

# Further information on Higher Modern Studies Course Assessment (November 2013)

## Key messages

SQA is currently developing Course and Unit assessments. This document outlines our progress in Course Assessment for the Higher Course in Modern Studies.

The new Modern Studies Higher Course will maintain the standard of the current qualification at Higher, and will continue to be benchmarked against SCQF level 6 as well as ensuring that the level of demand for candidates is consistent with other Higher qualifications.

The new Modern Studies Higher Course combines popular and relevant contexts from the current Course as well as introducing updated content and new contexts to ensure the continuing relevance of the subject. The Higher Modern Studies Course has been revised to build on the skills, knowledge and understanding developed at National 5, and to provide clear progression from National 5 and on to Advanced Higher. The course will provide opportunities to develop breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, and the application of skills through the study of a range of contemporary contexts. Personalisation and choice will be increased through a wider range of contexts for study, as well as the opportunity for candidates to choose an issue for research in the Modern Studies: Assignment.

Course assessment will have two components: a question paper and an assignment. Both will be externally assessed. The question paper is worth 60 marks and the assignment is worth 30 marks.

Across the two components of the course assessment, both skills and knowledge and understanding will have equal importance. Skills will be developed within a body of contemporary, relevant knowledge and understanding in political, social and international contexts. Each component will assess both skills and knowledge and understanding, although the question paper will have a greater emphasis on knowledge and understanding, while the assignment will have a greater emphasis on the application of skills.

The question paper will assess the skills and sample knowledge and understanding from the Course Specification and the Course Assessment Specification. It will draw upon styles of questions that are familiar in Modern Studies.

The assignment will apply research and decision making skills in the context of a Modern Studies issue. Learners have an open choice of issue to allow for personalisation and choice.

Course assessment will be out of 90 marks.

## Higher specimen question paper (publication by 28 February 2014)

The question paper will assess the skills and sample knowledge and understanding from the Course Specification and the Course Assessment Specification. It will demonstrate progression from National 5 as summarised in the table below:

	<b>National 5</b>	<b>Higher</b>
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<b>Total marks</b>	60	60
<b>Time</b>	One hour 30 minutes	Two hours 15 minutes
<b>Sections</b>	3 sections	3 sections
<b>Mark ranges for each question in the SQP</b>	4 – 10	8 - 20
<b>Number of questions</b>	3 per section, 9 overall	1 or 2 per section, 5 overall
<b>Use of sources</b>	Use up to 3 detailed sources	Use up to 3 detailed/complex sources
<b>Question paper format/optionality/choice</b>	In the optional parts, no choice of questions. Separate information-handling questions in optional parts.	In the optional parts, choice of extended response questions. No separate information-handling questions in optional parts — requirement to apply skills to less familiar context.
<b>Mandatory content</b>	Questions drawn from political, social and international contexts	Questions drawn from political, social and international contexts
<b>Depth of treatment of mandatory content</b>	Detailed descriptions and explanations	Extended responses requiring knowledge and understanding and analysis/evaluation
<b>Question stems/command words</b>	Describe, in detail ... Explain, in detail ... Source-based questions assessing skills of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Drawing conclusions</li> <li>◆ Making decisions</li> <li>◆ Explaining selectivity in the use of facts</li> </ul>	'Statement' or given view. Discuss. To what extent... Evaluate ... Analyse ... To what extent ... [source-based question] What conclusions can be drawn ... [source-based question]

The purpose of this question paper is to demonstrate application of skills and breadth of knowledge and understanding by sampling from the mandatory information on Course coverage.

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

- ◆ detecting and explaining the degree of objectivity using a range of sources of information
- ◆ drawing and supporting complex conclusions using a range of sources of information
- ◆ giving detailed explanations, analysis and evaluation of complex issues

This question paper will have three sections. Each section will be made up of questions requiring candidates to draw on their knowledge and understanding and apply skills.

The knowledge and understanding will be drawn from the *Modern Studies (Higher) Course Specification* and the Further Mandatory Information on Course Coverage in the *Modern Studies (Higher) Course Assessment Specification*.

This question paper will be set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. The question paper is worth 60 marks. The duration of the question paper will be two hours 15 minutes. It will be divided into three sections, each of 20 marks; sections 2 and 3 will each have two optional parts as shown below; there will be parity of demand between the optional parts.

