



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period

Unit code: FK7V 34

Superclass: DB

Publication date: October 2012

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 02

Unit purpose

This unit aims to develop skills in evaluating and interpreting data from **one** of the following specified periods:

- ◆ Scottish Society 1660-1789
- ◆ British Social and Economic History 1750-1850
- ◆ Modern Europe 1789-1870
- ◆ Medieval British History 597-1188
- ◆ History of the Gaels: Earliest times
- ◆ Modern British History 1485-1603
- ◆ 20th Century Europe 1900-1929
- ◆ Ireland 1780-1850
- ◆ The Middle East 1914-1948

NB There should be no unnecessary overlap in content, either within or between Units.

It is intended for candidates who have a general interest in history as well as those who would use it as the basis for further study.

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

- 1 Explain the main developments associated with a specific situation, or a particular event, or series of events.
- 2 Reach a measured conclusion on an issue or event(s).

General information (cont)

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 History through units and National Qualifications at SCQF Levels 5 or 6, or other similar qualifications, is desirable but not essential.

Ultimately, entry is at the discretion of the centre.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**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.*

Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication* at SCQF level 6, and *Information and Communication Technology* 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.

Assessment

This Unit will be holistically assessed by a single instrument of assessment covering all Unit Outcomes. Whilst this is one assessment, flexibility is allowed to break this down into structured questions. This will take the form of an open book assessment.

An exemplar instrument of assessment and marking guidelines has been produced to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 7.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period

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

Outcome 1

Explain the main developments associated with a specific situation, or a particular event, or series of events.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Selection of historical period
- ◆ Identification of situation or event(s)
- ◆ Context of situation or event(s)
- ◆ Main developments

Outcome 2

Reach a measured conclusion on an issue or event(s)

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ How to make use of sources
- ◆ Different interpretations/viewpoints of issues or event(s) using primary and secondary source
- ◆ How to reach a valid conclusion using primary and secondary sources

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period

Evidence Requirements for Outcomes 1 and 2

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

- ◆ Identify the situation or event(s)
- ◆ Relate the situation or event(s) to the historical period
- ◆ Explain the main development of a specific situation or event(s)
- ◆ Set issue or event(s) within a chronological framework
- ◆ Explain different interpretations/viewpoints of issue or event(s)
- ◆ Draw a valid conclusion
- ◆ Explain different interpretations/viewpoints of issue or event(s) using primary and secondary sources
- ◆ Reach a valid conclusion using primary and secondary sources

This Unit will be holistically assessed by a single open book instrument of assessment covering all Unit Outcomes. Candidates should be given the task at an appropriate point of delivery of the Unit.

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.

Assessment Guidelines

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

This assessment could take the form of an open book essay *or* structured questions with an expected candidate response of approximately 1500 words *or* an individual oral presentation *or* a poster exhibition with expected candidate's response of 10 to 12 minutes in presentation or explanation of a poster *or* any other method that is appropriate to meet the evidence requirements. Candidates could also provide 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 candidates could use a poster for Outcome 1 and an oral presentation for Outcome 2 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.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period

Tutors should make candidates aware of the importance of the judicious selection of appropriate academic sources.

NB It is important that language used in the assessment instrument reflects SCQF level 7 in each type of task.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period

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 one of a suite of units that covers History within the HNC/D Social Science Group Awards. This unit prepares candidates for *History B: Analysing Topics within a Historical Period*. This unit can be taught as a free-standing unit or as part of the HNC/D Social Science Group Awards.

The aim of this Unit is to provide an interesting and engaging introduction to history, and can be used as a foundation to subsequent units.

Only **one** of the specified topics should be covered.

The choice of periods provided allows lecturers to work within areas of specialism, and at the same time offers candidates the opportunity of exploring past events in a format that is engaging and interesting. For example, the topic Scottish Society 1660-1789 could be selected to allow candidates to explore the changing face of Scotland and the effects these changes were to have on its people.

History is the study of the past, and historical knowledge presents candidates with a clearer understanding of the world we live in. There is an opportunity within this topic to present a backdrop to the development of the social sciences by introducing learners to the rationalism of the Enlightenment which was to influence agrarian, industrial, political and scientific changes. Exploring and identifying the mammoth social impact these revolutions had on society at this time, will also allow candidates to link this knowledge to other social science subjects such as sociology, geography, economics and/or philosophy, and perhaps offer them a clearer understanding of these areas. After all, can we truly understand society today if we have no understanding of the past?

The debate surrounding the Treaty of Union 1707 could be considered for Outcome 1, *Explain the main developments associated with a specific situation, or a particular event, or series of events*. This topic would immediately highlight to candidates that history is not simply a narrative, but rather candidates will be encouraged to examine and explain various pieces of evidence and interpretations before reaching a conclusion.

Equally, for Outcome 2, *reach a measured conclusion on an issue or event(s)*, the development in the Highlands throughout this period could allow candidates to weigh up whether changes to Highland society could be attributed more to a reaction against Jacobitism than to commercialism. A measured conclusion could be reached by drawing on and evaluating both arguments.

A questioning approach should be encouraged at all times as it leads candidates to think like social scientists and be analytical and enquiring, rather than passively accepting facts. This empowers candidates by building on essential, transferable skills.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

The delivery of this Unit should be candidate-centred, and the lecturer should ensure that teaching methods are employed that will fully engage all candidates with the topic. Candidates should be encouraged to develop an enquiring mind. Primary and secondary sources should be introduced, highlighting different explanations/interpretations of a topic, thereby allowing candidates to develop their analytical and evaluative skills.

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.

Assessment will be one holistic, open book, instrument of assessment covering Outcomes 1 and 2.

