



National
Qualifications

Sociology

Assignment

General assessment information

This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the assignment Component of National 5 Sociology Course assessment.

It must be read in conjunction with the specific assessment task for this Component of Course assessment, which may only be downloaded from SQA's designated secure website by authorised personnel.

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Introduction

This is the general assessment information for National 5 Sociology assignment

This assignment is worth 30 marks out of the total of 80 marks for the Course assessment. The Course will be graded A-D.

Marks for all Course Components are added up to give a total Course assessment mark which is then used as the basis for grading decisions.

This is one of two Components of Course assessment. The other Component is a question paper.

This document describes the general requirements for the assessment of the assignment Component for this Course. It gives general information and instructions for assessors.

It must be read in conjunction with the assessment task for this Component of Course assessment.

The assessment task will be set and externally marked by SQA and conducted in centres under the conditions specified by SQA.

Equality and inclusion

This Course assessment 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 candidates 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 in this Course is provided in the *Course Support Notes*.

What this assessment covers

This assessment contributes 30 marks to the overall 80 marks for the Course assessment.

The assessment will assess the skills, knowledge and understanding specified for the assignment in the *Course Assessment Specification*. These are:

- ◆ identifying and describing basic differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human social behaviour
- ◆ using investigation skills to find appropriate sources of information
- ◆ organising and interpreting information in sociology
- ◆ communicating sociologically informed views

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.

The added value in this assignment consists of breadth and application. Candidates will use sociological skills, knowledge and understanding from across the Units in the Course. They will use their basic sociological skills to communicate a sociologically informed view on their topic.

Assessment

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for the added value of this Course by means of an **assignment**.

Assessment overview

The assessment takes the form of an assignment, which requires candidates to use sociological skills, knowledge and understanding to investigate a topic in sociology. The assignment comprises several stages, culminating in a report which gives a sociologically informed view of the topic studied.

The initial stages of the assignment require the candidate to choose a topic for investigation, and to undertake the investigation, keeping a record of findings and sources. It is important that the candidate understands the requirements of the written report clearly at the outset of the assignment, so that appropriate investigation can be undertaken. It is also important that candidates use sociological terminology as appropriate in their assignment.

The assignment task requires candidates to produce a report based on an investigation into a sociological topic. Candidates will use sociological skills, knowledge and understanding to give a sociologically informed view of their topic.

The assessment requires the candidate to:

- A choose and describe a topic that is of interest to sociologists
- B identify and describe basic differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human social behaviour
- C use investigation skills to find appropriate sources of information for the topic
- D organise and interpret information in sociology
- E communicate sociologically informed views

The assessor should support candidates to choose a topic to investigate. The choice should be based on the interest of the candidate and available resources. There is a free choice of which topic may be investigated. Assessors must ensure that whichever choice candidates make, they are able to meet the requirements given for successful completion of the assignment. They must also ensure that the topic chosen conforms to the British Sociological Association's Statement of Ethical Practice.

Some examples of suitable topics are:

- ◆ Money makes the world go round: Investigate the effects of consumerism on today's society.

- ◆ Family patterns have undergone tremendous change in the past 60 years: Investigate how this has changed gender roles in the family.
- ◆ Education, education, education: Investigate how differentials in educational achievement reflect a young person's position in society.
- ◆ Do we create society or does society create us? Investigate the role of the individual in society.

Assessment conditions

Assessors must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.

This assessment will be carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start at an appropriate point in the Course. This will normally be when they have completed most of the work on the Units in the Course.

Evidence which meets the requirements of this Component of Course assessment will be between 800 and 1,200 words long, excluding references, footnotes and appendices. The candidate must provide the word count for the completed report, excluding appendices, footnotes and references. If the word count exceeds the maximum by 10%, a penalty will be applied.

There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access.

Candidates must undertake the assessment, whatever the nature, independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the formal assessment process taking place. The term 'reasonable assistance' is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. If any candidate requires more than what is deemed to be 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment.

Reasonable assistance may be given on a generic basis to a class or group of candidates, for example, advice on how to develop a project plan. It may also be given to candidates on an individual basis. Clarification may be sought by candidates regarding the choice of topic for the assignment. When reasonable assistance is given on a one-to-one basis in the context of something the candidate has already produced or demonstrated, there is a danger that it becomes support for assessment and assessors need to be aware that this may be going beyond reasonable assistance.

Once work on the assessment has begun, the candidate should be working independently.

Reasonable assistance does not include providing detailed feedback on drafts or marking the draft work.

