



MODERN STUDIES
Higher

First edition — published March 2006

National Course Specification

MODERN STUDIES (Higher)

COURSE CODE C236 12

COURSE STRUCTURE

The Course has three mandatory Units:

DV52 12	Political Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)	1 credit (40 hours)
DV53 12	Social Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)	1 credit (40 hours)
DV54 12	International Issues (Higher)	1 credit (40 hours)

All Courses include 40 hours over and above the 120 hours for the Units. This may be used for induction, extending the range of learning and teaching approaches, support, consolidation, integration of learning and preparation for Course assessment.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry to the Course is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Standard Grade Modern Studies or another social subject at Grade 1, 2 (or possibly 3)
- ◆ an Intermediate 2 Course or Unit(s) in Modern Studies
- ◆ a Course or Units at Intermediate 2 in another social subject

PROGRESSION

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ Advanced Higher Modern Studies or other subjects at Advanced Higher
- ◆ a Higher National programme in Social Sciences
- ◆ a higher education Course
- ◆ training or employment

Administrative Information

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National Course Specification (cont)

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

CREDIT VALUE

The Higher Course in Modern Studies is allocated 24 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6.*

**SCQF points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification 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

Achievement of this Course gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skills component	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

National Course Specification: Course details

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

RATIONALE

Higher Modern Studies makes a distinctive contribution to the curriculum. Study of the Course develops an understanding of fundamental processes which underpin political and social life. These processes are considered in local, national and international contexts which are both relevant and significant. The structured understanding gained in this way can be applied in other situations. Higher Modern Studies will be of interest to a wide range of adult candidates, as well as to school candidates. Modern Studies at Higher makes a contribution to a well-balanced individual curriculum with appropriate emphasis given to the skills of communicating, learning, creative thinking and critical evaluation of the media and the utilisation of information technology.

The Higher Course in Modern Studies develops understanding of the political and social processes operating in the contemporary world. Candidates should extend their knowledge and understanding of contemporary issues and develop skills of evaluating that they may have been introduced to at Standard Grade or in Intermediate Modern Studies. The structure of the Course requires candidates to study issues from within the United Kingdom and the wider world.

Important skills are developed and enhanced through study of Higher Modern Studies. These skills include:

- ◆ handling and analysing complex data
- ◆ adopting a structured approach to the study of contemporary issues and problems
- ◆ constructing and sustaining lines of argument which mirror the complexity of the issues they address
- ◆ evaluating evidence, detecting a lack of objectivity and drawing and presenting conclusions in a balanced and structured way
- ◆ participating in debate and discussion, through which attitudes of open-mindedness and tolerance are fostered

Modern Studies also contributes to personal and social development. In particular, the Course addresses the area of rights and responsibilities. This includes the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society and the moral and ethical responsibilities of individuals.

Candidates should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. They should make use of generic learning skills and the skills developed in Higher Modern Studies will make a contribution to learning in many other subjects.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

COURSE CONTENT

The Course is divided into three mandatory Units dealing with political, social and international issues. The Study Themes within the Units are described below.

Political Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

There are four Study Themes:

Study Theme 1A	Devolved Decision Making in Scotland
Study Theme 1B	Decision Making in Central Government
Study Theme 1C	Political Parties and their Policies (including the Scottish Dimension)
Study Theme 1D	Electoral Systems, Voting and Political Attitudes

Candidates must study two out of the four Study Themes. Expanded descriptions of the content of these Study Themes are contained in the Unit Specification *Political Issues in the United Kingdom (Dxxx 12)*.

Study Theme 1A: Devolved Decision Making in Scotland

- 1 Decision making in Scotland: the Scottish Parliament as an arena for conflict, co-operation and decision making; functions; organisation of and procedures for business. The Scottish Executive; the respective roles of the First Minister and the Cabinet. The effects of the electoral system on decision making for Scotland at Holyrood level.
- 2 Representation of Scottish interests at Westminster. The distribution of powers between the Scottish Parliament and the UK Parliament; co-operation and conflict between the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive and the UK Parliament. The effects of the electoral system on Westminster decision making for Scotland.
- 3 Local government in Scotland: role, functions, finance and reform. COSLA, co-operation and conflict with the Scottish Executive. The effects of the electoral system on local authority decision making.

