



Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Politics D: Political Representation

Unit code:

Unit purpose: This Unit aims to develop a candidate's ability to analyse political concepts and a system of political representation. It requires candidates to critically evaluate an historic, or contemporary, state's system of political representation in relation to two political concepts.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

1. Analyse two political concepts and a system of political representation.
2. Critically evaluate a specific state's system of political representation in relation to two political concepts.

Credit points and level: 1 HN credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills:

Candidates should possess good communication skills. Other knowledge, skills and experience relevant to the Unit would also be beneficial.

The previous study of Politics through Units and National Qualifications at Intermediate and Higher level, or other similar qualifications, is desirable but not essential.

In addition, candidates should normally have achieved HN Unit Politics A: *An Introduction to Political Theories of the State*, HN Unit Politics B: *The United Kingdom and Scotland* and HN Unit Politics C: *The United States and the European Union*.

Ultimately, entry is at the discretion of the centre.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill(s) of Communication at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, and IT at SCQF level 5 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Context for delivery: If this Unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes. This Unit is included in the framework of HNC/D Social Sciences.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment:

This Unit will be holistically assessed by a single instrument of assessment covering all Unit Outcomes. This will take the form of an open book assessment handed out or negotiated at an appropriate point in the delivery of the Unit (generally near the start of the Unit).

An exemplar instrument of assessment and marking guidelines has been produced to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 8.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Politics D: Political Representation

Unit code:

The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Please refer to *Knowledge and/or Skills for the Unit* and *Evidence Requirements for the Unit* after the Outcomes.

Outcome 1

Analyse two political concepts and a system of political representation.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- Explanation and analysis of two political concepts, in terms of power relationships between a state and its citizens
- Accurate description of the main features of a system of political representation
- Analysis of likely consequences to a society of establishing such a system of political representation

Outcome 2

Critically evaluate a specified state's system of political representation, in relation to two political concepts

Knowledge and/or Skills

- Identification and accurate description of the ways in which a system of political representation was used by an historic, or is used by a contemporary, state
- Critical evaluation of this state's system of political representation, in relation to two political concepts

Evidence Requirements for the Unit

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills for both Outcomes by showing that they can:

Apply knowledge and skills to two political concepts, one system of political representation and one specific state where this system of representation has been adopted. This Unit will be holistically assessed by a single open book instrument of assessment covering all Unit Outcomes. In response to the task set, the candidate must convey complex ideas in a well-structured and coherent form. Regardless of the assessment method chosen, the candidate must submit a bibliography presented in a standard referencing format such as Harvard or APA. Candidates should be given the task at an appropriate point of delivery of the Unit.

Response to the task set should include:

- An explanation and analysis of **two** political concepts in terms of power relationships between a state and its citizens.
- An accurate description of the main features of **one** system of political representation.
- Analysis of the likely consequences to a society of establishing such a system of political representation.
- Identification and an accurate description of the ways in which a system of political representation was/is used by **one** state (past or present).
- A critical evaluation of this state's system of political representation, in relation to **two** political concepts.

Assessment Guidelines

This Unit will be holistically assessed by a single instrument of assessment covering all Unit Outcomes. This will take the form of an open book research project handed out or negotiated at an appropriate point in the delivery of the Unit (generally near the start of the Unit) and a submission/presentation date set. Periodic discussions and a final feedback session with the candidate should ensure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

There is a wide range of methods of assessment that would allow candidates to meet the evidence requirements. The following are suggestions and there may be other methods that would be suitable. Centres are reminded that Prior Verification would help to ensure the national standard is being met.

This assessment could take the form of an open book research project (with access to materials (e.g. text books, political journals, notes, VLE) and could take the form of an essay *or* report *or* set of structured questions with an expected candidate response of approximately 1500 words, submitted as a written report, *or* an individual oral presentation *or* poster exhibition with expected candidate's response of approximately 10 to 12 minutes in presentation or explanation of poster, a pod cast *or* any other method that is appropriate to meet the evidence requirements. Candidates could also provide the evidence requirements in the form of an individual Blog, or creation of a website, with approximately 1500 words. It is important that it is designed with an agreed format to meet all knowledge and skills required across all Outcomes.

It is possible to combine the oral presentation with the poster exhibition, where the candidate outlines some aspects of the research findings in a poster and covers the others in an oral presentation on the same occasion. Where this occurs the total time for all aspects would be 10 to 12 minutes (rather than 10 to 12 minutes each). See 'Guidance on delivery and assessment' for further details. It is recommended that oral presentations are recorded in some form.

Tutors should make candidates aware of the importance of the judicious selection of appropriate academic sources, as they research and then prepare for the presentation of their findings.

NB: It is important that the language used in the assessment instrument reflects SCQF level 8 in each type of task.

Administrative Information

Unit code:

Unit title: Politics D: Political Representation

Superclass category:

Original date of publication:

Version:01

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

© Scottish Qualifications Authority [year]

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of Higher National qualifications.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre for further details, telephone 0845 279 1000.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Politics D: Political Representation

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This is the last in a suite of four Units that covers Politics within the HNC/D Social Sciences Group Award; the others being Politics A: *An Introduction to Political Theories of the State*, Politics B: *The United Kingdom and Scotland* and Politics C: *The United States and the European Union*. The Unit can be taught as a free-standing Unit or as part of the HNC/D Social Sciences Group Awards.