Section 1 – Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom

Section 2 – Social Issues in the United Kingdom

*Part A: Social Inequality in the United Kingdom*

*Part B: Crime and the Law in the United Kingdom*

Section 3 – International Issues

*Part C: World Powers*

*Part D: World Issues*

Candidates will answer one extended response question assessing knowledge and understanding and higher-order skills of analysis **and** evaluation. This question may be set in any section of the paper and candidates will have a choice of one question to answer from two.

Candidates will answer two smaller extended response questions assessing knowledge and understanding and higher-order skills of analysis **or** evaluation. These questions may be set in any section of the paper and candidates will have a choice of one question to answer from two in each section/part.

Candidates will answer two source-based information-handling skills questions which assess the skills of: detecting and explaining the degree of objectivity; and drawing and supporting complex conclusions. These questions may be set in any section of the paper, and candidates will have no choice of question to answer. These questions will consist of between two and three sources of information at an appropriate level of detail and complexity for this SCQF level. Sources may be written, numerical, graphical or pictorial.

For the question paper, there will be a separate question paper and answer booklet.

### **Points of stability and points of change between current Higher and new Higher**

	<b>Points of Stability</b>	<b>Points of Change</b>
Skills	Applying information-handling skills of decision making, drawing conclusions and explaining the degree of objectivity.	Decision making skills assessed in the Modern Studies: Assignment. Other skills assessed in the question paper.
Use of sources	Use of a range of written, numerical, graphical and pictorial sources of information.	In the Modern Studies: Assignment, candidates will research an issue and collect sources.
Knowledge and understanding	Familiar topics and issues will be retained across all Units and in all three sections of the question	Opportunity to include a range of new contexts including a wider knowledge and understanding of the democratic

	paper. Retention of political, social and international areas of study	political system in Scotland and the United Kingdom; introduction of the Crime and the Law in the United Kingdom option within Social Issues in the United Kingdom; wide choice of World Power or World Issue to study.
Question stems / command words	Use of 'Discuss' and 'To what extent' as command words	Consistent use of command words and followed through into marking instructions; introduction of command words 'Analyse' and 'Evaluate'.
Unit Assessment	3 Units	Increased flexibility in approaches to gathering evidence
Course Assessment	Question paper retained.	Question Paper (135 minutes) and Assignment (Production of evidence stage in up to 90 minutes)
Types of Question	Extended responses.	Extended responses and source-based questions.
Marking instructions	Will continue to be available.	Extended advice and guidance for centres in how marks are allocated to a range of responses. Extended marking principles.
Level of demand	Benchmarked against SCQF level 6 and current Higher	Improved alignment with other subjects at Higher
Marks	90 marks in total	90 marks: 60 from question paper, 30 from Assignment

(For sample questions from the current draft of the Specimen Question paper, please see Appendix 1)

### **Higher Assignment (publication by 31 March 2014)**

An assignment is a new method of assessment for this subject.

The Modern Studies: Assignment will apply research and decision-making skills in the context of a Modern Studies issue. Learners have an open choice of issue to allow for personalisation and choice.

At Higher, the assignment will give learners an opportunity to demonstrate the following higher-order cognitive skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ identify a Modern Studies issue about which there are alternative views
- ◆ research a Modern Studies issue, using a range of sources of information
- ◆ synthesise and analyse information from a range of sources
- ◆ evaluate the usefulness and reliability of a range of sources of information
- ◆ reach a decision on the issue studied
- ◆ show detailed knowledge and understanding of the issue to support the decision reached
- ◆ show an awareness of alternatives to the decision
- ◆ communicate information using the conventions of a report

At Higher the assignment is worth 30 marks (33% of the total mark). The assignment will have a greater emphasis on the assessment of skills than the question paper. Up to 20 marks will be awarded for the assessment of skills; up to 10 marks will be awarded for the assessment of knowledge and understanding of the issue.

The following table illustrates progression from the National 5 Assignment to the Higher Assignment:

	<b>National 5</b>	<b>Higher</b>
<b>Marks</b>	20	30
<b>Time for production of evidence stage</b>	Up to one hour under controlled conditions	Up to one hour 30 minutes under controlled conditions
<b>Choice of topic</b>	Any relevant Modern Studies topic or issue	Any relevant Modern Studies issue about which there are alternative views
<b>Analysis</b>	Explain and analyse key features to a topic or issue	Analyse and synthesise information from a range of sources
<b>Research skills</b>	Evaluate own research methods	Evaluate usefulness and reliability of sources used
<b>Evaluation</b>	Reach a conclusion(s)	Reach a decision and show awareness of alternative views
<b>Specified Resources</b>	Up to two single sided sheets of A4	Up to two single sided sheets of A4
<b>Presentation</b>	Use structured template	Use the conventions of a report

Evidence will be produced under controlled conditions, within one hour 30 minutes, and submitted to SQA for external marking. SQA will produce two documents called Assignment: General Assessment Information and Assignment: Assessment Task.