Study Theme 1B: Decision Making in Central Government

- 1 The Executive; the respective roles of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; accountability to Parliament; the role of senior civil servants in the UK political system.
- 2 Parliament (House of Commons and House of Lords) as an arena for conflict, co-operation and decision making; functions; organisation of and procedures for business.
- 3 Influences on the decision making process in the UK: the extent of these pressures, their impact and legitimacy.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

Study Theme 1C: Political Parties and their Policies (including the Scottish Dimension)

- 1 Political parties: ideology, membership, organisation and finance; influences on the decisions within parties and on the formulating of party policies; the role of party leaders, MPs, party members, the media and voters.
- 2 Conflict and consensus within and between parties; ideological differences within and between parties; reasons for changes in party ideologies and/or policies. Electoral success.
- 3 Party policies on taxation, law and order, education and Europe: trends and differences.

Study Theme 1D: Electoral Systems, Voting and Political Attitudes

- 1 The UK, Scottish, European Parliamentary and Scottish local government electoral systems; effects on the distribution of power within and among parties, in elected bodies and between the electorate and the elected.
- 2 Voting patterns; explanations of voting behaviour.
- 3 The shaping of political attitudes through the media; opinion polls; referenda; voter participation.

Social Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

There is one Study Theme. An expanded description of the content of this Study Theme is contained in the Unit Specification ***Social Issues in the United Kingdom (Dxxx 12)***.

Study Theme 2: Wealth and Health Inequalities in the United Kingdom

- 1 Evidence of inequalities in wealth and health; causes of inequalities in wealth and health; consequences of inequalities in wealth and health.
- 2 With reference to ethnicity and gender: the extent of social and economic inequalities; the nature and effect of government responses to deal with these inequalities.
- 3 The principles of the Welfare State. The debate over the provision of and funding of health care and welfare; individual and collective responsibility.

International Issues (Higher)

There are six Study Themes:

Study Theme 3A	The Republic of South Africa
Study Theme 3B	The People's Republic of China
Study Theme 3C	The United States of America
Study Theme 3D	The European Union
Study Theme 3E	The Politics of Development in Africa (with the exception of the Republic of South Africa)
Study Theme 3F	Global Security

Candidates must study two of the six Study Themes. Expanded descriptions of the content of these Study Themes are contained in the Unit Specification ***International Issues (Dxxx 12)***.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

Study Theme 3A: The Republic of South Africa

- 1 The South African political system: the role and powers of the South African government at national, provincial and local levels.
- 2 Political issues: participation and representation. Political parties and support from different groups. Political trends.
- 3 Social and economic issues: the nature and extent of social and economic inequalities; demands for change; the effectiveness of government responses and the consequences among and within different racial groups.

Study Theme 3B: The People's Republic of China

- 1 The Chinese political system: the role and powers of the Chinese government at national, regional and local levels.
- 2 Political issues: participation and representation. The role of the Chinese Communist Party and the extent of political opposition. Political trends.
- 3 Social and economic issues: the nature and extent of social and economic inequalities; demands for change; the effectiveness of government responses and the consequences for different groups.

Study Theme 3C: The United States of America

- 1 The USA political system: the role and powers of the USA government at federal, state and local levels.
- 2 Political issues: participation and representation; immigration. Political parties and support from different groups. Political trends.
- 3 Social and economic issues: (case study: ethnic minorities) the nature and extent of social and economic inequalities; demands for change; the effectiveness of government responses and the consequences for different groups.

