



## **National 5 Sociology**

Course code:	C868 75
Course assessment code:	X868 75
SCQF:	level 5 (24 SCQF credit points)
Valid from:	session 2017–18

The course specification provides detailed information about the course and course assessment to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the course and the course assessment in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed.

This document is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver the course.

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## **Course overview**

The course consists of 24 SCQF credit points which includes time for preparation for course assessment. The notional length of time for a candidate to complete the course is 160 hours.

The course assessment has two components.

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper	70	2 hours
Component 2: assignment	30	See course assessment section

Recommended entry	Progression
Entry to this course is at the discretion of the centre.  Candidates should have achieved the fourth curriculum level or the National 4 People and Society course or the National 4 Modern Studies course or equivalent qualifications and/or experience prior to starting this course.	<ul> <li>Higher Sociology course</li> <li>other qualifications in related areas</li> <li>further study, employment or training</li> </ul>

## **Conditions of award**

The grade awarded is based on the total marks achieved across all course assessment components.

## Course rationale

National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice. Every course provides opportunities for candidates to develop breadth, challenge and application. The focus and balance of assessment is tailored to each subject area.

The National 5 Sociology course helps candidates to develop an understanding of society that goes beyond personal experience and common-sense explanations. They learn to think about human society, social issues, culture and identity from different points of view. They also learn about the key role of evidence in supporting explanations for human social behaviour and become familiar with research methods in sociology.

## **Purpose and aims**

The course develops candidates' sense of themselves as part of society. The sociological approach encourages candidates to ask questions about the social world in which we live, and to use evidence to support explanations for human social behaviour.

Candidates develop knowledge and understanding of the sociological perspectives, theories and concepts used to investigate and explain aspects of the social world. This sociological understanding encourages imaginative thought and prompts questions about our world.

### Candidates develop:

- an understanding of society through a study of basic sociological perspectives, theories and concepts
- an understanding that sociology challenges 'common-sense' explanations about human social behaviour
- an awareness of cultural and social diversity and the significance of relationships among individuals, groups and institutions
- an awareness of the role of sources of information, research evidence and research methods in sociology
- basic investigation skills to select, organise and interpret information
- thinking and communication skills
- confidence in investigating and using evidence to explain social experiences and social issues
- the ability to communicate their own and others' experiences of social life and views of the world

## Who is this course for?

The course is suitable for learners wishing to develop a deeper understanding of the social world in which we live, as well as those who wish to progress to more specialised training, further education or employment. Learners may have little or no prior experience of studying sociology, but their general education and life experience will provide a good foundation for beginning this qualification.

## Course content

The National 5 Sociology course comprises three areas of study. Each area offers options in order to allow personalisation and choice.

### **Human society**

Candidates develop an understanding of the sociological approach to studying human societies. They investigate the research methods used in sociology and describe relationships that exist among individuals, groups and institutions from different sociological perspectives.

### Culture and identity

Candidates develop a basic knowledge and understanding of how to use sociological concepts to explain culture and identity. They investigate and explain the relationship between culture and identity and develop skills in collecting, using and communicating information from a range of sources. They also develop an awareness of diversity.

#### Social issues

Candidates develop a sociological understanding of contemporary social issues. They develop knowledge of sociological theories and the terminology used to explain social issues. They also develop skills in using a range of sources, including research evidence, to justify points of view.

## Skills, knowledge and understanding

## Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course

The following provides a broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the course:

- identifying and describing basic differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human social behaviour
- understanding society by describing sociological perspectives, theories and concepts
- describing the sociological significance of relationships among individuals, groups and institutions
- using investigation skills to find appropriate sources of information
- organising and interpreting information in sociology
- describing the main research methods used in sociology
- using sociological explanations for human social behaviour
- using knowledge and understanding of research and evidence to support explanations

## Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment

The following provides details of skills, knowledge and understanding sampled in the course assessment.

## Skills, knowledge and understanding for the question paper

Candidates are required to:

- understand society by describing sociological perspectives, theories and concepts
- describe the sociological significance of relationships among individuals, groups and institutions
- describe the main research methods used in sociology
- use sociological explanations for human social behaviour
- use knowledge and understanding of research and evidence to support explanations

### **Human society**

Candidates are required to explain and use the following terms correctly: common-sense and sociological approaches, research methods, qualitative and quantitative data, structural and action perspectives.

They are also required to describe and explain:

- the main features of the common-sense approach to understanding human society, the main features of the sociological approach to understanding human society, and the differences between the two
- the main features, advantages and disadvantages of three quantitative methods: questionnaires, official statistics, structured interviews
- the main features, advantages and disadvantages of three qualitative methods: participant observation, non-participant observation, unstructured interviews
- basic features of the structural and action perspectives, including describing two differences between the structural and action perspectives
- the different way in which these perspectives explain relationships among individuals, groups and institutions in society

#### **Culture and identity**

Candidates are required to explain and use sociological concepts of culture, subculture, identity and diversity.

They are also required to describe and explain:

- ♦ the basic process of socialisation
- primary socialisation; secondary socialisation; agents of socialisation; rules, norms and values
- the relationship between the socialisation process and the formation of identity
- examples of socialisation, culture and identity using appropriate concepts
- features of cultures and subcultures
- features and examples of diversity within cultures and subcultures

Candidates must use information from sources or research evidence to support explanations.