Learners will use specified resources during the production of evidence stage. These should show evidence of primary or secondary research carried out by the candidate and may include, for example: statistical, graphical or numerical data; survey results; interview questions and/or answers; questionnaire and/or results; list of internet search engine results; newspaper article or extracts; notes taken from a visit or talk; notes taken from a written or audio visual source. Learners may be advised by teachers/ lecturers as to resources that would be appropriate for the assignment at this SCQF level.

**Criteria used to allocate marks**

Identifying and demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the issue about which a decision is to be made, including alternative courses of action

Synthesising and analysing information from a range of sources including use of specified resources

Evaluating the usefulness and reliability of a range of sources of information
Communicating information using the conventions of a report
Reaching a decision, supported by evidence, about the issue

(For further information from the current draft of the Assignment, please see Appendix 2)

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# Appendix 1

The following examples show *some* of the questions in each section of the current draft of the Specimen Question Paper.

## DEMOCRACY IN SCOTLAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

*One aim of an electoral system is to provide fair representation.*

**Evaluate** the effectiveness of an electoral system you have studied in providing fair representation.

You should refer to electoral systems used in Scotland, the United Kingdom or both in your answer.

12 marks

*One role of parliamentary representatives is to hold the government to account.*

**Evaluate** the effectiveness of parliamentary representatives in holding the government to account.

You should refer to parliamentary representatives in Scotland, the United Kingdom or both in your answer.

12 marks

Study Sources A and B below and opposite then answer the question that follows.

### SOURCE A

#### The 2010 General Election Televised Debates

The 2010 General Election witnessed the first live television debates between leaders from each of the three main UK parties - Conservatives, Labour and the Liberal Democrats. Cameron, Brown and Clegg all hoped to visually connect with voters during a tightly fought campaign nicknamed the 'digital election'.



Before the first ever debate of its kind, an Ipsos MORI poll revealed 60% of those voters surveyed felt the TV debates would be important to them in helping decide the way they would vote. The performance of the candidates during the debates could also have the potential to alter the way the media handle coverage of each of the leaders and their parties. Following the debates, a range of polls suggested Nick Clegg had won convincingly with many voters indicating they would switch to the Liberal Democrats. The success of the Lib Dem leader led to claims of 'Cleggmania' and a prediction of a historic increase in the number of seats for the party.

In a second survey conducted after the election by an independent polling organisation, it found the leaders' TV debates changed the voting intentions of more than a million voters. Put another way, the results indicated the debates altered the voting behaviour of more than 4% of the electorate. Also, it could be argued that TV coverage of the leaders' debate motivated thousands of voters to use their vote when otherwise they may not have done. In some parts of the country there was a rise of 17% in younger voters indicating they would turn out to vote. On the other hand, it could be argued that the TV debates only reinforced the existing views most people had.

A third survey from the British Election Study 2010 found 9.4m people watched the first live debate on ITV, 4.5m in the second on Sky and 8.5m the final debate on the BBC. After the second debate, polling figures suggested Cameron and Clegg were joint winners. After the third debate polling figures suggested Cameron was the winner. Overall, the results from this study appeared to suggest 12% of voters changed their mind about which party to vote for as a consequence of watching the TV election debates.