The aim of this Unit is to build on candidates' theoretical knowledge learned from previous politics Units and encourage creativity and innovation through research. The Unit provides: an examination and analysis of political concepts, in terms of power relationships between a state and its citizens; description and analysis of the likely consequences of establishing a system of political representation, and the opportunity for the candidate to research the system of political representation used by a state, past or present, in relation to two political concepts.

The two political concepts chosen to be researched may include: accountability, citizenship, democracy, equality, justice, liberty, power and authority or rights. This is an indicative list, but appropriate alternative political concepts may be introduced. The system of political representation to be researched could be one of the following: direct democracy, representative democracy, liberal democracy, social democracy, constitutional democracy, totalitarianism, anarchism, Marxism, Leninism, communitarianism. This is an indicative list, but appropriate alternative systems of representation may be introduced. Candidates, having negotiated with their tutor, may choose to research two concepts and one system of representation in relation, either to a state examined whilst studying a previous HN Politics Unit, or one of the candidate's own choosing. Candidates will however gain a greater understanding of the historical development and continuing relevance of systems of representation and political concepts if they are introduced to more than just those chosen for assessment.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

An exemplar instrument of assessment and marking guidelines has been produced to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 8. While this is an intellectually challenging and stimulating Unit it is also one that presents candidates with the opportunity to learn creatively and innovatively by developing critical political research skills appropriate for higher level study.

Centres should structure the teaching programme to allow time for development of Core Skills and other transferable skills and for assessment practice within the notional hours suggested.

This assessment could take the form of an open book research project (with access to materials (e.g. text books, political journals, notes, VLE) and could take the form of an essay *or* report *or* set of structured questions with an expected candidate response of approximately 1500 words, submitted as a written report, *or* an individual oral presentation *or* poster exhibition with expected candidate's response of approximately 10 to 12 minutes in presentation or explanation of poster, a pod cast *or* any other method that is appropriate to meet the evidence requirements. Candidates could also provide the evidence requirements in the form of an individual Blog, or creation of a website, with approximately 1500 words. It is important that it is designed with an agreed format to meet all knowledge and skills required across all Outcomes. Authenticating a candidate's work is essential. It would be helpful to collect notes or PPT presentation materials from a candidate as further evidence of meeting SCQF level 8 in the presentation.

It is possible to combine the oral presentation with the poster exhibition, where the candidate outlines some aspects of the research findings in a poster and covers the others in an oral presentation on the same 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.

The purpose of the Unit is to build on candidates' theoretical knowledge learned from previous politics Units, based on examination and analysis of political concepts, in terms of power relationships between a state and its citizens; description and analysis of the likely consequences of establishing a system of political representation, and the opportunity for the candidate to research the system of political representation used by a state, past or present, in relation to two political concepts. When delivering lectures, therefore, it would be appropriate to draw up a list of topics for investigation (systems of political representation and states to which the research could be applied) from which candidates would make a choice. The list, however, should be used to stimulate innovative research possibilities and not be considered either prescriptive or exhaustive. Candidates should make their choice in discussion with their lecturer. This will allow for both candidate 'freedom' to choose a state/system of particular interest, and tutor input, guidance and support to be achieved. Given the higher order nature of this task there will need to be a degree of 'structured guidance' from tutors. Tutors may, therefore, wish to provide periodic individual tutorials as a means of monitoring progress, reading drafts or suggesting further avenues of research

Reassessment should be done by a review of the original work. Candidates should be asked to hand in a complete piece of work, with amendments incorporated in the appropriate context, rather than a large add-on at the end, or asked to fully rewrite their work to a prescribed format if it did not meet requirements. Oral clarification could be used for minor omissions or to clarify minor detail.

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 (e.g. where a presentation falls short of the required time) another presentation of the same time as the original would be required.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may contribute towards the development of Core Skills of Communication and IT. It can also support the development of other transferable skills, such as, essay writing, referencing, citation and bibliography skills and thinking, analytical and critical skills.

It is possible to develop Communication at Higher level if the assessment takes the form of an essay/report or oral presentation. **For written communication at SCQF level 6 the skill is: produce well structured written communication on complex topics.** To develop this skill candidates can be encouraged in both formative and summative assessment to present all essential ideas/information and supporting detail in a logical and effective order; use a structure that is organised and use paragraphing to make distinctions between facts, opinions, arguments and conclusion, use a format, layout, and word choice which are appropriate to the content and context, and use spelling, punctuation, vocabulary and sentence structures which are consistently accurate. It is part of the evidence requirements for the Unit to ensure that candidates convey complex ideas in a well-structured and coherent way. This can be stressed in delivery and in formative work, as well as being considered in a summative assessment.

