States and European Union*	*2*	*16*	*8*
FK84 35	*Politics D: Political Representation*	*1*	*8*	*8*
PSYCHOLOGY (ADVANCED) PDA				
J0NC 35*	Psychology C: Analysis and Evaluation of Psychological Topics	2	16	8
FK8C 35	Psychology D: The Research Process in Psychology	1	8	8
SOCIOLOGY (ADVANCED) PDA				
J0NA 35*	*Sociology C: Analysing and Evaluating Sociological Debates*	*2*	*16*	*8*
FK8P 35	*Sociology D: Specialist Study*	*1*	*8*	*8*

3 Aims of the qualifications

Candidates will be encouraged not only to know and evaluate research carried out by social scientists associated with the specific discipline, but also to understand how research is carried out along with its philosophical base. Wherever possible, research methods will be contextualised. Candidates will also have several opportunities to carry out small-scale pieces of research themselves depending on subject choice.

3.1 General aims of the Professional Development Awards

- Develop skills in information communication technology
- Organising and planning
- Working as an individual and with others
- Problem solving
- Enabling progression within the SCQF, including progression to HNC or HND programmes
- Time management, goal setting, punctuality and meeting deadlines
- Referencing, citation and bibliography skills
- Developing personal effectiveness
- Developing the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning
- Providing opportunities for career planning and enhancing candidates' employment prospects

3.1.1 Specific aims of the Professional Development Awards (SCQF level 7)

- Develop an understanding of a social science discipline
- Develop an understanding of the contribution a social science discipline makes to the modern world and human behaviour
- Develop an open-minded, critical and evaluative approach to study
- Develop examination techniques
- Gain knowledge and understanding of the importance of evidence based research, including investigation and research skills
- Gain knowledge of competing views, perspectives, theories and evidence relating to a social science discipline
- Develop skills in managing and prioritising information

3.1.2 Specific aims of the Professional Development Awards (SCQF level 8)

- Develop an understanding of a social science discipline
- Develop an understanding of the contribution a social science discipline makes to the modern world and human behaviour
- Develop an open-minded, critical and evaluative approach to study
- Develop examination techniques
- Gain knowledge and understanding of the importance of evidence based research, including investigation and research skills
- Gain knowledge of competing views, perspectives, theories and evidence relating to a social science discipline
- Develop skills in managing and prioritising information

4 Recommended entry to the qualifications

4.1 PDAs (SCQF level 7)

Entry to this qualification is at the discretion of the centre. The following information on prior knowledge, skills, experience or qualifications that provide suitable preparation for this qualification has been provided for guidance only.

Learners would benefit from having attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by one or more of the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- SQA Units, courses and programmes in appropriate subjects at SCQF level 6
- SWAP Access programmes in Arts and Humanities
- and/or other equivalent qualifications

Social Sciences has a tradition of offering opportunities to applicants without formal qualifications and who may have experienced social exclusion. Therefore, centres are encouraged to support fully our tradition of social inclusion and continue to provide opportunities for applicants from non-traditional programmes. In such cases, centres are encouraged to take into account experience, life skills and potential ability.

Consideration of access should be based on the interest and ability of a candidate to undertake the particular Units. For example, an applicant may have completed a non-certificated course in psychology or sociology and wish to pursue this at a higher level. Alternatively, a candidate may be involved in political activity and wish some type of formal certificate.

4.1.1 Core Skills entry profile

The Core Skill entry profile provides a summary of the associated assessment activities that exemplify why a particular level has been recommended for this qualification. The information should be used to identify if additional learning support needs to be put in place for learners whose Core Skills profile is below the recommended entry level or whether learners should be encouraged to do an alternative level or learning programme.