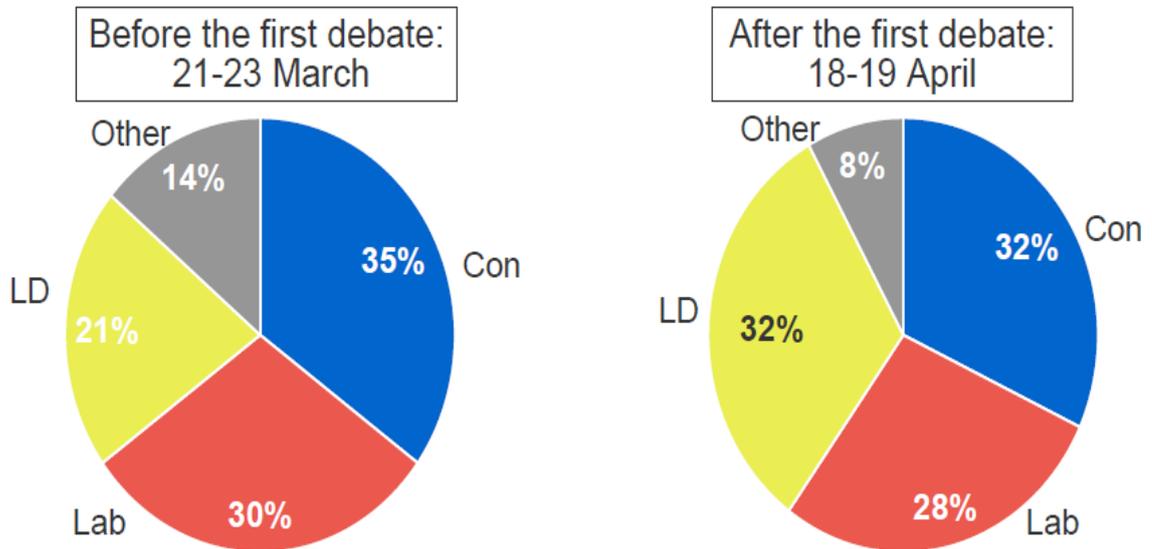
After the polling stations closed and the votes were counted, it was found that no one party had an overall majority. The Conservatives obtained the largest share of the overall vote polling 36% (up 3.7% from 2005), Labour attracted 29% of the vote (down 6.2% from 2005) and the Liberal Democrats 23% (up 1% from 2005).

**(Adapted from, BBC Website; 8<sup>th</sup> May 2010)**

**SOURCE B**

**Voting Intentions Before and After First Televised Debate**

**Question: How would you vote if there were a General Election tomorrow?**



**Opinion Poll conducted by: Ipsos MORI – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

Use only the information in Sources A and B opposite and above.

To what extent is it accurate to state that the televised debates had a significant impact on voting intentions?

**8 marks**

## SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

### Social inequality in the United Kingdom

Analyse government policies to tackle inequalities that affect a group in society in the United Kingdom.

12 Marks

Analyse the different lifestyle choices that may result in poor health.

12 Marks

### Crime and the law in the United Kingdom

Analyse government policies to tackle crime in the United Kingdom.

12 Marks

Analyse the ways in which the victims of crime are affected.

12 Marks

## INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

### World Powers

With reference to a world power you have studied:

*The political system provides an effective check on the government.*

**Discuss.**

**20 Marks**

**To what extent** is a world power you have studied influential in international relations?

**20 Marks**

### World Issues

With reference to a world issue you have studied:

*International organisations have been successful in resolving a significant world issue.*

**Discuss.**

**20 Marks**

**To what extent** has a world issue you have studied had an impact on people in different countries?

**20 Marks**

## General Marking Principles for Modern Studies Higher

The following general marking principles must be applied when marking all candidate responses to questions in this Paper. These principles must be read in conjunction with the detailed Marking Instructions for each question. The marking schemes are written to assist in determining the 'minimal acceptable answer' rather than listing every possible correct and incorrect answer.

- ◆ Marks for each candidate response must **always** be assigned in line with these general marking principles and the detailed Marking Instructions for the relevant question. If a specific candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed Marking Instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your Team Leader/Principal Assessor. *You can do this by posting a question on the Marking Team forum or by e-mailing/phoning the e-marker Helpline.*
- ◆ Marking should always be positive, ie marks should be awarded for what is correct and not deducted for errors or omissions.
- ◆ Where the candidate violates the rubric of the paper and answers two parts in one section, both responses should be marked and the better mark recorded.
- ◆ For credit to be given, points must relate to the question asked. Where candidates give points of knowledge without specifying the context, these should be rewarded unless it is clear that they do not refer to the context of the question.

## Marking Principles for each question type

For each of the question types the following provides an overview of marking principles and an example of their application for each question type.