The assignment will be conducted under some supervision and control. This means that although candidates may complete part of the work outwith the

learning and teaching setting, assessors should put in place processes for monitoring progress and ensuring that the work is the candidate's own and that plagiarism has not taken place.

Assessors should put in place mechanisms to authenticate candidate evidence. For example:

- ◆ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with candidates
- ◆ short spot-check personal interviews
- ◆ checklists which record activity/progress
- ◆ photographs, film or audio evidence

Group work approaches as part of the preparation for assessment can be helpful to simulate real-life situations, share tasks and promote team working skills. However, group work is not appropriate once formal work on assessment has started.

Evidence to be gathered

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

- ◆ The report of their sociological investigation

The assignment may be produced in written form or word-processed. Whichever is used, the assignment booklet should be submitted on paper to SQA for marking.

General Marking Instructions

Part one: General marking principles for National 5 Sociology assignment

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles that will be applied when assessing candidate responses.

These principles are reflected in the specific Marking Instructions used to mark the assignment.

- ◆ Marks for each candidate response will always be assigned in line with these
- ◆ General marking principles and any specific Marking Instructions for the relevant requirements.
- ◆ Principal Assessors will provide guidance on marking specific candidate responses which do not appear to be covered by either the general or specific Marking Instructions.
- ◆ Marking will always be positive, ie marks will be awarded for what is correct and not deducted for errors or omissions.
- ◆ In presenting their sociologically informed view of a topic in sociology, candidates should show the following skills, knowledge and understanding:
 - A choosing and describing a topic that is of interest to sociologists
 - B identifying and describing basic differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human social behaviour
 - C using investigation skills to find appropriate sources of information for the topic
 - D organising and interpreting information in sociology
 - E communicating sociologically informed views

Part two: Specific Marking Instructions

The tables which follow provide the same information but are presented in different ways. Both provide an overview of the marking commentary. The first provides detailed Marking Instructions, and the second provides a summary.

Detailed Marking Instructions table

Skills	General Marking Instructions	Max mark	Specific Marking Instructions
<p>A Choosing and describing a topic that is of interest to sociologists</p>	Describes the topic, including two main points of information about the topic.	2	<p>Candidates can be credited up to a maximum of 2 marks.</p> <p>2 marks: The description of the topic given is clear and gives two main points of information, one of which is the sociological issue.</p>
<p>B Identifying and describing basic differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human social behaviour (8 marks)</p>	<p>Describes one common-sense view of the topic.</p> <p>Gives two contemporary examples of this commonly held view.</p> <p>Describes one difference between a common-sense view and a sociological explanation of the topic.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Candidates can be credited up to a maximum of 2 marks.</p> <p>2 marks: The description of one common-sense view of the topic is accurate.</p> <p>Candidates can be credited up to a maximum of 2 marks.</p> <p>2 marks: Gives two contemporary examples of this commonly held view.</p> <p>Candidates can be credited up to a maximum of 2 marks.</p> <p>2 marks: Description of one difference between a common-sense view and a sociological explanation of the topic is clear and accurate.</p>
<p>C Using investigation skills to find appropriate sources of information for the topic (2 marks)</p>	Identifies resources that can be used to gain a sociological understanding of an issue.	2	<p>Candidates can be credited up to a maximum of 2 marks.</p> <p>2 marks: Is able to identify and give basic references for two appropriate sources.</p>
<p>D Organising and interpreting information in sociology (10 marks)</p>	Selects and summarises main points of information from one named source.	3	<p>Candidates can be credited up to a maximum of 3 marks.</p> <p>3 marks: Selects and clearly summarises main points of information from one named source.</p>

	<p>Selects and summarises main points of information from a second named source.</p> <p>Interprets the basic sociological meaning of these summarised points by extracting and explaining essential information.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Candidates can be credited up to a maximum of 3 marks.</p> <p>3 marks: Selects and clearly summarises main points of information from a second named source.</p> <p>Candidates can be credited up to a maximum of 4 marks.</p> <p>4 marks: Explains the importance of essential points of information from two sources which show the sociological meaning.</p>
<p>E Communicating sociologically informed views (10 marks)</p>	<p>Explains the topic with reference to information from sources.</p> <p>Explains the topic using sociological terminology, knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Explains whether the evidence presented supports or challenges the common-sense view of the topic.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Candidates can be credited up to a maximum of 2 marks.</p> <p>Explains the topic by making clear links between relevant information from sources and the topic to show sociological understanding.</p> <p>Candidates can be credited up to a maximum of 4 marks.</p> <p>Explains the topic clearly using basic sociological terminology, knowledge and understanding of a relevant sociological perspective, theory or concept. The link between theory and topic is clear and developed.</p> <p>Candidates can be credited up to a maximum of 4 marks.</p> <p>4 marks: Gives a view on the common-sense point of view of the topic. The viewpoint is clearly supported with a developed explanation of the evidence.</p>
Total marks		30	