The candidates could be tasked with producing a written communication which presents, analyses, and evaluates a substantial body of information. These skills can be developed through formative activities, such as shorter essays on each political concept or the theory of the political representation, without being formally assessed for certification of Core Skill. The topic of explaining, evaluating and applying political concepts, and describing theories of political representation is complex, so should easily fit with SCQF level 8.

It is important to develop report writing or essay-writing skills for candidates' future progression. In doing this candidates should also be encouraged to use an appropriate referencing method, such as Harvard or APA, for any formative or summative reports. Referencing, citation and bibliography skills are best developed using the vehicle of formative essay or report writing; even oral assessment methods should incorporate an appropriate bibliography. It is hoped that candidates will have been introduced to these skills by undertaking Politics A, B or C Units. This Unit is useful for the consolidation of these skills.

For oral communication at SCQF level 6 the skill is: produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic. In both formative and summative assessment the candidate could be encouraged to give a detailed oral presentation on two political concepts, one system of

political representation and one specific state where this system of representation has been adopted. This would be a complex topic. The specific skills of using an appropriate level of vocabulary, consistent spoken language structures and formality, conveying all essential information, opinions, or ideas with supporting detail accurately and coherently, and with varied emphasis as appropriate and responding to others, taking account of their contributions would be developed in an oral presentation or in an oral explanation of a poster exhibition. Although a summative assessment would require individual work and individual presentation, a formative assessment could be constructed that would encourage candidates to work in a small group, with a few people contributing to the presentation. This may allow a candidate to experience the demands of oral presentation before choosing this as an option for summative assessment of the Unit (if Centre is able to give choice).

The Core Skill of Information Technology at SCQF level 5 the skill is: use ICT independently, effectively, and responsibly to access information within a range of tasks.

This Unit can help to develop such skills by the use of mini formative presentations using PowerPoint or other ICT presentation tool that will also support the development of oral communication. A summative assessment using ICT presentation methods is also possible. Specific areas of accessing information using Internet searches or VLE use and providing and creating information can be developed in such tasks. Creating a Blog or a website for the summative assessment is another way in which this Core Skill can be developed. This could be used where candidates (and their lecturer) have particular skills and interest in ICT.

Thinking, analytical and critical skills could be developed by posing questions at appropriate points in the delivery, enabling discussion and promoting the need for candidates to take responsibility for learning by encouraging the development of research skills via the Internet or using political journals and text books.

For the Core Skills of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6, the skill is ‘Critical Thinking’, ‘Planning and Organising’ and ‘Reviewing and Evaluating’. Thinking, analytical and critical skills could be developed by posing questions at appropriate points in the delivery, enabling discussion and promoting the need for candidates to take responsibility for learning by encouraging the development of research skills via Internet or using political journals and text books. These skills are also developed through the discussion of the research. The research task for this Unit requires that a complex issue is identified; research is undertaken, and the findings are presented, either in the form of a written report or through the use of one of a number of other methods deemed appropriate to meet the evidence requirements. This task fits well with the development of this Core Skill.

Open learning

The Unit is ideally suited to delivery by open or distance learning. A written response in the form of a report could be posted or emailed to the assessor or uploaded onto a VLE. Structured guidance through the provision of periodic individual tutorials could be done using video-conferencing or web-link. For further information on Open and Distance Learning, please refer to the SQA publication, *Assessment and Quality Assurance of Open and Distance Learning* (SQA, 2000)

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering special alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Alternative Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

DRAFT

General information for candidates

Unit title: Politics D: Political Representation

This Unit is designed to enable you to develop your investigative and research skills and build on the theoretical knowledge learned from previous politics Units. You will have the opportunity to examine and analyse political concepts, in terms of the power relationships that can exist between a state and its citizens. In addition you will learn how to describe and analyse the likely consequences to a society of establishing a system of political representation. You will also have the opportunity to design an investigation and conduct research on the system of political representation used by a state, past or present, in relation to two political concepts. Throughout, you will be encouraged to develop a creative and innovative mind, with analytical and evaluative skills highlighted throughout.

The research will be conducted partly in structured class time and partly in your own time and will be detailed work. The assessment will be *open book*. This means that you will be allowed access to materials (e.g. text books, political journals, newspapers, VLE).

The research task will be handed out to be completed at a date specified by your lecturer. It should be completed according to a prescribed format and could take the form of an open book research project (with access to materials (e.g. text books, political journals, notes, VLE) and could take the form of an essay *or* report *or* set of structured questions with an expected response of approximately 1500 words, submitted as a written report, *or* an individual oral presentation *or* poster exhibition with expected response of approximately 10 to 12 minutes in presentation or explanation of poster, a pod cast *or* any other method that is appropriate to meet the evidence requirements. You could also provide the evidence requirements in the form of an individual Blog, or creation of a website, with approximately 1500 words.

It is possible to combine the oral presentation with the poster exhibition, where you could outline some aspects of the research findings in a poster and cover the others in an oral presentation on the same occasion. If you did this the total time for all aspects would be 10 to 12 minutes (rather than 10 to 12 minutes each).

It is important that it is designed with an agreed format to meet all knowledge and skills required across all Outcomes. Your lecturer will inform you of which method(s) your centre will support.