



Higher
Course Assessment
Specification



Higher Sociology Course Assessment Specification (C768 76)

Valid from August 2014

This edition: April 2016, version 3.0

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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:	Higher Sociology
SCQF level:	6 (24 SCQF credit points)
Course code:	C768 76
Course assessment code:	X768 76

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	60 marks
Component 2 — assignment	30 marks
Total marks	90 marks

This Course includes six SCQF credit points to allow additional time for 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 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:

- ◆ breadth — drawing on knowledge and skills from across the Course
- ◆ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills

This added value consists of a [question paper](#)¹ and an [assignment](#).

The question paper will sample sociological knowledge and understanding from across the Units.

The assignment requires learners to use sociological skills, knowledge and understanding from the Course.

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.

¹ Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/jargonbuster>

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 an assignment.

Component 1 — question paper

The purpose of this question paper is to assess learners' use of skills, and their knowledge and understanding of sociological perspectives, theories and concepts. Learners are required to use sociological explanations and research evidence to respond to questions.

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

- ◆ understanding society by explaining sociological perspectives, theories and concepts
- ◆ explaining the sociological significance of relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions in a changing social world
- ◆ explaining and evaluating research methods used in sociology
- ◆ using sociological theories to analyse and explain human social behaviour
- ◆ using knowledge and understanding to evaluate research and evidence to support explanations

This Component will have 60 marks (approximately 66% of the total mark).

The question paper will have three Sections:

Section 1: Human Society

Section 2: Culture and Identity

Section 3: Social Issues

Each Section of the question paper will be made up of questions that will sample from the skills, knowledge and understanding described in '*Further mandatory information on Course coverage*' at the end of this document.

Learners must understand what is required in their response to questions that ask them to describe, explain, analyse or evaluate. Learners will need to use or apply their knowledge of sociology, particularly where questions require the response to be related to a given scenario.

There are a total of 20 marks available in each of the three Sections.

- ◆ The mark range for questions will be between 2 and 20 marks.
- ◆ There can be up to five questions within a Section.
- ◆ Questions can have more than one Part.
- ◆ A stimulus may be used with any question.
- ◆ A stimulus can include text, graphs or other information.

Component 2 — assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to assess learners' investigation and communication skills appropriate to sociology. This assignment requires learners to carry out their own secondary research into a topic of choice and produce a report on their findings.

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

- ◆ explaining differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human social behaviour
- ◆ using research skills to investigate topics
- ◆ analysing and evaluating information including published research
- ◆ communicating sociologically-informed views

This Component will have 30 marks (approximately 33% of the total mark).

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 2 hours.

Controlled assessment — assignment

This assignment is:

- ◆ Set by SQA.
- ◆ Conducted under some supervision and control.

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

Setting the assessment

This assignment is set by SQA.

- ◆ There is an open choice of topic for the Higher Sociology assignment.
- ◆ A word count will be provided.

Conducting the assessment

This assignment is conducted under some supervision and control.

The production of evidence for assessment will be conducted:

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

Further mandatory information on Course coverage

The following gives details of mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Higher Sociology 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 explain, analyse, evaluate and apply knowledge of sociology.

Human Society

Perspectives: structural; action

Theories must include: Consensus, Conflict, Functionalism, Marxism, Feminism, Symbolic interactionism, Weberism.

- ◆ differences between sociological and common-sense explanations
- ◆ analysing similarities and differences between theories
- ◆ the research process in sociology: theory, hypothesis, operationalisation, fieldwork, presentation of results
- ◆ methods which must include: surveys; questionnaires, structured interviews and unstructured interviews, participant and non-participant observation, case-study, focus groups, official statistics, or any other relevant methods
- ◆ research methods that tend to generate quantitative data and those that tend to generate qualitative data
- ◆ strengths and weaknesses of research methods
- ◆ choice of research method to use in particular contexts

Culture and Identity

Perspectives: structural; action

Theories must include: Functionalism, Marxism, Feminism, Symbolic interactionism, Labelling.

- ◆ sociological concepts which must include: primary socialisation, secondary socialisation, identity, culture, subculture, diversity, power and status, prejudice and discrimination
- ◆ the impact of socialisation on the formation of identity
- ◆ the significance of power and status in terms of relationships, with reference to a culture and/or subculture
- ◆ aspects of identity which must include both age and gender
- ◆ aspects of culture; high culture; popular culture
- ◆ sociologically relevant research and evidence for aspects of culture and identity including at least two appropriate research studies — this must include the main findings and conclusions of:
 - *Cohen (1972) Folk Devils and Moral Panics* to explain deviance within a subculture
 - one other study of choice to explain a chosen aspect within a culture or subculture
- ◆ practical, ethical and theoretical criteria used to evaluate sociological research

Social Issues

Perspectives: structural; action

Theories must include: Functionalism, Marxism, Feminism, Symbolic interactionism, Labelling, Weberism.

- ◆ contemporary social issues:
 - social mobility
 - a chosen social issue
- ◆ sociologically relevant research and evidence of social mobility including at least two appropriate research studies — this must include the main findings and conclusions of:
 - *Goldthorpe (1972) (2008) Oxford Mobility Studies*
 - *Blanden J Machin M (2008) Up and down the Income Ladder in Britain: Past Changes and Future Prospects*
- ◆ sociologically relevant research and evidence for a social issue of choice which must include the main findings and conclusions of two studies
- ◆ practical, ethical and theoretical criteria used to evaluate sociological research

Administrative information

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History of changes to Course Assessment Specification

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	<p>Page 2 — Question paper changed from 70 to 60 marks; total for Course changed from 100 to 90 marks; marks now used instead of percentages.</p> <p>Page 3 — Added value section clarified and 'in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate' deleted from first bullet point.</p> <p>Page 5 — Structure of question paper and assignment clarified.</p> <p>Pages 5–6 — 'Explaining differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human social behaviour' moved from question paper to assignment Component.</p> <p>Page 7 — Setting, conducting and marking of assessment: clarification of content.</p> <p>Pages 8–9 — Further mandatory information on Course content section: reformatted; multiple clarifications of content.</p>	Qualifications Development Manager	April 2014
2.1	<p>Page 8 — minor clarification to confirm that both age and gender must be included.</p>	Qualifications Manager	August 2015
3.0	<p>Page 8 — 'Analysing similarities and differences between theories' added to Human Society section to reflect updated Assessment Standard.</p> <p>Page 9 — 'socio economic inequality' changed to 'social mobility'.</p> <p>Page 8 & 9 — Clarification provided regarding which sociological theories relate to each specific Unit.</p>	Qualifications Manager	April 2016

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Note: You are advised to check SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of the Course Assessment Specification.

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