#### Social issues

Candidates are required to:

- use sociological theories and research evidence to explain social issues
- explain the role of research evidence in sociology
- describe and explain two social issues: one social issue must be differential achievement in education relating to class, gender and ethnicity
- use two sociological theories, one of which must be a structural theory, when explaining social issues
- refer to research evidence when explaining social issues. For the social issue of differential achievement in education this must include:
  - Rosenthal R and Jacobson L, 1968. Pygmalion in the classroom. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston
  - Kingdon G and Cassen R, 2007. Understanding low achievement in English schools.
     London School of Economics
- ♦ describe and explain a second social issue of choice
- describe and explain issues of inequality in terms of class, gender and ethnicity in relation to this social issue
- use two sociological theories to explain the social issue
- apply two pieces of research evidence to support explanations for this social issue

## Skills, knowledge and understanding for the assignment

The following skills, knowledge and understanding are assessed in the assignment:

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

#### **Candidates must:**

- choose and describe a topic that is of interest to sociologists
- identify and describe basic differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human social behaviour related to the topic
- ◆ use investigation skills to find appropriate sources of information for the topic these must not include the two pieces of research evidence that are used for the question paper: Rosenthal R, and Jacobson L, 1968. Pygmalion in the classroom. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston; and Kingdon G and Cassen R, 2007. Understanding low achievement in English schools. London School of Economics
- organise and interpret information in sociology
- communicate sociologically informed views

Skills, knowledge and understanding included in the course are appropriate to the SCQF level of the course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level (www.scqf.org.uk).

## Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

This course helps candidates to develop broad, generic skills. These skills are based on <u>SQA's Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work</u> and draw from the following main skills areas:

- 1 Literacy
- 1.3 Listening and talking
- 3 Health and wellbeing
- 3.1 Personal learning
- 4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship
- 4.6 Citizenship
- 5 Thinking skills
- 5.3 Applying
- 5.4 Analysing and evaluating

These skills must be built into the course where there are appropriate opportunities and the level should be appropriate to the level of the course.

Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the course support notes.

## Course assessment

Course assessment is based on the information provided in this document.

The course assessment meets the key purposes and aims of the course by addressing:

- breadth drawing on knowledge and skills from across the course
- application requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This enables candidates to extend and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired during the course, assessed by a question paper and an assignment.

## Course assessment structure: question paper

Question paper 70 marks

The question paper assesses candidates' use of skills, and their knowledge and understanding of sociological perspectives, theories, concepts and issues. Candidates must use sociological explanations and research evidence to respond to questions.

The question paper allows candidates to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- identifying and describing basic differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human society
- understanding society by describing sociological perspectives, theories and concepts
- describing the sociological significance of relationships among individuals, groups and institutions
- describing the main research methods used in sociology
- using sociological explanations for human social behaviour
- using knowledge and understanding of research and evidence to support explanations

The question paper has three sections. The first section is worth 30 marks, the other two sections are worth 20 marks each. The question paper therefore has 70 marks out of a total of 100 marks for the course assessment and constitutes 70% of the course assessment.

### Setting, conducting and marking the question paper

The question paper is set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. Candidates complete the question paper in 2 hours.

Specimen question papers for National 5 courses are published on SQA's website. These illustrate the standard, structure and requirements of the question papers candidates sit. The specimen papers also include marking instructions.

## Course assessment structure: assignment

Assignment 30 marks

The assignment 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 assignment allows candidates to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- identifying and describing basic differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of a topic of interest to sociologists
- using investigation skills to find appropriate sources of information
- organising and interpreting information in sociology
- communicating sociologically informed views

The assignment has 30 marks out of a total of 100 marks for the course assessment and constitutes 30% of the course assessment.

## Setting, conducting and marking the assignment

The assignment gives candidates an open choice of topics within guidelines set by SQA. Evidence is submitted to SQA for external marking. All marking is quality assured by SQA.

## **Assessment conditions**

The assignment has two stages:

- research
- production of evidence (report)

In the initial stages of the assignment, candidates choose a topic for investigation and undertake the investigation, keeping a record of findings and sources. It is important that candidates understand the requirements of the written report clearly at the outset of the assignment so that they can carry out appropriate investigation. Candidates should use sociological terminology as appropriate in their assignment.

## Candidates will:

- choose and describe a topic of interest to sociologists
- identify and describe basic differences between sociological and common-sense explanations related to the topic
- use investigation skills to find appropriate sources of information for the topic
- organise and interpret information in sociology
- communicate sociologically informed views

Assessors should support candidates to choose a topic to investigate. The choice should be based on the candidate's interest and available resources. There is a free choice of topic to investigate. Assessors must ensure that whichever topic candidates choose, they are able to meet the requirements 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.

Examples of suitable topics are:

- media influence on identity are we shaped by what we see?
- ♦ family patterns have undergone tremendous change in the past 60 years investigate how this has changed gender roles in the family
- do we create society or does society create us? investigate the role of the individual in society

#### Time

The assessment is carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start at an appropriate point in the course, normally when they have completed most of the work in the course. The evidence should be completed in time to meet submission dates set by SQA.

#### Supervision, control and authentication

The assignment is 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 plagiarism has not taken place. 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, there must be clear evidence for each candidate to show that they have met the evidence requirements. Group work is not appropriate once formal work on assessment has started.

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

#### Resources

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

#### Reasonable assistance

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 a 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, eg advice on how to develop a project plan. It may also be given to candidates on an individual basis. Candidates may seek clarification regarding the choice of topic. 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 or it may be that they have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

Reasonable assistance may include:

- directing candidates to the instructions for candidates
- clarifying instructions/requirements of the task
- advising candidates on the choice of topic
- advising candidates on possible sources of information
- arranging visits to enable gathering of evidence
- interim progress checks

Reasonable assistance does not include:

- providing the topic
- directing candidates to specific resources to be used
- providing model answers
- providing detailed feedback on drafts, including marking

## Evidence to be gathered

The candidate evidence required for this assessment is the report of the candidate's 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.

#### Volume

Evidence should be between 800 and 1,200 words long, excluding references, footnotes and appendices. Candidates 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 is applied.