Study Theme 3D: The European Union

- 1 Aims, growth and achievement of the European Union (EU). The main institutions and their influence within the Union.
- 2 Co-operation and conflict with reference to political, social and economic issues: constitutional arrangements; enlargement; the single market and single currency; regional and social policy.
- 3 Case study of the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

Study Theme 3E: The Politics of Development in Africa (with the exception of the Republic of South Africa)

- 1 Health and health care issues; access to education, food and safe water. The links between health, education, food and development.
- 2 Economic, political and social factors affecting development.
- 3 The respective roles of African governments, African Union, the European Union, Non-Governmental Organisations, the United Kingdom and the United Nations in promoting development.

Study Theme 3F: Global Security

- 1 The organisation and role of the United Nations (UN): aims, membership, institutions, decision making procedures, reforms/changes. The role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO): international role, reforms/changes.
- 2 Origins and consequences of recent threats to peace and security, including international terrorism, demanding an international response.
- 3 International responses: the EU, NATO and the UN responses to recent threats to peace and security including international terrorism.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

ASSESSMENT

To gain the award of the Modern Studies (Higher) Course, candidates must pass all the Units and the Course assessment. The candidate's grade is based on the Course assessment.

Assessment Objectives

The key objective of assessment is to ensure that candidates have achieved the aims of the Course. In particular, assessment seeks to ensure that candidates have understood and can apply the Course content and that they can communicate their understanding.

Unit assessments aim to ensure candidates can complete a range of descriptive and analytical questions relating to familiar and unfamiliar situations.

Course assessment aims to enable candidates to describe and analyse political, social and international issues in unfamiliar and more demanding contexts through the use of extended response questions, evaluating items, and a decision making report.

Candidates will be encouraged to integrate the skills of knowledge and understanding and analysis and communicate these effectively, provide up-to-date exemplification of political and social issues, both nationally and internationally, using appropriate terminology and presented in a coherent and logically structured way. Arguments should be supported by up-to-date evidence and analysis should be balanced and informed showing a high level of awareness of political and social issues.

At Higher, candidates will be able to produce detailed descriptions and in-depth analysis. Sources used should be complex. The requirements at Higher should be markedly greater than at Intermediate 2 or at Standard Grade.

Unit Assessment

The Unit assessment for each of the three Units will be a closed book assessment which should take place at an appropriate time. The maximum time allowed for each assessment is 35 minutes for the Political Issues and the International Issues Units, and 60 minutes for the decision making exercise in the Social Issues Unit.

Each Unit is assessed against the standards set out in the *National Unit Specification: statement of standards* for each Unit. Full details of the Outcomes, Performance Criteria and Evidence Requirements may be found in the Unit Specifications.

Further details about Unit assessment for this Course can be found in the NAB materials produced in conjunction with each of the three Unit Specifications.

Course Assessment

The Course assessment is based on two Question Papers.

Paper	Time allocation	Mark allocation
1	1 hour 30 minutes	60
2	1 hour 15 minutes	30

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

Paper 1

- ◆ this paper examines knowledge and understanding covering the Course content and also assesses analysis, evaluation and problem solving
- ◆ questions will require an extended response
- ◆ the paper will consist of three sections:
 - Section A will cover Political Issues in the United Kingdom
 - Section B will cover Social Issues in the United Kingdom
 - Section C will cover International Issues
- ◆ each question will be worth 15 marks
- ◆ candidates must answer a total of four questions: one question from each Section, and one other from either Section A or Section C

Paper 2

- ◆ this paper will consist of a decision making exercise. It is based on Section B – *Social Issues in the United Kingdom*
- ◆ one exercise will be set. This will consist of a series of short evaluating questions worth 10 marks in total and a report worth 20 marks

Further details of the Course assessment are given in the Course Assessment Specification and in the Specimen Question Paper.