Core Skill	Recommended SCQF entry profile	Associated assessment activities
Communication	5	- Research, read and select information from variety of sources - Explain, analyse and evaluate information - Present arguments Synthesise information - Organise and structure complex communication effectively - Use referencing, citation and bibliography systems - Use accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation - Use appropriate word choice
Numeracy	5	- Interpretation of data and statistics - Production of data and statistics
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	5	- Present information using PowerPoint or other ICT presentation tool - Search web sites for relevant information - Present formative and summative evidence electronically, for example: creating a Blog; keeping a reflective electronic journal; making a podcast; ePortfolio - Use of different types of software Use of word processing/spreadsheet/data handling packages - Use of various audio visual software
Problem Solving	5	- Project based learning activities - Active learning/cooperative learning activities
Working with Others	5	Active learning/cooperative learning activities

4.2   PDAs (SCQF level 8)

Entry to this qualification is at the discretion of the centre. However, it would beneficial if candidates had at least one of the following:

- Relevant Units or qualifications at SCQF level 7
- Relevant PDA at SCQF level 7
- HNC Social Sciences
- Significant employment experience where detailed written reports are expected Relevant employment experience for a specific subject(s)

4.2.1   Core Skills entry profile

Core Skill	Recommended SCQF entry profile	Associated assessment activities
Communication	6	Essays; presentation; poster presentation; blogs and podcasts
Numeracy	5	Research project would include using statistics
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	5	Word processed essays and reports; blogs and podcasts. SPSS or similar package for research project
Problem Solving	6	Research project in Psychology; subject specific 'D' Units at SCQF level 8
Working with Others	6	Group activities, eg research in Psychology, field work in Geography

5.   Additional benefits of the qualification in meeting employer needs

Market research continues to show that employers, in both the public and private sector, accept the relevance of the Social Sciences. Skills such as communication, time management and the ability to work with others were said to be fundamental to a candidate's employment prospects.

Candidates who have progressed into employment, or were in employment while studying for such Awards, confirm their usefulness to employment prospects. This is illustrated further under subject related (specific) aims of the Professional Development Awards as well as the General Aims.

5.1 Mapping of General Aims of PDAs (SCQF level 7 and 8)

1   Develop skills in information and communication technology.

2   Develop skills in numeracy.

3   Organising and planning.

4   Working as an individual and with others.

5   Problem solving.

6   Enabling progression within the SCQF, including progression to degree programmes.

7   Time management, goal setting, punctuality and meeting deadlines.

8   Referencing, citation and bibliography skills.

9   Developing personal effectiveness.

10   Developing the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning.

11   Providing opportunities for career planning and enhancing candidates' employment prospects.

5.1.1 Mapping of general aims to Units

Code	Unit title	Aims										
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**
FK7V 34	History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK7W 34	History B: Analysing Topics within a Historical Period	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK85 34	Politics A: An Introduction to Political Theories of the State	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK86 34	Politics B: The United Kingdom and Scotland	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK8D 34	Psychology A: History and Development of Psychology	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK8E 34	Psychology B: Explanation and Research of Psychological Topics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK8R 34	Sociology A: Introduction to Sociology	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK8T 34	Sociology B: Applying Sociological Theories and Studies to Sociological Topics	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK7X 35	History C: Evaluating Topics within a Historical Period	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK7T 35	History D: Specialist Study	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK87 35	Politics C: The United States and the European Union	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK84 35	Politics D: Political Representation	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Code	Unit title	Aims										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
FK8F 35	Psychology C: Analysis and Evaluation of Psychological Topics	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK8C 35	Psychology D: The Research Process in Psychology	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK8V 35	Sociology C: Analysing and Evaluating Sociological Debates	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK8P 35	Sociology D: Specialist Study	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

5.2.1 Mapping of Specific Aims of PDAs (SCQF level 7)

1   Develop an understanding of a social science discipline.
2   Develop an understanding of the contribution a social science discipline makes to the modern world and human behavior.
3   Develop an open-minded, critical and evaluative approach to study.
4   Develop examination techniques.
5   Gain knowledge and understanding of the importance of evidence based research, including investigation and research skills.
6   Gain knowledge of competing views, perspectives, theories and evidence relating to a social science discipline.
7   Develop skills in managing and prioritising information.