Marking Instructions summary table

Skill	Requirements	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks
A Choosing and describing a topic that is of interest to sociologists	Describes the topic, including two main points of information about the topic.	Description of the topic is unclear or has fewer than two points of information.	Description of the topic given is clear and gives two main points of information, one of which is the sociological issue.		
B Identifying and describing basic differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human social behaviour (8 marks)	Describes one common-sense view of the topic.	Description of one common-sense view of the topic is basic or unclear.	Description of one common-sense view of the topic is accurate and developed.		
	Gives two contemporary examples of this commonly held view.	Gives one contemporary example of this commonly held view.	Gives two contemporary examples of this commonly held view.		
	Describes one difference between a common-sense view and a sociological explanation of the topic.	Description of one difference between a common-sense view and a sociological explanation of the topic is unclear or contains some inaccuracies.	Description of one difference between a common-sense view and a sociological explanation of the topic is clear and accurate.		

Skill	Requirements	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks
C Using investigation skills to find appropriate sources of information for the topic (2 marks)	Identifies and gives basic references for sources that can be used to gain a sociological understanding of an issue.	One appropriate source is given with a basic reference.	Identifies and gives basic references for two appropriate sources.		
D Organising and interpreting information in sociology (10 marks)	Selects and summarises main points of information from one appropriate source.	Selects points of information from one appropriate source. This may be basic or unclear.	Selects and summarises main points of information from one appropriate source. The summary is basic.	Selects and clearly summarises main points of information from one appropriate source.	
	Selects and summarises main points of information from a second appropriate source.	Selects points of information from a second appropriate source. This may be basic or unclear.	Selects and summarises main points of information from a second appropriate source. The summary is basic.	Selects and clearly summarises main points of information from a second appropriate source.	
	Interprets the basic sociological meaning of these summarised points by extracting and explaining essential information.	Basic sociological meaning is given for one source. The interpretation may lack clarity or contain inaccuracies.	Basic sociological meaning is given for at least one source. The interpretation is clear and accurate.	Explains importance of essential points of information from one source, which shows the sociological meaning.	Explains importance of essential points of information from two sources, which shows the sociological meaning.

Skill	Requirements	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks
E Communicating sociologically informed views (10 marks)	Explains the topic with reference to information from sources.	Explains the topic with limited reference to information from sources.	Explains the topic by making clear links between relevant information from sources and the topic to show sociological understanding.		
	Explains the topic using sociological knowledge and understanding. Candidates will identify and use one sociological perspective, theory or concept to give one possible theoretical explanation for the topic.	Explains the topic using basic sociological knowledge and understanding of a sociological perspective, theory or concept. The explanation and link contains inaccuracies.	Explains the topic using basic sociological knowledge and understanding of a sociological perspective, theory or concept. The explanation and link lacks clarity.	Explains the topic using basic sociological knowledge and understanding of a sociological perspective, theory or concept. The explanation and link is clear but may be basic.	Explains the topic clearly using basic sociological knowledge and understanding of a relevant sociological perspective, theory or concept. The link between theory and topic is clear and developed.
	Gives a view on the common-sense point of view of the topic by explaining whether the evidence presented supports or challenges a common-sense point of view of the topic.	Gives a view on the common-sense point of view of the topic with little or no supporting evidence.	Gives a view on the common-sense point of view of the topic with basic or unclear supporting evidence.	Gives a view on the common-sense point of view of the topic. The viewpoint is clearly supported by a basic explanation of the evidence.	Gives a view on the common-sense point of view of the topic. The viewpoint is clearly supported with a developed explanation of the evidence.
TOTAL 30					

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Detailed Marking Instructions amended to clarify requirements of the task. Changes made to mark allocation for some sections of the task. Overall mark allocation for task remains unchanged.	Qualifications Manager	September 2014
2.0	Marking instructions amended to clarify the requirements of the task and the way in which marks are awarded. Section on word count penalty amended.	Qualifications Manager	September 2015
2.1	Wording within the Marking Instructions summary table has been changed in some sections for clarification purposes only.	Qualifications Manager	September 2016

Security and confidentiality

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