Centres should design an appropriate assessment instrument based on a method that is suitable in allowing candidates to meet the evidence requirements. This can be written or oral (depending on the needs of the candidates and the organisational aspects for the Centre in choosing particular methods). If an oral method is chosen, it is recommended that Centres should record this (either by DVD or digital recorder, etc) or provide assessor notes on the presentation for External Verification purposes. Oral presentations (or poster exhibitions) must be done individually as each candidate has to show evidence of meeting all evidence requirements, so a group presentation would not be suitable.

If the Centre is using a Blog or creation of a website as the way to gather evidence, this should not be in the public domain. Rather it should be on an intranet or private area of a VLE to reduce the likelihood of plagiarism. 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 7 in the presentation.

A Centre can choose a mixture of methods across a cohort, as it may be more suitable for some candidates to give a written response and for others to use an oral method.

Centres should make sure they can authenticate a candidate's work. This may be done by questioning a candidate about their work, by seeing drafts of work under construction, by having partial write-up in presence of assessor or by using an anti-plagiarism tool, such as Turnitin or SafeAssign, which checks Internet sites.

Remediation 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. If it is thought appropriate that a candidate tackle a different topic or question, then that new submission would count as a reassessment.

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 (eg where the quality of evidence is poor in a presentation) another presentation of the same duration, on the same topic or question as the original would be required. Only where a different topic or question is attempted would this be classed as reassessment.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may contribute towards the development of Core Skills of *Communication* and *Information and Communication Technology*. 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 SCQF level 6 if the assessment takes the form of an essay 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 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 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, without being formally assessed for certification of Core Skills. The task of evaluating and interpreting data from a specified period is complex and therefore should easily fit with SCQF level 6.

It is important to develop essay-writing skills for candidates' future progression. In doing this candidates should also be encouraged to use an appropriate referencing method, such as Harvard, for any formative or summative essays. Referencing, citation and bibliography skills are best developed using the vehicle of formative essay writing. It is part of the summative assessment to have an appropriate bibliography submitted in a standard referencing format.

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 evaluating and interpreting data from a specified period, which 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 the Centre is able to give a choice).

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period

As it is important that candidates submit a bibliography (or reference section) in a standard format, such as Harvard, for the summative assessment, even oral assessment methods should incorporate an appropriate bibliography.

For the Core Skill of Information and Communication Technology at SCQF level 5 the skills are: 'Accessing Information, use ICT independently, effectively, and responsibly to access information within a range of tasks' and 'Providing/Creating Information, use ICT independently, effectively, and responsibly to carry out a range of processing 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 text books.

Curriculum for Excellence

The Curriculum for Excellence aspires to place learners at the centre of the curriculum and develop their capacities as Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors. The four capacities will be developed throughout this Unit.

This unit will develop the literacy and communication skills of the learners by way of formative and summative assessments. Independent learning is required throughout this unit, whilst the opportunity is available for group learning through formative tasks. The subject of history demands independent thinking, and through reasoned evaluation allows learners to reach satisfactory conclusions. Further opportunity is offered to develop technological skills by way of researching via the internet, the production of word documents, powerpoint presentations, blogs and/or the creation of a website. Collectively these skills contribute towards the creation of a **Successful Learner**.

Time management skills should improve during the delivery of this Unit, as should the ability to relate to others through formative tasks. The topics in History A should allow the learner to develop their own thoughts of the world around them, and they will be given the opportunity to express these views within the classroom setting. This should lend to the emergence of a **Confident Individual**, particularly if they gain success in the achievement of the Unit.

History A can also contribute to learners becoming **Responsible Citizens** by allowing the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of the world, and Scotland's place in it. Furthermore, informed, ethical views of complex issues can be developed, as can an understanding of different cultures.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period

Learners can become **Effective Contributors** to society by learning to work together effectively in teams within the class setting. This can be achieved through group-work where they can apply critical thinking within new contexts. In planning group tasks, evaluating data and presenting their findings, learners will also develop problem solving skills. Both oral and written communication skills will also be developed. This can be achieved through written work, individual powerpoint presentations, and the creation of blogs and websites.

All these skills are achievable within the Unit.

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by open or distance learning; however, it would require planning by the centre to ensure sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence.

A written response in the form of an essay or answers to structured questions could be posted or emailed to the assessor or uploaded onto a VLE. An oral presentation could be used that would be recorded on DVD and sent to the assessor, or could be done using video-conferencing or web-link and observed by the assessor.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Clarification of remediation and reassessment.	16/10/12

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General information for candidates

Unit title: History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period

This Unit aims to introduce you to the study of history by focusing on **one** specified historical period. Within the Unit you will discover how to examine and explain major developments within human societies and the impact they have had. You will also learn how to weigh up various interpretations/explanations surrounding the topic, and be taught to reach a valid conclusion from this. Throughout this unit you will be encouraged to develop an enquiring mind and skills of evaluation.

At the end of the Unit you will be assessed by way of one open book assessment covering Outcomes 1 and 2. The assessment may be a written essay of approximately 1500 words, *or* could be broken down into a set of structured questions with an overall response of approximately 1500 words, *or* an oral presentation of 10 to 12 minutes, *or* a poster exhibition with an oral explanation of 10 to 12 minutes, *or* another method decided by your centre. Your centre will inform you of the chosen method, which will be open book. This means that you will be allowed access to materials (e.g. text books, notes, VLE).

As you progress through the Unit material, you will be encouraged to develop the Core Skills of *Communication* at SCQF level 6 and *Information and Communication Technology* at SCQF level 5 by the types of activities you will experience.

You will also be given opportunities throughout the Unit to develop as a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor.