



Higher National Unit specification: general information

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the HND in Social Sciences. Centres are required to develop the assessment instrument in accordance with this validated specification. Centres wishing to use another type of Graded Unit or assessment instrument are required to submit proposals detailing the justification for change for validation.

Graded Unit title: Social Sciences: Graded Unit 3

Graded Unit code: FM6A 35

Type of Graded Unit: Examination

Assessment Instrument: Closed-book

Publication date: July 2012

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 02

Unit purpose

This Graded Unit is designed to provide evidence that the candidate has achieved the following principal aims of the HND in Social Sciences:

- ◆ develop an in-depth understanding of different social science disciplines
- ◆ develop a comprehensive understanding of the contribution of social sciences to the modern world and human behaviour
- ◆ demonstrate that by combining perspectives from more than one subject, particular themes or aspects of human behaviour can be examined, explained and thereby understood in a more comprehensive manner
- ◆ develop an open-minded, critical and evaluative approach to study
- ◆ develop examination techniques
- ◆ gain knowledge and understanding of different research issues
- ◆ analyse and evaluate competing views, perspectives, theories and evidence in a minimum of two subjects to enable the candidate to adopt a comprehensive social scientific approach
- ◆ develop skills in managing and prioritising information

General information (continued)

It is intended for candidates who wish to test their ability to integrate what they have learned while working towards the Units of the Group Award. Their purpose is to add value to the Group Award, making it more than the sum of its parts, and to encourage candidates to retain and adapt their skills and knowledge.

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

- 1 Achieve an HND in Social Sciences, assuming the successful completion of all other required units.
- 2 Articulate into an appropriate undergraduate programme.
- 3 Enter the field of employment with a recognised and valued qualification.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

It is recommended that the candidate should have completed or be in the process of completing the following Units relating to these specific aims prior to undertaking this Graded Unit:

- ◆ Social Science: Research Issues
- ◆ Sociology C: Analysing and Evaluating Sociological Debates
- ◆ Sociology D: Specialist Study

and a minimum of 3 credits from the following units:

- ◆ Economics C: Applied Economics - The Global Perspective
- ◆ Economics D: Economics Today
- ◆ Geography C: Environmental Geography
- ◆ Geography D: Geography Today
- ◆ History C: Evaluating Topics within a Historical Period
- ◆ History D: Specialist Study
- ◆ Philosophy C: An Introduction to Logical Analysis
- ◆ Philosophy D: Normative Ethics
- ◆ Politics C: The United States and the European Union
- ◆ Politics D: Political Representation
- ◆ Psychology C: Analysis and Evaluation of Psychological Topics
- ◆ Psychology D: The Research Process in Psychology

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit 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.*

General information (continued)

Core Skills

There are no Core Skills embedded in this Graded Unit specification.

Assessment

This examination-based Graded Unit is closed-book. It will consist of **three questions** in a written examination of three hours' duration. The use of notes, textbooks, handouts and other materials will not be permitted. The questions relating to research and methodology and social science disciplines should provide the candidate with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of the Group Award. The examination is generally reflective of the Group Award.

In undertaking this closed-book examination candidates should:

- ◆ demonstrate achievement of the aims of the Group Award covered by this Graded Unit
- ◆ indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 8

It is recommended that close attention is paid to the Exemplar for this unit to assist in the design of the assessment, getting it prior verified and then using and marking the assessment.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates

Graded Unit title: Social Sciences: Graded Unit 3

Conditions of assessment

This examination-based Graded Unit is closed-book. It will consist of **three unseen questions** in a written examination of three hours' duration. The assessment must be invigilated. The use of notes, textbooks, handouts and other materials will not be permitted. The questions relating to research and methodology and social science disciplines should provide the candidate with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of the Group Award. The examination is generally reflective of the Group Award.

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

If a candidate does not achieve a pass or if a candidate wishes to upgrade, this must be based on a significantly different examination from that given originally. A candidate's grade will be based on his/her achievement on the new assessment event using a significantly different examination, if this results in a higher grade.

The examination should be unseen and the assessment should be conducted in controlled and invigilated conditions.

Should a candidate not complete all three questions, yet still achieve an overall passing grade, this will stand as a "pass" at the grade achieved in the examination.

