



Higher
Course
Specification



Higher Politics Course Specification (C758 76)

Valid from August 2014

This edition: April 2015, version 2.0

This specification may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged. Additional copies of this Course Specification can be downloaded from SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2015

Course outline

Course title: Higher Politics

SCQF: level 6 (24 SCQF credit points)

Course code: C758 76

Mandatory Units

H4L2 76	Politics: Political Theory (Higher)	6 SCQF credit points
H4L3 76	Politics: Political Systems (Higher)	6 SCQF credit points
H4L4 76	Politics: Political Parties and Elections (Higher)	6 SCQF credit points

Course assessment **6 SCQF credit points**

This Course includes six SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course. Further information on the Course assessment is provided in the Assessment section.

Recommended entry

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ National 5 social subjects or social science Courses

Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ Advanced Higher Modern Studies Course or its component Units
- ◆ further study, employment and/or training

Further details are provided in the Rationale section.

Equality and inclusion

This Course Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information, please refer to the *Course/Unit Support Notes*.

Rationale

All new and revised 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.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles

The Higher Politics Course builds upon the principles and practices for the social studies curriculum area.

The Higher Politics Course will encourage learners to develop important attitudes, including an open mind and respect for the values, beliefs and cultures of others, openness to new thinking and ideas, and a sense of responsibility and global citizenship.

This Course contributes to learners' understanding of society by helping them to develop an understanding of political theory, political systems in the UK, international contexts and the factors affecting the electoral performance of political parties. This sense of political understanding will, in turn, assist them in participating as effective contributors to society and responsible citizens within that society, as well as giving them more individual confidence in their learning and working lives. By studying this Course, learners are enabled to develop the four capacities. Politics will develop successful learners by extending their horizons and knowledge of political life and challenging them to look at the world in new ways. Learners become confident by developing a critical awareness of the nature of politics and the relationship between political theories, systems and parties.

Learners will build up a framework of political knowledge and understanding that will help them develop a sense of responsible citizenship. They will become effective contributors who, through the knowledge and understanding gained from research and critical thinking activities carried out individually and in groups, will develop attributes that will be important for their life and work. Interpreting, evaluating and commenting on political issues will develop thinking skills. Learners will progressively develop skills in literacy and numeracy.

Purpose and aims of the Course

The purpose of this Course is to develop the learner's knowledge and understanding of how different political ideologies, systems and parties resolve the timeless pursuit of power, authority and legitimacy. Its theoretical perspective enables learners to identify, explore and analyse political issues in order to develop their own views and perspectives. This purpose will be achieved through successful study of the three Units. The Course will develop investigating, analysing and evaluating skills to help learners to interpret and understand political issues.

Politics makes a distinctive contribution to the curriculum by its study of important political concepts and ideologies, the comparison of different political systems and the evaluation of the factors that impact on the electoral performance of political parties.

The main aims of the Higher Politics Course are to enable learners to develop:

- ◆ a range of research and evaluating skills
- ◆ the ability to analyse political ideas, events, issues, systems, parties and electoral performance
- ◆ knowledge and understanding of significant political concepts and ideologies
- ◆ knowledge and understanding of political systems through comparative study
- ◆ knowledge and understanding of political parties and elections

Information about typical learners who might do the Course

This Course is appropriate for a wide range of learners, from those who wish to achieve a greater understanding of politics in order to engage as active and informed members of society, to learners who wish to progress to more specialised training or higher education or employment.

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, it may be beneficial for learners to have the skills and knowledge required by a social studies or social science National 5 Course or equivalent qualifications.

Through the successful completion of this Course learners will develop a range of important and transferrable skills, including researching political issues, synthesising information from a wide range of sources to produce detailed and balanced conclusions, explaining and evaluating political concepts, comparing and contrasting political systems, and interpreting and evaluating electoral data.

Politics Units and Courses are offered at SCQF level 6. Vertical and lateral progression is possible through other qualifications in the social studies suite of Courses.

This Course provides an entry qualification for study in further and higher education and for entry into a diverse range of occupations and careers.

Course structure and conditions of award

Course structure

This Course develops a range of cognitive skills. It encourages active learning through which learners will acquire and apply relevant skills, knowledge and understanding. Through using a wide range of sources of information learners will develop investigating, evaluating and analysing skills in order to understand and explain complex political issues.