Link between Unit and Course assessment/added value

Course assessment will require candidates to:

- ◆ demonstrate the ability to retain and integrate the knowledge and understanding acquired in the Units
- ◆ apply the knowledge and understanding acquired in the Units to less familiar and more demanding contexts
- ◆ evaluate unfamiliar information (ie to draw reasoned conclusions, detect bias, make comparisons, support a point of view)
- ◆ demonstrate a broader knowledge and understanding of the Study Themes

When Units are taken as part of a Course, candidates will have the opportunity to demonstrate achievement beyond that required to attain each of the Unit Outcomes. This could include short evaluating questions to support the decision making exercise. This attainment may, where appropriate, be recorded and used to contribute towards Course estimates, and to provide evidence for appeals. Additional details are provided, where appropriate, with the exemplar assessment materials.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The candidate's grade will be based on the total score obtained from the Course assessment. The descriptions below indicate the nature of achievement required for an award at Grade C and A in the Course.

For an award at Grade C candidates should be able to:

- ◆ demonstrate knowledge and understanding of complex issue(s) by:
 - providing an accurate description of the issue(s)
 - making reference to relevant:
 - factors and/or institutions
 - examples
- ◆ demonstrate skills of analysis:
 - in a balanced way
 - with relevant exemplification
 - by reaching relevant developed conclusion(s)
- ◆ demonstrate evaluating skills by:
 - relevant and accurate evaluation of complex sources
 - balanced analysis that includes appropriate conclusions, points of view and relevant background knowledge

For an award at Grade A candidates should be able to:

- ◆ demonstrate knowledge and understanding of complex issue(s) by:
 - providing an accurate and extended description of the issue(s)
 - making reference to relevant:
 - institution(s) and/or complex factors
 - detailed examples
- ◆ demonstrate skills of analysis:
 - in a well balanced way
 - with relevant and detailed exemplification
 - by reaching relevant, well developed conclusion(s)
- ◆ demonstrate evaluating skills by:
 - relevant, accurate and well developed evaluation of complex sources
 - balanced and well developed analysis that includes appropriate and well argued conclusions, points of view and relevant background knowledge

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

ESTIMATES AND APPEALS

Estimates

In preparing estimates, evidence must take account of performance across the Course and must be judged against the Grade Descriptions. Further advice on the preparation of estimates is given in the Course Assessment Specification.

Appeals

Evidence to support appeals for the Course must show a sufficient breadth of coverage of the content and must relate to the Course Grade Descriptions.

Candidates are required to have knowledge and understanding of and the ability to analyse and evaluate within the chosen Study Themes from the specified sections in the question paper.

The best evidence will meet the following criteria:

- ◆ there should be evidence of retained and integrated knowledge and understanding
- ◆ there should be evidence of the ability to apply the knowledge and understanding to less familiar and more demanding contexts
- ◆ there should be evidence of retained skills of evaluation of unfamiliar materials
- ◆ the candidate should be able to demonstrate a broader knowledge and understanding of the Study Themes

Evidence which meets these criteria and demonstrates the retention of knowledge and skills over a period of time is likely to come from an integrated test or prelim which reflects the requirements of the Course assessment in demand, structure and timing.

Although a prelim examination is not mandatory, it can give a good indication of how a candidate will perform with the addition of time pressure and the need to apply knowledge and skills in new contexts in the Course assessment. Questions should replicate the style of the Specimen Question Paper. Questions from previous SQA examination papers may be adapted for use in a prelim exam which may provide appropriate evidence. Where this method is used, centres should ensure that the questions come from at least three different examination papers and that some adjustments are made to some of the questions to ensure that the candidates will not have had the opportunity previously to see the questions. Whatever approach is taken to the creation of prelim papers or other assessment items, centres must be certain that the material has not been seen previously by the candidates.

The NABs for the Units of this Course on their own do not provide sufficient evidence to support an appeal since they do not provide evidence of a candidate's ability to:

- ◆ respond to questions from across more than one Unit of the Course on a single occasion
- ◆ apply skills in more demanding situations

Centres which offer an integrated test or prelim which covers only two Units should include in their submission an additional test covering the third Unit.

To lend weight to an appeal, the candidate should have exceeded the minimum cut-off score for the test or prelim, or for the NABs which are being submitted (if applicable).