The types of questions used in this paper are:

- ◆ 'Statement' or given view. Discuss. [20 mark extended response]
- ◆ To what extent... [20 mark extended response]
- ◆ Evaluate ... [12 mark extended response]
- ◆ Analyse ... [12 mark extended response]
- ◆ To what extent is it accurate to state that ... [information-handling question – 8 marks]
- ◆ What conclusions can be drawn ... [information-handling question – 8 marks]

### **Extended response questions that assess knowledge, understanding and analysis and/or evaluation (12 or 20 marks)**

- ◆ For 12-mark responses, up to 8 marks will be awarded for knowledge and understanding (description, explanation and exemplification) and 4 marks for demonstration of higher-order knowledge and understanding through analysis **or** evaluation.
- ◆ For 20-mark responses, up to 8 marks will be awarded for knowledge and understanding (description, explanation and exemplification) and 12 marks for demonstration of higher-order knowledge and understanding through analysis **and** evaluation.
- ◆ In each section/part candidates will have a choice of one from two extended response questions.
- ◆ For the Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom Section, candidates may refer to Scotland only, to the United Kingdom only, or to **both** Scotland and the United Kingdom in their responses.
- ◆ Marking must be consistent. Never make a hasty judgement on a response based on length, quality of hand writing or a confused start.
- ◆ Use the full range of marks up to 12 or 20 marks.
- ◆ Do not use the specific marking instructions as a checklist. Other relevant points should be credited.

### **Source-based questions that assess information-handling skills (8 marks)**

- ◆ Questions will have at least two sources at an appropriate SCQF level
- ◆ Award up to **four** marks for a single developed point depending on the use of the evidence in the sources and the quality of the analysis/evaluation
- ◆ Credit highly candidates who synthesise information within and between sources.
- ◆ For full marks candidates must refer to all sources in their answer.

### **‘Objectivity’ Questions**

- ◆ For full marks candidates must make an overall judgement as to the extent of the accuracy of the given statement. Maximum **six** marks if no overall judgement is made on extent of accuracy of the statement. Credit given (up to 2 marks) for answers which evaluate the ‘usefulness’ or ‘reliability’ of the source however this is not required for full marks.

### **‘Conclusions’ Questions**

- ◆ For full marks candidates must make conclusions/judgements based upon evidence.

The Specimen Question Paper will also include detailed marking instructions showing how general marking principles will be applied to each specific question and examples of appropriate content.

# Appendix 2

**The following information is taken from the current draft of the Assignment.**

## **General Marking Principles for Higher Modern Studies: Assignment**

*This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidate responses in this assignment. These principles are reflected in the specific marking instructions that will be used to mark the assignment.*

- a) Marks for each candidate response must always be assigned in line with these general marking principles and the specific marking instructions.
- b) If a specific candidate response does not seem to be covered by either these principles or specific marking instructions, or where they have researched an area in which you are unable to verify the knowledge which they have presented, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your Assessment Leader/Principal Assessor.
- c) Marking should always be positive, ie marks should be awarded for what is correct and not deducted for errors or omissions.

Candidates may demonstrate a range of approaches to how they structure their assignment evidence in the production of evidence stage.

Candidates may demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways and at different points in their assignment evidence. Markers should credit relevant and appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding wherever it is demonstrated. In presenting their findings, candidates should show the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

**A. Identifying and demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the issue about which a decision is to be made, including alternative courses of action**

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways.

**B. Analysing and synthesising information from a range of sources including use of specified resources**

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways. Candidates must make reference to the Research Evidence brought into the assessment.

Candidates will go beyond knowledge and understanding in order to:

- establish links between evidence
- establish contradictions and inconsistencies
- explore different views on the issue
- identify possible consequences/implications

**C. Evaluating the usefulness and reliability of a range of sources of information**

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways.

**D. Communicating information using the conventions of a report**

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways.

#### **E. Reaching a decision, supported by evidence, about the issue**

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways.

##### **Specified resources to be taken into assessment**

Candidates may take Research Evidence collected during the research phase into the production of evidence stage.

This evidence should consist of no more than two single-sided sheets of A4. Candidates should be encouraged to briefly annotate or highlight information on their resources before the production of evidence stage.

This Research Evidence must be submitted to the SQA along with the candidate evidence produced under a high degree of supervision.

The nature of the resources taken into the write up should show evidence of primary or secondary research carried out by the candidate and may include, for example: statistical, graphical or numerical data; survey results; interview questions and/or answers; questionnaire and/or results; list of internet search engine results; newspaper article or extracts; notes taken from a visit or talk; or notes taken from a written or audio visual source.

Candidates can receive guidance from their assessor on the type of resources which would be appropriate for the assignment at this SCQF level.

While no marks are awarded for the Research Evidence taken into the assessment, candidates must make reference to the results of their research contained in these resources in order to support their analysis. Otherwise they will not be able to achieve all the marks available.

Further information will be provided on the allocation of marks for the Higher Modern Studies: Assignment
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