Code	Unit title	Aims						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
FK7V 34	History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK7W 34	History B: Analysing Topics within a Historical Period	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK85 34	Politics A: An Introduction to Political Theories of the State	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK86 34	Politics B: The United Kingdom and Scotland	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK8D 34	Psychology A: History and Development of Psychology	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK8E 34	Psychology B: Explanation and Research of Psychological Topics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK8R 34	Sociology A: Introduction to Sociology	X	X	X	X		X	X
FK8T 34	Sociology B: Applying Sociological Theories and Studies to Sociological Topics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

5.2.2 Mapping of Specific Aims of PDAs (SCQF level 8)

1 Develop an understanding of a social science discipline.
2 Develop an understanding of the contribution a social science discipline makes to the modern world and human behaviour.
3 Develop an open-minded, critical and evaluative approach to study.
4 Develop examination techniques.
5 Gain knowledge and understanding of the importance of evidence based research, including investigation and research skills.
6 Gain knowledge of competing views, perspectives, theories and evidence relating to a social science discipline.
7 Develop skills in managing and prioritising information.

Code	Unit title	Aims						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
FK7X 35	History C: Evaluating Topics within a Historical Period	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK7T 35	History D: Specialist Study	X	X	X	X		X	X
FK87 35	Politics C: The United States and the European Union	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK84 35	Politics D: Political Representation	X	X	X	X		X	X
FK8F 35	Psychology C: Analysis and Evaluation of Psychological Topics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK8C 35	Psychology D: The Research Process in Psychology	X	X	X	X		X	X
FK8V 35	Sociology C: Analysing and Evaluating Sociological Debates	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FK8P 35	Sociology D: Specialist Study	X	X	X	X		X	X

5.3 Mapping of Core Skills development opportunities across the qualifications

Unit code	Unit title	Communication		Numeracy		ICT		Problem Solving			Working with Others	
		Written	Oral	Using Number	Using Graphical Information	Accessing Information	Providing/Creating Information	Critical Thinking	Planning and Organising	Reviewing and Evaluating	Working Co-operatively with Others	Reviewing Co-operative Contribution
FK7V 34	History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)			D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)					
J02X 34*	History B: Analysing Topics within a Historical Period	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)			D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	E (SCQF 5)				
J032 34*	Politics A: An Introduction to Political Theories of the State	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)			D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	E (SCQF 5)				
J0H0 34*	Politics B: The United Kingdom and Scotland	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)			D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	E (SCQF 5)				
FK8D 34	Psychology A: History and Development of Psychology	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)			D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)					
J030 34*	Psychology B: Explanation and Research of Psychological Topics	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	E (SCQF 6)	E (SCQF 6)	E (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)
FK8R 34	Sociology A: Introduction to Sociology	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)			D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)					
J031 34*	Sociology B Applying Sociological Theories and Studies to Sociological Topics	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)			D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	E (SCQF 5)				

Unit code	Unit title	Communication		Numeracy		ICT		Problem Solving			Working with Others	
		Written	Oral	Using Number	Using Graphical Information	Accessing Information	Providing/Creating Information	Critical Thinking	Planning and Organising	Reviewing and Evaluating	Working Co-operatively with Others	Reviewing Co-operative Contribution
J0LS 35*	History C: Evaluating Topics within a Historical Period	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)			D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	E (SCQF 6)				
FK7T 35	History D: Specialist Study	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)			D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)					
J0NB 35*	Politics C: The United States and the European Union	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)			D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	E (SCQF 6)				
FK84 35	Politics D: Political Representation	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)			D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)		
J0NC 35*	Psychology C: Analysis and Evaluation of Psychological Topics	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)			D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	E (SCQF 6)			D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)
FK8C 35	Psychology D: The Research Process in Psychology	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)
J0NA 35*	Sociology C: Analysing and Evaluating Sociological Debates	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)			D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	E (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)
FK8P 35	Sociology D: Specialist Study	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)			D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 5)	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)	D (SCQF 6)		

D = developed Core Skill   E = embedded Core Skill

5.4 Assessment Strategy for the qualifications

SCQF level 7 PDAs	Assessment	
	Outcome 1	**Outcome 2**
History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period	one open book	
History B: Analysing Topics within a Historical Period	one closed book	one open book
Politics A: An Introduction to Political Theories of the State	one open book	
Politics B: The United Kingdom and Scotland	one closed book.	one open book
Psychology A: History and Development of Psychology	one open book	
Psychology B: Explanation and Research of Psychological Topics	one closed book	one open book
Sociology A: Introduction to Sociology	one open book	
Sociology B Applying Sociological Theories and Studies to Sociological Topics	one closed book and one open book	