## **Grading**

A candidate's overall grade is determined by their performance across the course assessment. The course assessment is graded A–D on the basis of the total mark for all course assessment components.

### **Grade description for C**

For the award of grade C, candidates will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

## **Grade description for A**

For the award of grade A, candidates will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

## **Equality and inclusion**

This course is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

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: <a href="https://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements">www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements</a>.

## **Further information**

The following reference documents provide useful information and background.

- National 5 Sociology subject page
- Assessment arrangements web page
- ♦ Building the Curriculum 3–5
- Design Principles for National Courses
- ♦ Guide to Assessment
- ♦ SCQF Framework and SCQF level descriptors
- ♦ SCQF Handbook
- SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work
- Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers
- ♦ Educational Research Reports
- SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools
- ♦ SQA e-assessment web page

## Appendix: course support notes

## Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance to teachers and lecturers on approaches to delivering the course. They should be read in conjunction with this course specification and the specimen question paper and/or coursework.

## Developing skills, knowledge and understanding

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that could be included in the course. Teachers and lecturers should refer to this course specification for the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment. Course planners have considerable flexibility to select coherent contexts which will stimulate and challenge their candidates, offering both breadth and depth.

Candidates need support and guidance to develop study skills and learning strategies. Candidates should be gradually encouraged to participate in their own learning by finding information and to generally show initiative, wherever appropriate. The benefits of co-operative learning, peer support and peer feedback can be substantial and should be encouraged. This can be supported by the use of information and communication technology (ICT).

The 'Approaches to learning and teaching' section provides advice and guidance that teachers and lecturers can build in to their delivery to develop these skills, knowledge and understanding.

## Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

The skills, knowledge and understanding in this course relate to:

- identifying and describing basic differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human social behaviour
- understanding society by describing sociological perspectives, theories and concepts
- describing the sociological significance of relationships among individuals, groups and institutions
- using investigation skills to find appropriate sources of information
- organising and interpreting information in sociology
- describing the main research methods used in sociology
- using sociological explanations for human social behaviour
- using knowledge and understanding of research and evidence to support explanations

Candidates learn best when they:

- understand clearly what they are trying to learn, and what is expected of them
- are given feedback about the quality of their work, and what they can do to make it better

- are given advice about how to make improvements and are fully involved in deciding what needs to be done next
- ♦ know who can help them if they need it

#### Teachers and lecturers should:

- encourage and support independent learning
- help candidates understand the requirements of the course by sharing learning/assessment criteria
- ♦ deliver effective feedback
- encourage candidates to set their own learning objectives
- encourage candidates to assess the extent of their existing knowledge
- encourage self- and peer-evaluation
- question effectively using higher order questioning when appropriate

The use of assessment for formative purposes can help raise attainment by:

- giving feedback
- detailing progress
- identifying candidates' strengths and areas for development

The National 5 Sociology course has three areas of study:

- Human society
- Culture and identity
- Social issues

## **Human society**

A wide variety of learning and teaching approaches can be used to deliver this area of study. This part of the support notes provides advice and guidance, and some examples of approaches that could be used. At all times, teachers and lecturers should provide opportunities for personalisation and choice to ensure that learning is relevant and motivating. Where possible, learning should be relevant to candidates' domestic and everyday life, their overall learning programme and/or work and leisure.

## Possible approaches to learning and teaching

A rich and supportive learning environment should be provided to enable candidates to achieve the best they can. This could include approaches covering:

- development of thinking skills
- asking candidates to explain or show their thinking
- collaborative and independent learning
- discussion around new concepts and how they can be applied
- using technology where appropriate
- candidates planning and/or participating in real-life activities involving sociological research methods

Human society		
Examples of learning and teaching contexts	Opportunities for learning	
Explain the main features of the following:	<b>Common-sense approach:</b> the individualistic and naturalistic views of common-sense interpretations of human society need to be understood, exemplified (using newspapers and other media) and challenged.	
<ul> <li>the common-sense approach to understanding human society</li> <li>the sociological approach to understanding human society</li> <li>the differences between the two</li> </ul>	<b>Sociological approach:</b> the main features of the sociological approach also need to be understood, not just for this area of study and the assignment, but in order to gain a better understanding of the whole course.	
	Differences between approaches: the differences between the two approaches should be	

Human society	Human society		
Examples of learning and teaching contexts	Opportunities for learning		
	understood at a generic level and candidates should be capable of applying this to specific topics in preparation for their assignment.		
Explain the main features, advantages and disadvantages of three quantitative	The quantitative research methods which must be used are:		
methods:	• questionnaires		
	◆ official statistics		
<ul><li>questionnaires</li><li>official statistics</li></ul>	• structured interviews		
• structured interviews	The advantages and disadvantages should relate to the likelihood of the research method to produce reliable and valid results considering the following:		
	♦ time		
	◆ cost		
	◆ ease		
	◆ sample size		
	◆ depth		
	◆ breadth		
	• nature of enquiry		
Explain the main features, advantages and disadvantages of three qualitative	The qualitative research methods which must be used are:		
research methods:	participant observation		
	non-participant observation		
<ul><li>participant observation</li><li>non-participant observation</li></ul>	• unstructured interviews		
<ul> <li>unstructured interviews</li> </ul>	The advantages and disadvantages should relate to the likelihood of the research method to produce reliable and valid results considering the following:		