By undertaking this Course, learners will develop a wide range of important and transferable skills, including researching political issues, synthesising information from a wide range of sources to produce detailed and balanced conclusions, explaining, analysing and evaluating political concepts, comparing and contrasting political systems, and interpreting and evaluating electoral data.

The skills listed above will be developed and applied over a range of political contexts in the component Units. Each Unit also offers opportunities to focus on particular skills.

The Higher Politics Course has three mandatory Units. Within each Unit there is a considerable degree of flexibility in the contexts that can be studied to allow personalisation and choice.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a number of ways.

The principles above will be applied in the following Units.

Politics: Political Theory (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will use a range of sources of information to evaluate different political ideologies and political concepts. They will draw on theoretical and conceptual knowledge and understanding of political ideologies and political concepts.

Politics: Political Systems (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will use a range of sources of information to compare different political systems. They will draw on knowledge and understanding of different political systems.

Politics: Political Parties and Elections (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will analyse a range of electoral data to evaluate factors which contribute to the electoral performance of UK political parties. They will draw on knowledge and understanding of the complex factors that contribute to the electoral performance of UK political parties.

Conditions of award

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all of the Units as well as the Course assessment. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Further information about skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course is given in the *Course Assessment Specification*. A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course is given in this section. This covers:

- ◆ researching, analysing, evaluating and synthesising information from a wide range of political sources
- ◆ using a wide range of sources of information to draw detailed and balanced conclusions about political concepts and ideologies
- ◆ comparing and contrasting different political systems, making generalisations, where appropriate, on the political process
- ◆ interpreting and evaluating a wide range of electoral data
- ◆ draw on factual and conceptual knowledge of political theory, political systems and political parties and elections

Skills, knowledge and understanding to be included in the Course will be 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.sqa.org.uk/scqf).

Assessment

Information about assessment for the Course is included in the *Course Assessment Specification*, which provides full details including advice on how a learner's overall attainment for the Course will be determined.

Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the *Unit Specification*.

They can be assessed on a Unit-by-Unit basis or by combined assessment.

They will be assessed on a pass/fail basis within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgments are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows:

Politics: Political Theory (Higher)

The learner will be required to provide evidence of the ability to:

- ◆ use a range of sources of information to evaluate different political ideologies or political concepts
- ◆ draw on theoretical and conceptual knowledge and understanding of political ideologies or political concepts

Politics: Political Systems (Higher)

The learner will be required to provide evidence of the ability to:

- ◆ use a range of sources of information to compare different political systems
- ◆ draw on knowledge and understanding of different political systems

Politics: Political Parties and Elections (Higher)

The learner will be required to provide evidence of the ability to:

- ◆ use a range of electoral data to evaluate factors which contribute to the electoral performance of UK political parties
- ◆ draw on knowledge and understanding of the complex factors which contribute to the electoral performance of UK political parties

Course assessment

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#)¹. At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment. The added value for the Course must address the key purposes and aims of the Course as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

In the Higher Politics Course, added value will focus on:

- ◆ breadth
- ◆ challenge
- ◆ application

The learner will draw on, extend and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding they have acquired during the Course. This will be assessed by a [question paper](#)² and an [assignment](#)³. The question paper will require demonstration of a breadth of skills, knowledge and understanding from across the Course. The assignment will require learners to extend and apply their skills, knowledge and understanding and will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow for personalisation and choice.

¹ Definitions can be found here: www.sqa.org.uk/jargonbuster

² See link above for definitions.

³ See link above for definitions.

Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Course. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Course are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities.

1 Literacy

1.1 Reading

1.2 Writing

2 Numeracy

2.3 Information handling

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

4.6 Citizenship

5 Thinking skills

5.3 Applying

5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Amplification of these skills is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the Course is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

Administrative information

Published: April 2015 (version 2.0)

History of changes to National Course Specification

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Minor re-wording of 'Course aims' to ensure consistency with skills, knowledge and understanding being assessed. Minor re-wording of 'Skills, knowledge and understanding' to ensure consistency. Re-wording of Unit descriptions and Outcomes to ensure consistency with Unit Specifications.	Qualifications Development Manager	April 2014
2.0	Minor change to wording within 'Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles' section. Change to Evidence Requirements for the 'Politics: Political Theory' Unit in the 'Unit assessment' section.	Qualifications Manager	April 2015

This specification may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if it is reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged. Additional copies of this Course Specification can be downloaded from SQA's website at www.sqa.org.uk.

Note: You are advised to check SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of the Course Specification.

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2015