SCQF level 8 PDAs	Assessment		
	Outcome 1	**Outcome 2**	**Outcome 3**
History C: Evaluating Topics within a Historical Period	one closed book	one open book	N/A
History D: Specialist Study	one open book		N/A
Politics C: The United States and the European Union	one closed book	one open book	N/A
Politics D: Political Representation	one open book		N/A
Psychology C: Analysis and Evaluation of Psychological Topics	one closed book	one open book	N/A
Psychology D: The Research Process in Psychology	one open book		
Sociology C: Analysing and Evaluating Sociological Debates	one closed book and one open book		N/A
Sociology D: Specialist Study	one open book		N/A

5.4   Assessment Strategy for the qualifications (cont.)

The design principles for HN have encouraged a more holistic approach to assessment and, where appropriate for assessment purposes, a wide variety of possible ways of gathering evidence has been made available. These will involve either open-book or closed-book assessment instruments. This allows candidates to experience a range of assessment and helps them to develop different skills, which should be transferable to the next step of higher education or to employment.

Sampling is used within the HN Social Science awards. Sampling is used in cases where competence across a wide range of knowledge and skills can be inferred from assessing a sample of knowledge and skills. Sampling is not about assessing less. Rather, it is about assessing competence that is *representative* of a wider range of knowledge and skills.

The following strategy is adopted within the Social Science Units.

SCQF level 7 PDAs

A UNITS

A Units will be holistically assessed by a single open-book assessment covering all Unit Outcomes.

There is a wide variety of methods of assessment that would allow candidates to meet the Evidence Requirements in an A Unit. The following are suggestions and there may be other methods that would be suitable. Centres are reminded that Prior Verification would help to ensure that the national standard is being met.

This assessment could take the form of one of the following:

- an open-book essay with an expected candidate response of approximately 1,500 words
  a set of structured questions with an expected candidate response of approximately 1,500 words
- an individual oral presentation *or* poster exhibition with an expected candidate's response of 10 to 12 minutes in presentation or explanation of poster
- a pod cast
- an individual Blog, or creation of a website, with approximately 1,500 words
  any other method that is appropriate to meet the Evidence Requirements.

It is possible to combine the oral presentation with the poster exhibition, where the candidate covers certain knowledge and skills requirements in a poster and covers the others in an oral presentation on the same assessment occasion. Where this occurs the total time for all aspects would be 10 to 12 minutes (rather than 10 to 12 minutes each). It is recommended that oral presentations are recorded in some form for external verification purposes.

Regardless of the assessment methods chosen candidates must submit a bibliography presented in a standard referencing format such as Harvard or APA.

In response to the task set, the candidate must convey complex ideas in a well-structured and coherent format.

Tutors should make candidates aware of the importance of the judicious selection of appropriate academic sources in researching the topics. Candidates should be encouraged to choose academic sources rather than generic search engines, to enable them to be more confident of information, particularly as this Unit is at SCQF level 7.

NB: It is important that the language used in the assessment instrument reflects SCQF level 7 in each type of task.

B UNITS

B Units will be assessed using two instruments of assessment. One will be a closed-book assessment (without the use of notes, textbooks, VLE or other materials in a supervised setting) and the other an open-book assessment.

There is a wide variety of methods of assessment that would allow candidates to meet the Evidence Requirements in a B Unit. The following are suggestions and there may be other methods that would be suitable. Centres are reminded that Prior Verification would help to ensure that the national standard is being met.

The closed-book assessment could take the form of one of the following:

⬧ a set of unseen structured questions requiring a response of approximately 1,000 words across all questions
⬧ an essay requiring a response of approximately 1,000 words
⬧ an oral response to set questions requiring a response in sustained detail for approximately 8 minutes
⬧ other oral presentation of approximately 8 minutes duration
⬧ any other method that is appropriate to meet the Evidence Requirements.

Candidates will know the broad area to be assessed one week prior to the assessment date. It is likely that if it is a written assessment it will take between 90 minutes and two hours to complete.