Human society		
Examples of learning and teaching contexts	Opportunities for learning	
	♦ time	
	◆ cost	
	♦ ease	
	♦ sample size	
	♦ depth	
	♦ breadth	
	• nature of enquiry	
	Research methods are crucial to understanding the sociological approach, and should be introduced when examining the nature of sociology. Candidates should be aware that different sociological perspectives may favour different research methods. Overt and covert approaches to both participant and non-participant observation should be considered.	
Explain the basic features of the structural and action perspectives, including describing two differences	The structural and action perspectives should be understood as groups of theories which share common characteristics.	
between them.	The macro, top-down, structures' influence over individual approach of the structural perspective should be contrasted with the micro, bottom-up, individual's influence over structures approach of the action perspective.	
Explain the different way in which the structural and action perspectives explain relationships among individuals, groups and institutions in society.	Structural perspective: consideration of the structural perspective should introduce the ways of examining and explaining human social behaviour which emphasise the importance of structures and institutions in shaping society and influencing behaviour. This should be exemplified using both consensual contexts which show how structures can be seen as working to benefit society as a whole; and conflicting contexts which show how structures can be used to the detriment of groups in society.	
	<b>Action perspective:</b> consideration of the action perspective should introduce the ways of examining and explaining human social behaviour which emphasise the importance of individual actions in shaping society and institutions. This should be exemplified by looking at the development of the action perspective and relating it to contemporary social settings.	

## **Culture and identity**

A wide variety of learning and teaching approaches can be used to deliver this area of study. This part of the support notes provides advice and guidance and some examples of approaches that could be used.

At all times, teachers and lecturers should provide opportunities for personalisation and choice to ensure that learning is relevant and motivating. Learning should build on, and be sensitive towards, candidates' life experiences. Approaches to learning and teaching should provide varied opportunities for candidates to reflect on and, at times, question some of their commonly-held beliefs. This could be challenging and rewarding for candidates as well as teachers and lecturers.

A holistic approach to learning and teaching would be appropriate. Opportunities to motivate candidates to understand complex or sensitive social issues linked to culture and identity may be more easily understood by candidates if topics or themes of contemporary relevance are identified and investigated by them.

## Possible approaches to learning and teaching

A rich and supportive learning environment should be provided to enable candidates to achieve the best they can. This could include approaches covering:

- development of investigating skills which involves collecting information from a range of sources
- development of strategies relating to planning and presenting information
- encouraging candidates to reflect on and explain their experiences or ideas
- discussion around new concepts and how they can be understood and applied
- collaborative and independent learning
- using technology where appropriate

Culture and identity		
Examples of learning and teaching	Opportunities for learning	
contexts		
Explain and use sociological concepts of culture, subculture, identity and	It is important that candidates are familiar with these terms and the features of them.	
diversity.	<b>Culture:</b> the ideas and self-concepts of a group or society (eg attitudes, beliefs, customs, norms and values) in a particular place and time, passing from one generation to the next.	
	<b>Subculture:</b> a group within a larger culture that has distinctive patterns of behaviour, beliefs, customs and other distinguishing features. Subcultures share some of the norms, values and beliefs of the dominant or parent culture but have distinct ones as well.	
	<b>Identity:</b> the conception, qualities, beliefs, and expressions that make a person (self-identity) or group (particular social category or social group). Identity is a label with characteristics, some of which are ascribed, and some which are achieved.	
	<b>Diversity:</b> in this context, diversity refers to cultural diversity — the co-existence within one society of people and groups from different cultural backgrounds. This is exemplified in the concept of multi-culturalism (compare with ethnocentrism). Note examples of diversity should be from within one society/country. Cross-cultural studies (looking at the differences in cultures in different countries) is not an example of diversity.	
	Candidates should be introduced to various examples of cultures, subcultures, and of diversity within a culture.	
Explain socialisation (primary and secondary), agents of socialisation, rules, norms and values.	Socialisation is understood as the process by which an individual learns the rules, norms and values of a group (society/culture) through social interaction.	
	Primary socialisation is the first stage and occurs within the family where young children first learn these through the agent of the family (mainly the parents).	
	Secondary socialisation happens after this through the agents of socialisation, including education, peers and the media.	

Culture and identity	
Examples of learning and teaching	Opportunities for learning
contexts	
	Rules and norms are expectations placed upon individuals within cultures (or subcultures) about the individual's behaviour. Rules are usually more formal and often coded, such as laws.
	Values are similarly learned through socialisation and are beliefs, ideals or principles through which a person determines what is correct, desirable, and proper.
	Candidates must use information from sources or research evidence to support explanations.

## Social issues

A wide variety of learning and teaching approaches can be used to deliver this area of study. This part of the support notes provides advice and guidance, and some examples of approaches that could be used. At all times, teachers and lecturers should provide opportunities for personalisation and choice to ensure that learning is relevant and motivating. Where possible, learning should be relevant to candidates' domestic and everyday life, their overall learning programme and/or work and leisure.

## Possible approaches to learning and teaching

A rich and supportive learning environment should be provided to enable candidates to achieve the best they can. This could include approaches covering:

- development of investigative skills
- development of simple evaluative skills by discussing the relative merits of different ideas
- asking candidates to explain or show their thinking
- collaborative and independent learning
- discussion around new concepts and how they can be applied
- using technology where appropriate

Social issues		
Examples of learning and teaching contexts	Opportunities for learning	
Explain social issues.	Candidates should be encouraged to recognise the nature of sociological thought, particularly that contrasting theories may offer different yet valid explanations for a social issue, such as differential achievement in education, which is mandatory in this course. A simple 'one is right and one is wrong' approach does not work in sociology, and for some candidates this may present a challenge.  Differential achievement in education must be understood by candidates in terms of class, gender and ethnicity. Candidates must be able to use two sociological theories to explain differential achievement in education, one of which must be structural.	
	Candidates must also be able to use two mandatory studies to explain differential achievement in education:	