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

To reflect the rigour of the Course assessment the test or prelim should include an appropriately timed Paper 2 – a decision making exercise, including the evaluating questions, sat on the same day or as close as possible to the test or prelim for Paper 1. The decision making exercise (DME) should not be familiar to the candidates, and hence past SQA papers should not be used, as these and their associated marking schemes are published and thus in the public domain. DME NABs provide a suitable alternative.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

All National Courses are subject to external marking and/or moderation. External markers, visiting examiners and moderators are trained by SQA to apply national standards.

The Units of all Courses are subject to internal moderation and may also be chosen for external moderation. This is to ensure that national standards are being applied across all subjects.

Courses may be assessed by a variety of methods. Where marking is undertaken by a trained marker in their own time, markers' meetings are held to ensure that a consistent standard is applied. The work of all markers is subject to scrutiny by the Principal Assessor.

To assist centres, Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator reports are published on SQA's website www.sqa.org.uk

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS COURSE

The learning experience gained by candidates should reflect the aims and rationale of the subject and should build on the good practices developed previously. The learning experience should include a variety of approaches to the acquisition of knowledge and skills, centre around progression and encourage and support independent learning.

The following learning experiences are essential to the Course and the additional 40 hours allowed in the Course can be used to develop the appropriate learning and teaching strategies.

Knowledge and skills enrichment through exposure to a wide range of resources, commercial products, official statistics, newspapers, current affairs magazines, videos and television and radio programmes. Among the major sources from the mass media are schools programmes and documentary/current affairs programmes. A wide range of views on current issues can be examined through extracts from the range of newspapers as well as articles from the major weekly news magazines. Many newspapers are also published in electronic form on the internet. Previous articles of relevance may be available from back issues, many of which are now distributed on CD-ROM. Candidates should become familiar with the process of downloading information from CD-ROM sources. Political cartoons can act as sources for the assessment of social and political messages and extracts from films can help the understanding of many international issues. The media inform and shape our understanding of the processes and issues central to the Course and this should underpin use of these resources.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

A wide range of sources is also available for statistical data. Among the most widely used are census data and statistics derived from government departments or from surveys. Technological developments are increasing their accessibility through CD-ROMs and the internet and ready access for candidates to the internet is invaluable in delivering the Course. Opinion polls are now widely published from many independent sources. International organisations such as the European Union and the United Nations and their associated agencies produce and disseminate a variety of relevant statistical information, as do many non-governmental organisations and pressure groups.

Learning and teaching approaches in Higher Modern Studies rely heavily on these sources for group work, oral discussion and debate, the detailed assessment of case studies and examples, more extended essays and report writing based on evaluating skills. Candidates should also be encouraged to reflect on their own experience. Given the model of assessment at Higher, it will be important throughout the Course for candidates to progress to more complex tasks of extended writing and data handling in order to develop their skills beyond the levels attained at Intermediate 2 or Credit level Standard Grade.

Opportunities should be built into the Course at an early stage to teach the skills of extended essay writing. This would be a valid use for some of the additional 40 hours' time. Similarly, candidates should be taught the data-handling and report-writing skills required for Higher at an appropriate point within the Course. The process of report writing may be built up progressively from mini-reports based on a limited number of sources to full-scale decision making exercises.

Candidates should be encouraged to discuss issues with each other and with teaching staff and to make oral presentations of their views. There should be opportunities to engage in discussion and debate through interaction between staff and candidates in the forum of debate. Candidates should be encouraged to prepare and debate key issues within the Course.

As candidates progress through the Course, they should be encouraged through assessment activities and homework tasks to develop higher-order extended writing skills, for example in discussion/analysis essays. Progress in evaluative and investigative skills can be shown by synthesising complex sources in decision making tasks based on exercises similar to the final Course assessment.

Candidates should be given opportunities to take individual responsibility for learning within a supportive environment. They should be provided with Course handouts indicating the timescale for the Course and key assessment points. They should also be given Unit handouts indicating the content to be covered, the sequence of topics, homework, assessment points and resources required.