At all times, the security, integrity and confidentiality of examinations must be ensured.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Graded Unit title: Social Sciences: Graded Unit 3

Instructions for designing the assessment task

The examination should be designed to assess the candidate's critical knowledge and understanding of the topics relating to the specific aims which this Graded Unit is designed to cover. The questions and corresponding marks should be designed in accordance with the ranges indicated in the table that follows. However, the overall total mark for the examination is 100.

Questions:

- ◆ Candidates will be required to answer three questions
- ◆ One question will be drawn from an understanding of Social Science: Research Issues
- ◆ The other two questions will relate to two different social science disciplines from the C and/or D Units. It is expected that there will be a number of questions for candidates to choose from – one from each of the Social Sciences Units C and D combinations delivered at the centre.
- ◆ Each question must relate to a different topic
- ◆ The chosen questions will not replicate questions covered in the specific C and D Units
- ◆ Examination questions should be changed on each assessment occasion and each session.

Key topics	Level of demand	Percentage weighting for each topic
<p>First question</p> <p>The questions will relate to: Social Science: Research Issues</p>	<p>Discussion relevant to the topic and question set.</p> <p>Ability to highlight the debates about research issues within the social sciences.</p> <p>NB Question will not directly duplicate questions set in assessment for Research Issues Unit.</p> <p>Explanation, analysis, evaluation and an ability to draw valid conclusions.</p>	<p>40 marks</p> <p>Knowledge and Understanding — <i>25 marks</i></p> <p>Evaluation and Conclusion — <i>15 marks</i></p> <p>(See below for range and descriptions of marks/grades)</p>

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Graded Unit title: Social Sciences: Graded Unit 3

Key topics	Level of demand	Percentage weighting for each topic
<p>Second question</p> <p>Answer a question chosen from any one of the following Social Science disciplines that has been presented in the Centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Economics C/D ◆ Geography C/D ◆ History C/D ◆ Philosophy C/D ◆ Politics C/D ◆ Psychology C/D ◆ Sociology C/D <p>NB The candidate must choose a different discipline to third question.</p>	<p>Discussion relevant to the discipline, topic and question set.</p> <p>In depth discipline knowledge applied to this question.</p> <p>Use of relevant terminology.</p> <p>NB Question will not directly duplicate questions set in assessment in any of these Units.</p> <p>Centre may choose specific disciplines for candidate responses, according to centre requirements/resources.</p> <p>Explanation, analysis, evaluation and an ability to draw valid conclusions.</p>	<p>30 marks</p> <p>Knowledge and Understanding — <i>18 marks</i></p> <p>Evaluation and Conclusion — <i>12 marks</i></p> <p>(See below for range and descriptions of marks/grades).</p>

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Graded Unit title: Social Sciences: Graded Unit 3

Key topics	Level of demand	Percentage weighting for each topic
<p>Third question</p> <p>Answer a question chosen from any one of the following Social Science disciplines that has been presented in the centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Economics C/D ◆ Geography C/D ◆ History C/D ◆ Philosophy C/D ◆ Politics C/D ◆ Psychology C/D ◆ Sociology C/D <p>NB The candidate must choose a different discipline to second question.</p>	<p>Discussion relevant to the discipline, topic and question set.</p> <p>In depth discipline knowledge applied to this question.</p> <p>Use of relevant terminology.</p> <p>NB Question will not directly duplicate questions set in assessment in any of these Units.</p> <p>Centre may choose specific disciplines for candidate responses, according to centre requirements/resources.</p> <p>Explanation, analysis, evaluation and an ability to draw valid conclusions.</p>	<p>30 marks</p> <p>Knowledge and Understanding — <i>18 marks</i></p> <p>Evaluation and Conclusion — <i>12 marks</i></p> <p>(See below for range and descriptions of marks/grades).</p>

The examination will be marked out of 100. Assessors will aggregate the marks achieved by the candidate to arrive at an overall mark for the examination. Assessors will then assign a grade to the candidate for this Graded Unit based on the following grade boundaries:

- ◆ A = 70%–100%
- ◆ B = 60%–69%
- ◆ C = 50%–59%

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Graded Unit title: Social Sciences: Graded Unit 3