Social issues	
Examples of learning and teaching contexts	Opportunities for learning
	<ul> <li>Rosenthal R and Jacobson L, 1968. Pygmalion in the classroom. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.</li> <li>Kingdon G and Cassen R, 2007. Understanding low achievement in English schools. London School of Economics.</li> </ul>
	Candidates must also be able to explain a second social issue which provides opportunities for personalisation and choice. A second (and subsequent) social issue can be selected from any aspect of human social life, eg poverty, crime or employment.
	Explaining the social issue using two sociological theories, at least one of which takes a structural perspective, allows candidates to understand that theories arise from different theoretical perspectives. A broad overview of perspectives will set the context, and then two theories, one of which should be structural, should be used to explain the issue.
	Theories that present contrasting ideas give the best possible basis for comparing the two theories.
Explain the role of research evidence in sociology.	Candidates must be able to explain the role that research evidence plays in sociology. This includes why research is important, what research can tell us, and the relationship between research and sociological theories.
	<b>Discussion and activities:</b> candidates may benefit from attempting to present some given data into graphs or pie charts in order to understand the process in reverse. Interpreting data requires an understanding of the use of the graphical tools used to represent it.
	Evidence could be sourced from reputable contemporary media reports on inequality and presented to candidates in a range of formats to encourage interpretation of different types of source materials. Evidence from National Statistics can be helpful in encouraging candidates to interpret different forms of charts and other graphical methods.

## **Delivering the National 5 Sociology course**

Sections may be delivered in any order and they may be delivered sequentially or concurrently. There may be some benefit, however, in delivering at least part of the human society section first to provide candidates with an opportunity to familiarise themselves with a basic understanding of how sociological explanations differ from common-sense views.

Candidates should be introduced to sociological language, concepts and theories in all sections, and should be encouraged to use sociological terminology as much as possible when explaining and communicating their ideas. Three possible approaches to delivery are given below.

## Approach 1

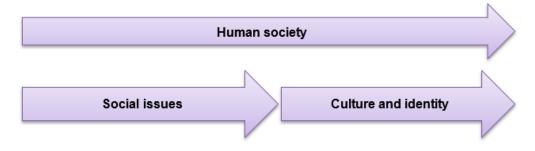


Adopting this approach, which begins with human society, enables candidates to distinguish between common-sense and sociological explanations of social behaviour. This enables candidates to understand the importance of researching topics of sociological interest rather than accepting common-sense explanations as fact.

In the human society section, candidates are encouraged to consider the extent to which human beings are shaped by social forces, as well as how society is shaped by human action. This is beneficial when progressing on to the culture and identity section, when candidates start to consider sociological concepts such as the socialisation process, culture and subcultures, and ways in which these can influence the formation of identity, and in turn create a diverse society.

Having studied the previous two sections, candidates would have the necessary underpinning knowledge to select a contemporary social issue of interest to them, and to explain it using relevant sociological theories and research evidence.

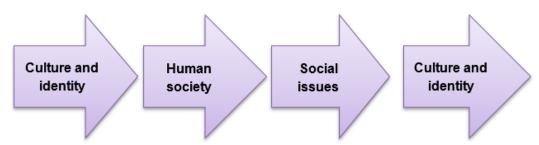
### Approach 2



Following this approach would support opportunities to learn concurrently about sociological perspectives and research methods while simultaneously adopting topics or themes introduced in the social issues and culture and identity sections.

An advantage of this approach would be that the relevance of a range of unfamiliar sociological perspectives, theories, concepts and research methods could be introduced to candidates in a flexible manner that could be responsive to their interests and level of knowledge and understanding, as well as their learning pace and style. This may help create a more stimulating learning environment in which candidates could be actively engaged in considering and reflecting on issues of significance to them while developing their understanding of sociological perspectives, theories, concepts, research methods and studies relevant to the contemporary social world.

## Approach 3



Approach 3 could be an appropriate approach for groups of candidates with no prior knowledge of sociology. Introducing the idea of culture and identity at an early stage of the learning process would provide teachers and lecturers with opportunities to encourage candidates to reflect on 'who they are' and 'why they are who they are'. Candidates can then be introduced to ideas around the socialisation process, such as norms, values, roles and the ways in which we learn to 'fit in' to our social world.

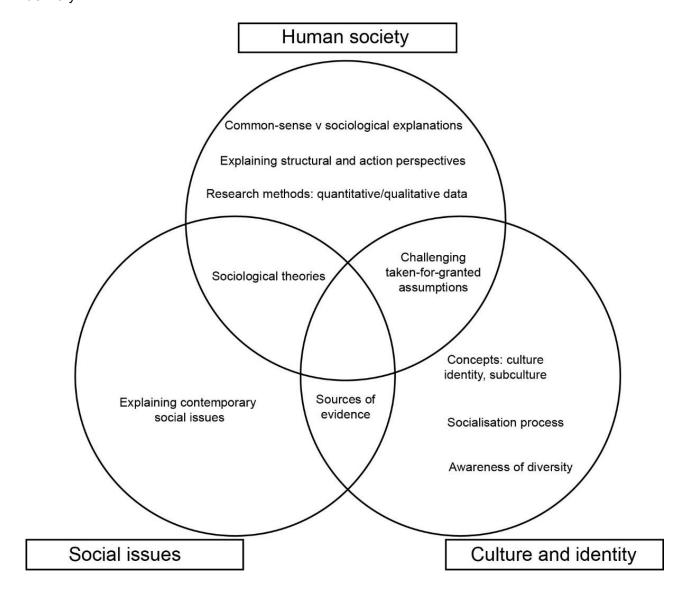
Using a wide variety of sources to support candidates to investigate the relationship between identity and the socialisation process would be helpful to introduce some of the basic ideas embedded in the human society section around structural and action perspectives, such as whether human behaviour is shaped by the society we live in or whether it is human behaviour that shapes society. This would also be helpful in using different sociological theories to explain contemporary social issues in terms of both their cause and impact.