The second assessment instrument will be *open book* (with access to materials eg text books, notes, VLE). The task should be handed out at an appropriate point in the delivery of the Unit and a submission date should be specified by the centre. It should be completed according to a prearranged format and could take the form of any of the following:

⬧ an open-book essay with an expected candidate response of approximately 2,000 words

⬧ set of structured questions with an expected candidate response of approximately 2,000 words

⬧ an individual oral presentation *or* poster exhibition with an expected candidate response of 15 minutes in presentation or explanation of poster

⬧ a pod cast

⬧ an individual Blog, or creation of a website, with approximately 2,000 words

⬧ any other method that is appropriate to meet the Evidence Requirements.

It is recommended that oral presentations are recorded in some form for external verification purposes.

Regardless of the assessment methods chosen candidates must submit a bibliography presented in a standard referencing format such as Harvard or APA.

In response to the task set, the candidate must convey complex ideas in a well-structured and coherent format.

Tutors should make candidates aware of the importance of the judicious selection of appropriate academic sources in researching the topics. Candidates should be encouraged to choose academic sources rather than generic search engines, to enable them to be more confident of information, particularly as this Unit is at SCQF level 7.

NB It is important that the language used in the assessment instrument reflects SCQF level 7 in each type of task.

SCQF level 8 PDAs (Advanced)

C Units

The 'C' Units will be assessed by two instruments of assessment. One will be a closed-book assessment (without the use of notes, textbooks, VLE or other materials in a supervised setting) and the other an open-book assessment.

There is a wide variety of methods of assessment that would allow candidates to meet the Evidence Requirements in a C Unit. The following are suggestions and there may be other methods that would be suitable. Centres are reminded that Prior Verification would help to ensure that the national standard is being met.

The closed-book assessment could take the form of one of the following:

- a set of unseen structured questions requiring a response of approximately 1,000 words across all questions
- an essay, also requiring approximately 1,000 words
- an oral response to set questions requiring a response in sustained detail for approximately 8 minutes
- other oral presentation of approximately 8 minutes duration
- any other method that is appropriate to meet the Evidence Requirements

Candidates will know the broad area to be assessed one week prior to the assessment date. It is likely that if it is a written assessment it will take 90 minutes to complete.

The second assessment instrument will be open-book (with access to materials, eg text books, notes, VLE). The task should be handed out at an appropriate point in the delivery of the Unit and a submission date should be specified by the centre. It should be completed according to a prearranged format and could take the form of any of the following:

- an open-book essay with an expected candidate response of approximately 2,000 words
- set of structured questions with an expected candidate response of approximately 2,000 words
- an individual oral presentation or poster exhibition with an expected candidate response of 15 minutes in presentation or explanation of poster
- a podcast
- an individual Blog, or creation of a website, with approximately 2,000 words
- any other method that is appropriate to meet the Evidence Requirements.

Regardless of the assessment methods chosen candidates must submit a bibliography presented in a standard referencing format such as Harvard or APA.

In response to the task set, the candidate must convey complex ideas in a well-structured and coherent format.

Tutors should make candidates aware of the importance of the judicious selection of appropriate academic sources in researching the topics. Candidates should be encouraged to choose academic sources rather than generic search engines, to enable them to be more confident of information, particularly as this Unit is at SCQF level 8.

Note — This Unit is a step up in level of demand and wording used in instruments of assessment should reflect SQCF level 8.

D Units

The 'D' Units will be holistically assessed by a single open-book assessment (with access to materials, eg text books, notes, VLE) covering all Unit Outcomes.

The assessment for a D Unit could take the form of any of the following:

- an essay question with an expected candidate response of approximately 2,000 words
- a report with an expected candidate response of approximately 2,000 words
- a set of structured questions with an expected candidate response of approximately 2,000 words
- an individual oral presentation or poster exhibition with an expected candidate response of approximately 15 minutes in presentation or explanation of poster
- a pod cast
- an individual Blog, or creation of a website, with approximately 2,000 words
- any other method that is appropriate to meet the Evidence Requirements

Regardless of the assessment methods chosen candidates must submit a bibliography presented in a standard referencing format such as Harvard or APA.