Reading will form an important part of the Modern Studies Course at Higher. Candidates should be encouraged to read and make notes from relevant textbooks as part of their coursework. It would be appropriate to spend some of the additional 40 hours' time on skills such as note taking and speed reading. Candidates should also be directed towards appropriate background reading, including political biographies and relevant fictional works. Liaising with other subject areas will often be helpful.

Effective learning and teaching in Modern Studies will involve a range of learning and teaching situations. Teachers and lecturers are best able to match the requirements of the Course to the capabilities of their candidates and to devise methods of organisation that meet the needs of individual candidates.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Course Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

MODERN STUDIES IN A BROADER CONTEXT

A number of national initiatives and programmes have been designed to promote themes that are important to contemporary society such as citizenship and enterprise. These themes contribute to individual subjects and Courses by making connections beyond the subject boundaries and enrich the learning experience. Similarly, the specialist knowledge and skills developed through study of a particular subject contributes to the understanding of these themes.

Modern Studies is the study of the social, economic, political, environmental and technological contexts in which we live and how these may be changed within a moral and ethical framework consistent with a democratic society. It encourages people to work towards a more just and sustainable world in which individual and collective agencies and the development of political literacy inform decision making. Modern Studies provides direct experience of ideas and initiatives that utilise research, critical enquiry and debate to challenge fixed positions and to promote alternative thinking. It also prepares people to play an active role in contemporary society and to equip them, as in National Priority (NP) 5 *Learning for Life*, with the necessary creativity, skills, attitudes and expectations to prosper. Modern Studies aims to empower people to take control of their own lives rather than being the passive subjects of change.

Modern Studies Courses promote NP 3 *Inclusion and Equality* by encouraging all to benefit from an education based on democratic values. Thus, qualities such as affirmation of difference and diversity, respect for evidence and reason, and willingness to accept that other views and beliefs can have validity are key components. In addition, willingness to accept the possibility of, and limits to, compromise and confidence and enterprise in pursuing information and communicating views, are very evident in the Modern Studies classroom. The subject illustrates the interconnectedness and interdependence of contemporary life in a globalised world by enabling students to interrogate their own and other people's values and attitudes. It examines the realities of living in a global society and makes it possible for young people to study the ways in which their lives in Scotland are linked to others, including those of people throughout the world.

The subject, in line with NP 4 *Values and Citizenship*, encourages in young people a respect for, and realisation of, their interdependence with other members of their families, neighbourhood and society in addition to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society. Part of this process is achieved by a structured approach to the study of contemporary issues and problems through the handling and analysis of complex data, the evaluation of evidence and by the presentation of conclusions in a balanced and structured way. It promotes participation in debate and discussion with attitudes of open-mindedness and tolerance.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

Modern Studies also contributes to NP 1 *Achievement and Attainment* by supporting the raising of standards of educational attainment, including the core skills of literacy and numeracy. Global, national and local banks of information are studied and a range of investigative methodologies is used, not least media interrogation (TV, radio, newspapers). Other crucial enquiry techniques include internet research and the use of libraries (for books, current affairs magazines, political cartoons, census data and statistics from government departments, the European Union, the United Nations, non-governmental organisations and pressure groups or from surveys/opinion polls). Letter writing, the construction of questionnaires and attitude surveys, structured interviews and observations, and involvement in fieldwork study are other key skills developed.

Modern Studies, as outlined in NP 2 *Framework for Learning*, aims to support and develop the skills of teachers and the self-discipline of pupils and to enhance classroom and school environments so they are conducive to learning and teaching. Innovative practice, which restores the control of learners and teachers over their educational environments, is promoted. Consequently, direct experience of pedagogies which stimulate an appetite for participation, consultation, and the assumption of responsibility are endorsed. It is recommended that young people plan, transact and evaluate active and participative schemes of work and methodologies that help them to acquire a reflective global perspective. Accordingly, there is a clear emphasis on developing a group of skills, values and attitudes rather than simply on the learning of factual content as an end in itself.