Guidance on grading candidates

Candidates who meet the minimum Evidence Requirements will have their achievement graded as a C (competent), A (highly competent), or B (somewhere between A and C). The grade related criteria to be used to judge candidate performance for this Graded Unit is specified in the following table:

Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work or exam script which consistently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Broad knowledge of scope and main areas of discipline will be relevant. ◆ Answers will be consistently good and strength of evaluation and analysis will be demonstrated within questions, with complex information conveyed appropriately. ◆ Terminology used will be appropriate to the topic and disciplines. ◆ Accurate technical coverage will be well integrated with explanation. ◆ Shows understanding of a limited range of theories, principles and concepts. ◆ Evaluation and analysis eg looking at strengths and weaknesses and weighing up different sides of an argument. ◆ Evaluation and critical analysis will be relevant to the question, topic and discipline. ◆ There will be clearly drawn conclusions that are closely integrated with the discussion in each answer. 	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work or exam script which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Broad knowledge of scope and main areas of development may be vague and non-central. ◆ Answers may be uneven within each question, although it is expected that complex information will be present. ◆ Terminology may be relevant but vague. ◆ Likely to have more technical coverage from rote learning ◆ Shows an uneven understanding of theories, principles and concepts ◆ Evaluation and analysis eg looking at strengths and weaknesses and weighing up different sides of an argument. ◆ Evaluation and analysis will tend towards 'learned' strengths and weaknesses. ◆ Conclusions drawn may be tentative and may only relate vaguely to the discussion.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Graded Unit title: Social Sciences: Graded Unit 3

Guidance on grading candidates (cont)

Candidate answers should be qualitatively stronger in each grade category than answers expected in the respective grade categories for *Social Sciences: Graded Unit 1* in order to reflect the level. This would include higher levels of analysis and evaluation and stronger integration of the topic to the discipline. The application of approaches or theories, etc. will also be better integrated with the discussion than could be expected at SCQF level 7.

Open learning

The preparation for the Examination may be undertaken by open or distance learning. The Examination itself would need to be undertaken under the approved conditions and invigilated in a designated centre.

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

Support notes

This Unit is intended for candidates who wish to test their ability to integrate what they have learned while working towards the Units of the Group Award. Much of your time in this unit will be taken up in preparation for the exam both in revising the material covered in the relevant Social Sciences units and also in improving the candidates' examination technique. It is recommended that those delivering this unit speak to their colleagues to discuss what topics have been covered in the units studied by the candidates and how they should best approach answering questions in the various social sciences disciplines.

Centres are strongly advised to get their examination and resit papers, along with marking guidelines in the prescribed format (see exemplar), prior verified if they are proposing to use papers that do not already have SQA approval. This will ensure that no fault is found with the papers if scrutinised at Central Verification.

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 social sciences demand independent thinking and through reasoned evaluation encourage learners to reach satisfactory conclusions. Further opportunity is offered to develop technological skills by way of researching via the internet. 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 preparation required for the Examination in Graded Unit 3 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.

Graded Unit 3 can also contribute to learners becoming **Responsible Citizens** by allowing the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of why people behave the way they do. Furthermore, informed, ethical views of complex issues can be developed, as can an understanding of different cultures.

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, and oral presentations and discussions. All these skills can be developed within the Unit.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Recommended Prior Knowledge and Skills has been amended.	17/07/12

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General information for candidates

Graded Unit title: Social Sciences: Graded Unit 3

This Unit is intended to test your ability to integrate what you have learned while working towards the Units of the Group Award. Much of your time in this unit will be taken up in preparation for the exam both in revising the material covered in the relevant Social Sciences units and also in improving your examination technique.

The examination itself will be closed book, invigilated and of three hours' duration. The examination paper will contain one compulsory unseen question based on the Research Issues unit and a number of other unseen questions covering the Social Sciences C and D units which have been delivered by your centre. You will be required to attempt two of the remaining questions. After marking, candidates who pass the examination will be awarded a grade – A, B or C.

There will be opportunity, if you fail, to resit an examination with a different set of questions. Candidates wishing to improve their grade may also choose to attempt the resit examination.

This unit is one of the units within the mandatory core of the HND Social Sciences award and must be achieved before gaining the award. The grade achieved in this unit may determine articulation opportunities into undergraduate programmes.

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.