In response to the task set, the candidate must convey complex ideas in a well-structured and coherent format.

Tutors should make candidates aware of the importance of the judicious selection of appropriate academic sources in researching the topics. Candidates should be encouraged to choose academic sources rather than generic search engines, to enable them to be more confident of information, particularly as this Unit is at SCQF level 8.

Note —The wording used in the instrument of assessment should reflect SCQF level 8.

Remediation and Re-assessment

Closed book

Remediation for the closed-book assessment could be done by oral clarification for minor omissions or to clarify minor detail. If additional information is required this can be added, as long as it is in total approximately 100 words or less per Outcome. If these conditions cannot be met, then the candidates should be reassessed using a different set of questions.

In oral assessment candidates can be questioned by the assessor at the end of their presentation or explanation, where minor omissions occur, or where clarity is required. This would help to reduce the need for reassessment. However, where more work is required to meet the Evidence Requirements (eg where the quality of evidence is poor in a presentation) another presentation of the same duration as the original would be required.

Open book

Remediation

If the candidate does not pass on the first attempt they should have a chance to remediate on the original question. This could be by oral questioning or amending the original assignment. The amendments should be incorporated within the assignment and not added at the end with numerous asterisks.

Lecturers and tutors should use their professional judgement with regards to the number of words to be added.

In oral work, candidates can be questioned by the assessor at the end of their presentation or explanation, where minor omissions occur, or where clarity is required. This would help to reduce the need for reassessment. However, where more work is required to meet the Evidence Requirements (eg where the quality of evidence is poor in a presentation) another presentation of the same duration, on the same topic or question as the original would be required. Only where a different topic or question is attempted would this be classed as reassessment.

Re-assessment

If the candidate does not pass on remediation then they should be reassessed using a different question.

6 Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment

6.1 Sequencing/integration of Units

SCQF level 7 PDAs

It would normally be the case that the A Unit will be delivered before the B Unit, but there may be certain circumstances where a centre deems it better or timetabling demands dictate that the B precedes the A Unit. Since each Unit is designed to stand alone, this is not a major issue.

The assessment for the A Unit would come at the end of the delivery period while the assessments for the B Unit are likely to come during and at the end of the delivery period. With the B Unit it is at the discretion of the centre as to whether they assess Outcome 1 or Outcome 2 first.

SCQF level 8 PDAs (Advanced)

Similarly, it would normally be the case that the C Unit will be delivered before the D Unit, but there may be certain circumstances where a centre deems it better or timetabling demands dictate that the D precedes the C Unit. Since each Unit is designed to stand alone, this is not a major issue.

The assessments for the C Unit are likely to come during and at the end of the delivery period, while the assessment for the D Unit would come at the end of the delivery period. With the C Unit it is at the discretion of the centre as to whether they assess Outcome 1 or Outcome 2 first.

6.2   Recognition of Prior Learning

SQA recognises that learners gain knowledge and skills acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. However, it is unlikely that a learner would have the appropriate prior learning and experience to meet all the requirements of such a Professional Development Award unless they have already achieved one of the Units in the award.

More information and guidance on the *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) may be found on our website **www.sqa.org.uk**.

The following sub-sections outline how this Group Award may be recognised for professional and articulation purposes.

6.2.1   Articulation and/or progression

The achievement of one or more of the **SCQF level 7 PDAs** could contribute towards the achievement of the HNC in Social Sciences Group Award although other Units, which are not part of the PDAs, would have to be achieved to obtain the HNC.

The HNC could then lead onto the HND in Social Sciences and both the HNC and HND can aid progression into undergraduate studies in Higher Education Institutions,

The achievement of one or more of the **SCQF level 8 PDAs** (**Advanced**) could contribute towards the achievement of the HND in Social Sciences Group Award although other Units, which are not part of the PDAs, would have to be achieved to obtain the HND.

6.2.2 Credit transfer

All decisions relating to credit transfer remain with centres. However, SQA carries out an initial mapping between old and new Units, to provide guidance.

6.3   Opportunities for e-assessment

Opportunities for e-assessment can be considered.