By returning to some of the introductory themes towards the end of the sequential/topic/ theme based delivery of all three sections, candidates could be encouraged to reflect back on some taken-for-granted or common-sense assumptions that were evident when they first began studying the National 5 Sociology course.

### Thematic delivery of sections

In the National 5 Sociology course, there is the potential for thematic delivery of topics across the course. This may suit the needs of candidates in terms of personalisation and choice, and may suit teachers and lecturers in centres interested in offering more integrated and imaginative delivery.

The following diagram illustrates links between the sections that offer potential for thematic delivery.



Ideas for possible themes to provide opportunities for integrated learning across the course could include:

- Theme: changing family patterns:
  - family diversity
  - domestic labour/gender roles
  - attitudes to childhood

Each of these sub-topics could be a focus for discussions on culture and identity and could be the basis for sourcing and interpreting research evidence on related social issues such as rising divorce rates, distribution of household tasks within families, or the effects of mass media on perceptions and experiences of childhood.

Such topics would provide extensive opportunities to use investigation skills to:

- explore the diverse range of family types that exist in contemporary society
- discuss common-sense and sociological explanations for ways in which family patterns have changed
- identify sources of quantitative and qualitative data that provide objective research evidence on the subject
- use both structural and social action perspectives to describe relationships among individuals, groups and institutions in terms of family diversity
- develop understanding of the influence of socialisation within the family on the formation of identity
- raise awareness of cultural diversity in relation to family experiences

Sources of evidence from a range of media are readily accessible to candidates in relation to a range of topics around the theme of changing family patterns. Sociological research should be relatively easily sourced by teachers and lecturers or even candidates themselves. Teachers and lecturers could ensure that opportunities to develop an understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of different research methods are provided. The holistic and integrated nature of this type of thematic learning is likely to support candidates to develop and communicate sociologically informed views.

- Theme: educational experiences
  - differential educational achievement
  - labelling and self-fulfilling prophecy
  - attitudes to school
  - progression from school on to further or higher education and employment
  - barriers to learning
  - government initiatives to promote learning

Candidates could relate and compare their own range of educational experiences to 'set the scene', then be supported to source and interpret evidence into some of the topics that their own discussions have generated. By taking ownership of and personalising their learning in this way, candidates are likely to be more actively engaged in the learning process.

However, teachers and lecturers are required to support candidates to actively make the links between their subjective experiences and the more objective methods required in sociological analysis.

## Overarching guidance

An awareness of equality and diversity issues is essential in sociology, and all materials used should be inclusive to reflect social and cultural diversity. Some topics may be sensitive for individual candidates, based on stages of development or personal experiences, therefore discretion and sensitivity should be shown in the selection and delivery of materials. In discussions which relate to health, relationships, emotions or socio-economic status, teachers and lecturers should be alert to any signs of discomfort or distress.

The subject matter of sociology readily lends itself to a variety of delivery and investigation methods, including:

- candidate-centred problem-solving activities
- pair and group discussion
- ♦ considering sources of evidence
- analysis of real-life applications of theory
- games and quizzes
- ♦ IT/web-based activities
- formal presentation

Stimulus materials, visual aids and familiar situations may also be used to good effect. Video and audio material can add variety and can be effective in highlighting contemporary issues as well as comparisons across cultures or throughout history in relation to a particular social issue or theme.

Statistical information, and information relating to a variety of sociological studies, should be made available to enable candidates to appreciate how sociologists both use and provide research evidence.

Candidates should be gradually encouraged, with guidance, to investigate topics in the library; online; in newspapers, magazines and journals; and to generally show initiative, wherever appropriate.

The benefits of co-operative learning, peer-support and peer-feedback can be substantial, and should be encouraged and supported by the use of information and communication technology (ICT) where appropriate.

## Preparing for course assessment

Each course has additional time which may be used at the discretion of the teacher or lecturer to enable candidates to prepare for course assessment. This time may be used towards the end of the course, for integration, revision and preparation and/or gathering evidence for course assessment.

The National 5 Sociology course assessment has two components: a question paper and an assignment. Teachers and lecturers should refer to this course specification for essential information on mandatory content required for course assessment and to the assignment assessment task.

## Preparation for the question paper

The question paper assesses breadth and application of sociological skills, knowledge and understanding from across the course. Candidates need opportunities to write answers to questions, within time constraints. This can be practised through co-operative learning activities or by offering a practice question paper with opportunities to discuss the quality of answers.

## Preparation for the assignment

The assignment requires candidates to use sociological skills, knowledge and understanding to investigate a topic in sociology. Detailed information can be found in the assignment assessment task.

Candidates should have opportunities to investigate topics within the course and to discuss their ideas with others to develop their understanding. Candidates need opportunities to develop skills in structuring extended responses.

The task assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

### Choosing and describing a topic that is of interest to sociologists

The choice of topic is very important and provides an opportunity for personalisation and choice by candidates. However, teachers and lecturers should ensure that there are sufficient resources available to candidates to complete the assignment. Candidates should be reminded that they must choose a topic of interest to sociologists. They must be able to give two main points of information about their topic.

## Identifying and describing basic differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human social behaviour

Candidates must apply their knowledge of the difference between common-sense and sociological views to their topic. They must do this by giving one common-sense view and two contemporary examples, such as newspaper headlines, in addition to one difference between the common-sense view and a sociological explanation of their topic.

### Using investigation skills to find appropriate sources of information

Candidates must find appropriate sources. The following two sociological studies, which are mandatory for the course assessment, **must not be used**:

- ♦ Rosenthal R and Jacobson L, 1968. *Pygmalion in the classroom*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- ♦ Kingdon G and Cassen R, 2007. *Understanding low achievement in English schools*. London School of Economics.