6.4   Support materials

Unit specifications and exemplars are available from SQA — the former on the main SQA website and the latter on the secure website.

6.5 Resource requirements

Staff should be suitably qualified to deliver the subjects at SCQF level 7 and level 8 and should have access to relevant sources and learning and teaching materials required for delivery.

7 General information for centres

Equality and inclusion

The Unit specifications making up this Group Award have been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners will be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. Further advice can be found on our website **www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements**.

Internal and external verification

All instruments of assessment used within this/these qualification(s) should be internally verified, using the appropriate policy within the centre and the guidelines set by SQA.

External verification will be carried out by SQA to ensure that internal assessment is within the national guidelines for these qualifications.

Further information on internal and external verification can be found in *SQA's Guide to Assessment* **(www.sqa.org.uk/GuideToAssessment)**.

8 Glossary of terms

Finish date: The end of a Group Award's lapsing period is known as the finish date. After the finish date, the Group Award will no longer be live and the following applies:

- candidates may not be entered for the Group Award
- the Group Award will continue to exist only as an archive record on the Awards Processing System (APS)

Lapsing date: When a Group Award is entered into its lapsing period, the following will apply:

- the Group Award will be deleted from the relevant catalogue
- the Group Award specification will remain until the qualification reaches its finish date at which point it will be removed from SQA's website and archived
- no new centres may be approved to offer the Group Award
- centres should only enter candidates whom they expect to complete the Group Award during the defined lapsing period

SQA credit value: The credit value allocated to a Unit gives an indication of the contribution the Unit makes to an SQA Group Award. An SQA credit value of 1 given to an SQA Unit represents approximately 40 hours of programmed learning, teaching and assessment.

SCQF: The Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) provides the national common framework for describing all relevant programmes of learning and qualifications in Scotland. SCQF terminology is used throughout this guide to refer to credits and levels. For further information on the SCQF visit the SCQF website at **www.scqf.org.uk**.

SCQF credit points: SCQF credit points provide a means of describing and comparing the amount of learning that is required to complete a qualification at a given level of the Framework. One National Unit credit is equivalent to 6 SCQF credit points. One National Unit credit at Advanced Higher and one Higher National Unit credit (irrespective of level) is equivalent to 8 SCQF credit points.

SCQF levels: The level a qualification is assigned within the framework is an indication of how hard it is to achieve. The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. HNCs and HNDs are available at SCQF levels 7 and 8 respectively. Higher National Units will normally be at levels 6–9 and Graded Units will be at level 7 and 8. National Qualification Group Awards are available at SCQF levels 2–6 and will normally be made up of National Units which are available from SCQF levels 2–7.

Subject Unit: Subject Units contain vocational/subject content and are designed to test a specific set of knowledge and skills.

History of changes

It is anticipated that changes will take place during the life of the qualification and this section will record these changes. This document is the latest version and incorporates the changes summarised below. Centres are advised to check SQA's APS Navigator to confirm they are using the up to date qualification structure.

NOTE: Where a Unit is revised by another Unit:

- No new centres may be approved to offer the Unit which has been revised.
- Centres should only enter candidates for the Unit which has been revised where they are expected to complete the Unit before its finish date.

Version Number	Description	Date
03	The following awards finished on 31/07/2024: GK26 48 PDA in History (Advanced) GK27 48 PDA in Politics (Advanced) GK29 48 PDA in Sociology (Advanced)	August 2024