### Organising and interpreting information in sociology

Using their two sources, candidates must select and summarise the main points of information from each source. Candidates must also interpret the sociological meaning of this information.

### Communicating sociologically informed views

Candidates must explain the topic with reference to the information from the sources, using sociological terminology, knowledge and understanding. This will often involve sociological theory. Candidates must also state whether the evidence supports or challenges the common-sense view of their topic, based on the evidence they have found.

## **Ethical guidance**

## Ethical practice in sociology

There is no expectation that candidates will conduct their own independent research. Learning and teaching approaches may include supporting candidates to carry out small-scale research activities.

The British Sociological Association (BSA) publishes a code of ethics for those undertaking sociological research. When students of sociology discuss or undertake research it is the teacher, lecturer or supervisor's responsibility to make certain that ethical standards are considered.

These notes give a brief outline of the ethical code of practice and provide guidance to help teachers and lecturers remain within the guidelines. The full code of ethical practice can be found on the BSA website.

#### Notes for teachers and lecturers

- ♦ Teachers and lecturers are required to supervise candidates' work and make certain that it does not break the ethical guidelines of the British Sociological Association.
- The wellbeing of both students and research participants must be protected at all times.

### Candidates and participants under age of 18

- Permission should always be gained from:
  - parents (in all cases)
  - the young person themselves (in all cases)
  - teachers and lecturers or carers (when research is outside the home).
- Candidates should be made aware of the potential for influencing children and young people. They must not therefore involve under 18s in any research topic that is either illegal or age restricted, eg drug use, alcohol, smoking, violent or sexually explicit material, or sexual activity.
- ♦ It is difficult to gain informed consent from young children so research must stop if there is any sign of distress or discomfort.

### **Brief outline of BSA ethical practice**

- Sociological research is intended to contribute to the wellbeing of society.
- Researchers must safeguard those involved in research and those affected by it.
- Report findings accurately and truthfully.
- Consider effects and consequences of the work.
- Researchers should not carry out work they are not qualified to do, eg asking questions
  of a personal nature that may cause distress unless trained to offer support.
- Research must be worthwhile.
- Methods should be appropriate.
- Researchers should clearly state the limits on their detachment from the topic or those involved.

- Researchers should keep safe and not take risks.
- Participants must not have their wellbeing compromised physically, socially or psychologically.
- Privacy and human rights should be protected.
- There should be awareness of disparities of power.
- ◆ Trust and integrity must be maintained.
- Freely given consent should be obtained.
- Participants should be told that they have a right to stop at any time or to refuse from the outset.
- Anonymity, privacy and confidentially must be maintained where possible.
- Participants can refuse to be recorded on film, audio or video.
- ♦ Particular care should be given to children in research consent from both child and parent and/or caregiver must be sought.
- ♦ Covert research should be avoided where possible. If necessary, permissions must be granted after the event.
- Social and cultural diversity must be respected.

### Suggested guidelines for good practice

- Discuss ethics before work begins. Some good and bad examples can be helpful.
- Check research plans before candidates start work on a project.
- Create a checklist for candidates' research plans. This has the added benefit of training candidates in proper research protocol.
- Review candidates' work regularly.
- Encourage discussion of ethical issues in the report.

# Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Course planners should identify opportunities throughout the course for candidates to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

Candidates should be aware of the skills they are developing and teachers and lecturers can provide advice on opportunities to practise and improve them.

SQA does not formally assess skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

There may also be opportunities to develop additional skills depending on approaches being used to deliver the course in each centre. This is for individual teachers and lecturers to manage.

Skills for lea	Skills for learning, skills for life, and skills for work		
1 Literacy	,	Opportunities in learning and teaching	
1.3 Listening	g and talking	Candidates develop the skill of listening, which means the ability to understand and interpret ideas, opinions and information presented orally by other people.  They also develop skills and confidence in talking, which involves their ability to orally communicate their ideas,	
		opinions and information, such as contributing and listening to a discussion of a social issue such as poverty, or contributing to a presentation on cultural diversity.	
3 Health a	nd wellbeing	Opportunities in learning and teaching	
3.1 Personal	l learning	Candidates develop their ability to be actively engaged in their learning. They develop skills in planning their learning and sourcing information through investigating topics in which they may personally have an interest.	
		They also begin to develop the skills of thinking constructively, reflecting on their learning, and learning from experience. This is likely to be particularly relevant in the learning contexts of the social issues and culture and identity sections.	

4	Employability, enterprise and citizenship	Opportunities in learning and teaching		
4.6	Citizenship	This course provides a range of opportunities to reflect on ways in which citizenship includes having concern about our social world and those who live within it.		
		The course provides opportunities for candidates to understand more about rights and responsibilities; to develop an awareness of democracy; to become outward-looking towards society while being able to recognise one's personal role in this context.		
		Studying topics related to social and cultural diversity, and developing an understanding of the concept of ethnocentrism, provides candidates with an opportunity to reflect on their social world in a different and better informed way.		
5	Thinking skills	Opportunities in learning and teaching		
5.3	Applying	Applying may involve the ability to use existing information to plan, organise and complete a task in a different context. In the context of this course, candidates are provided with a range of opportunities to develop this skill.  This could include using sociological theories and, with support, interpreting information from secondary sources to investigate and explain a particular social issue.		
		investigate and explain a particular social issue.		
5.4	Analysing and evaluating	Analysing and evaluating involves the ability to identify and weigh-up the features of a situation or issue and to use judgement in coming to a conclusion. It includes reviewing and considering any potential solutions.		
		Opportunities for candidates to develop and demonstrate this skill in this course include when they review and evaluate a range of research methods used in sociology, and the ways in which different sociological theories explain a particular social issue.		