02	Revision of Units: Revision of Unit: FK7W 34 History B: Analysing Topics within a Historical Period Has been revised by J02X 34 History B: Analysing Topics within a Historical Period for the PDA in History GK22 47	03/12/2018
	Revision of Units: FK85 34 Politics A: An Introduction to Political Theories of the State has been revised by J032 34 Politics A: An Introduction to Political Theories of the State and FK86 34 Politics B: The United Kingdom and Scotland has been revised by J0H0 34 Politics B: The United Kingdom and Scotland for the PDA in Politics GK23 47	
	Revision of unit: FK8E 34 Psychology B: Explanation and Research of Psychological Topics has been revised by J030 34 Psychology B: Explanation and Research of Psychological Topics For the PDA in Psychology GK24 47	
	FK8T 34 Sociology B: Applying Sociological Theories and Studies to Sociological Topics Has been revised by J031 34 Sociology B: Applying Sociological Theories and Studies to Sociological Topics in the framework for PDA in Sociology (GK25 47).	
	FK7X 35 History C: Evaluating Topics within a Historical Period has been revised by J0LS 35 History C: Evaluating Topics within a Historical Period in the framework for PDA in History (Advanced) (GK26 48).	
	FK87 35 Politics C: The United States and European Union has been revised by J0NB 35 Politics C: The United States and European Union in the framework for PDA in Politics (Advanced) (GK27 48)	
	FK8F 35 Psychology C: Analysis and Evaluation of Psychological Topics has been revised by J0NC 35 Psychology C: Analysis and Evaluation of Psychological Topics in the framework for PDA in Psychology (Advanced) (GK28 48)	
	Revision of unit: FK8V Sociology C: Analysing and Evaluating Sociological Debates has been revised by J0NA 35 Sociology C: Analysing and Evaluating Sociological Debates For the PDA in Sociology (Advanced) GK29 48	
	Core Skills mapping updated for J02X 34, J032 34, J0H0 34, J030 34, J031 34, J0LS 35, JONB 35, J0NC 35 AND J0NA 35 on pages 15 and 16.	

Group Award Specification: PDA in: History (GK22 47), Politics (GK23 47), Psychology (GK24 47), Sociology (GK25 47), History (Advanced) (GK26 48), Politics (Advanced) (GK27 48), Psychology (Advanced) (GK28 48), Sociology (Advanced) (GK29 48)

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Acknowledgement

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of this qualification.

9   General information for learners

This section will help you decide whether this is the qualification for you by explaining what the qualification is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the qualification and opportunities for further learning and employment.

Within the PDA in a Social Science you will study in depth one of the social sciences disciplines, namely History, Politics, Psychology or Sociology.

Curriculum for Excellence and skills development

Studying the social sciences requires independent thinking, analytical skills and reasoned evaluation to reach satisfactory conclusions about human behaviour and society. By developing both general and specific skills you will be well on the way to becoming a **successful learner**. There will be plenty opportunity for research, debate and classroom discussion so as you gain success in achieving Units you will become a more **confident individual**.

HN Social Sciences can make a positive contribution to you becoming **a critical but responsible citizen** as you develop knowledge and understanding of the relationship between the individual and society and consider wider, complex ethical and political issues.

By learning to work collaboratively throughout your studies you will learn to become an **effective contributor**, applying critical thinking within new contexts, planning group tasks, evaluating data and presenting your findings.

You will develop a range of general skills, for example:

♦   critical and evaluative thinking
♦   problem solving
♦   the ability to manage and absorb large amounts of information
♦   communication skills and presentation techniques
♦   the ability to be flexible and to work co-operatively with others
♦   personal effectiveness
♦   the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning
♦   study and research skills
♦   skills in IT
♦   skills in numeracy

In addition, a PDA in Social Sciences will*:*

♦   Enable progression within the SCQF including progression to HNS and HND Social Sciences and beyond into degree programmes
♦   provide opportunities for career planning and enhancing your employment prospects

You will also develop a range of skills specific to the study of social sciences, including:

- an understanding of social science disciplines
- an understanding of the contribution of social sciences to the modern world and human behaviour
- an ability to demonstrate that particular themes or aspects of human behaviour can be examined, explained and thereby understood in a more comprehensive manner
- an open-minded, critical and evaluative approach to study
- knowledge and understanding of different research methods
- skills in information and communication technology
- skills in numeracy
- investigation and research skills
- knowledge of competing views, perspectives, theories and evidence from a variety of sources to enable the candidate to adopt as comprehensive a social scientific approach as possible
- skills in managing and prioritising information

In addition, you will develop the following key skills:

- the ability to evaluate theoretical concepts
- the application of theoretical concepts to human social behaviour
- critical cognition
- statistical skills
- an understanding of the role of information technology in the social sciences

The subject specific Units are assessed using a variety of open and closed-book assessments.