There may be opportunities to extend the range of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. For example:

Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work					
1 Literacy	Opportunities in learning and teaching				
1.1 Reading	Through their reading and examination of sources of primary and secondary research, candidates begin to develop skills in understanding and interpreting ideas, opinions and information presented in textual form. They begin to develop skills in handling information, begin to make reasoned and informed decisions, such as making an informed judgement on whether an article on homelessness presented a biased viewpoint.				
1.2 Writing	Candidates develop the ability to produce texts which communicate ideas, opinions and information. This could be a written account comparing structural and action perspectives, or a written summary describing agents of socialisation.				
3 Health and wellbeing	Opportunities in learning and teaching				
3.5 Relationships	Throughout the course candidates could be encouraged to work effectively as part of a group. This helps develop various types of social and working relationships, and provides opportunities to practise a range of interpersonal skills.  Opportunities to show respect and a sense of care for self and others are plentiful throughout the course — much of the learning and teaching in sociology provides candidates with opportunities to consider their own and others' experiences of life, and to appreciate the importance of respecting the heritage and cultural identity of others.				

## **Appendix 2: glossary**

This glossary clarifies the meaning of terms used in this course specification.

Note: the meaning of terms differ across disciplines and levels. This glossary is designed for National 5 Sociology.

**Action perspective:** a perspective is a group of theories which share some similar characteristics to form an overall way of viewing society. The action perspective takes a micro sociological approach and explains society in a 'bottom up' way, ie by considering the meaning placed on symbols, actions, words and social events. It tends to emphasise the individual's ability to control their own actions and to be influenced by personal interpretation or meaning. The action perspective believes that individuals can control and influence institutions in society.

**Agents of socialisation:** the family is the main agent of primary socialisation, where an infant learns the basics of social behaviour, eg eating, toileting, dressing and cleanliness. Secondary agents of socialisation include education, peer groups, religious organisations, the media and work places.

**Common-sense explanations:** explanations that come from a personal or shared understanding of social behaviour rather than from sociological evidence. Common-sense explanations include naturalistic and individualistic explanations.

- ◆ Naturalistic explanations: explanations of behaviour that claim that there is a natural or normal way to behave, eg it is only natural that men and women fall in love and marry.
- Individualistic explanations: social behaviour and particularly social problems are caused by individual traits, eg poverty is caused by laziness, stupidity or failure to work hard in school.

**Cultural diversity:** the presence of a variety of cultures and subcultures co-existing in society. Respecting and valuing cultural diversity is the opposite of ethnocentrism.

**Culture:** beliefs, behaviours and shared characteristics of a society. Cultural aspects include music, literature, styles or modes of dress, behaviour, rules, institutions (eg family, religion, work, and health care), language, values and norms.

**Data:** evidence gathered by undertaking research.

**Ethnocentrism:** the tendency to judge other cultures and norms based on one's own cultural system, making the assumption that one's own culture is normal or superior and others are strange, wrong or inferior.

**Identity:** in sociology, identity refers to distinctive characteristics belonging to an individual (which can be shared with others in group identities). It describes a person's sense of group affiliation, eg national identity, gender identity or class identity. Identity is formed through socialisation.

**Micro and macro perspectives:** generally, action perspectives take a micro (small scale) view of society and structural perspectives take a macro (large scale) view.

**Norms:** rules of behaviour and ideas that are considered normal within a particular culture or subculture. Norms tend to reflect the values of the group.

**Power:** the ability to control ones environment and the behaviour of others. Power can be held in a range of ways, eg gender power, roles that hold authority, personal charisma, social class, expertise, moral or religious persuasion, and force.

**Primary sources:** data collected by the researcher and their team using research methods.

Qualitative data: data that is descriptive of people's experiences or feelings.

**Quantitative data:** data that is numerical or that can be counted and presented in numerical format.

**Reliability:** the likelihood that the same or very similar results would be gained if the research was replicated.

**Research methods:** recognised means of gathering data. Types of research method include: participant and non-participant observation, structured and unstructured interviews, official statistics and questionnaires.

**Roles:** a set of expected behaviours and actions based on a particular social position or status. Individuals normally have a number of different social roles that demand different behaviours or attitudes. We become adept at moving from one role to another over the course of days and throughout a lifetime, eg a woman may be a mother, sister, daughter, teacher, manager, consumer, team member, committee member and friend. In each of these roles she will behave differently and will shift from one to another without difficulty.

**Secondary sources:** information not personally collected by the researcher.

**Socialisation:** the process by which individuals learn the norms and values of their culture and expected behaviours within these norms. There are various agencies of socialisation at work in this process.

**Sociological approach:** in contrast to common-sense explanations of the social world, the sociological approach uses sociological research and theory to explain the social world.

**Sources:** information relevant to the given topic. These can be selected from media articles, books, diaries, government records, official documents and sociological studies.

**Structural perspective:** a perspective is a group of theories which share some similar characteristics to form an overall way of viewing society. The structural perspective takes a macro sociological approach and explains society in a 'top down' way, ie by considering the structures in society and their interaction with individuals and groups in society. It tends to emphasise the degree to which individuals' actions are shaped by institutions in society.

**Subculture:** a group of people sharing a set of norms, values and beliefs within a mainstream culture. Subcultures will share some of the norms and values of the dominant culture and differ in others.

**Theories:** theories in sociology explain social behaviour and the social world. Theories are tested by using sociological research and scholarly debate.

Validity: the extent to which the study measures or investigates what it claims to.

Values: shared ideas within a culture or subculture about what is right, good, fair and just.

## **Administrative information**

Published: September 2017 (version 2.0)

## History of changes to course specification

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Course support notes added as appendix.	September 2017

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