In conclusion, the Modern Studies student has opportunities to develop broad, transferable *core skills* that people need in order to be full, active and responsible members of society and who have the capability of working with others. Courses help develop communication skills which are essential in clarifying thought, in interacting and conversing with others, in expressing thoughts and in conveying information, feelings and opinions. Information Technology is used to collect, organise, analyse, present and communicate information. Modern Studies provides opportunities for young people to cope with the numerical demands of everyday life, becoming comfortable with numbers, and with graphs, symbols, diagrams and calculators. The Modern Studies student is also able to tackle issues and problems in personal, social, political, economic and environmental contexts, informed by prior experience, personal and social values consistent with a democratic society, anti-discrimination and the critical application of technology.

In summary, Modern Studies equips young people to be, in the words of *A Curriculum for Excellence* (2004), ‘successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors’.

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Political Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

CODE DV52 12

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit seeks to develop the candidate's ability to relate key political decisions to an understanding of British society and analyse political issues using relevant data and a variety of political perspectives.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a key political issue from the chosen Study Theme.
- 2 Analyse a key political issue from the chosen Study Theme.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry to the Course is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Standard Grade Modern Studies or another social subject at Grade 1, 2 (or possibly 3)
- ◆ an Intermediate 2 Course or Unit(s) in Modern Studies
- ◆ a Course or Units at Intermediate 2 in another social subject.

Administrative Information

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Political Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**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

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skills component	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Political Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a key political issue from the chosen Study Theme.

Performance Criteria

- (a) The issue is described accurately.
- (b) The description makes reference to factors/institutions/examples that are relevant.

OUTCOME 2

Analyse a key political issue from the chosen Study Theme.

Performance Criteria

- (a) The analysis of the issue is made in a balanced way with relevant exemplification.
- (b) Conclusions reached are valid and appropriate.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

The content for this Unit is specified in Appendix 1 — Statement of Standards.

Although two Study Themes should be undertaken, the assessment evidence for this Unit need cover only one of these Study Themes.

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment in these Outcomes the candidate should answer one structured question assessing both knowledge and understanding (Outcome 1) and analysis (Outcome 2) during or near the end of the Unit. This will include written or equivalent evidence which satisfies both Outcomes for the chosen Study Theme. A maximum time of 35 minutes is allowed.

If reassessment is required, it should consist of a fresh assessment instrument. This may sample another area of the same Study Theme, or content from the second Study Theme taken in the Unit.

The assessment of the Outcomes should be based on a holistic approach. Achievement can be determined by a cut-off score. The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessment for this Unit, it should be of a comparable standard. It is recommended that such an instrument of assessment should be submitted to SQA for prior moderation.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Political Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

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

While the 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

The content of this Unit is detailed under Course Content in the Course details. Expanded descriptions of the Study Themes contained in this Unit are attached as an appendix to this Unit Specification.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

The following learning experiences will enrich this Unit: exposure to a wide range of resources, especially official statistics, newspapers, both on paper and electronically, political cartoons, as well as television and radio, where political issues are addressed both directly (eg current affairs programmes) and indirectly (eg soap opera sub-plots). Group work, discussions and debates can enhance the learning environment. Extended essay writing and report writing need to be developed from an early stage in the Unit. Reading both textbooks and appropriate background materials is encouraged.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The evidence of attainment of both Outcomes for this Unit should be provided in the form of a structured answer for one Study Theme. The evidence can be gathered during or near the end of the Unit and must be completed under controlled conditions, ie without collaboration, the assistance of notes, or teacher/ lecturer advice. Supervision may be carried out by a teacher/lecturer, invigilator or other responsible person. A maximum time of 35 minutes in total should be allowed for assessment of an item covering both Outcomes.

The marking scheme should reflect the standard embodied in the Performance Criteria. This will allow the evidence to be considered as a whole. The level of attainment required for successful completion of the Unit should represent satisfactory attainment of the Outcomes and, by inference, satisfactory coverage of all Performance Criteria.

Care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for support and reassessment of candidates if required.

Where suitable tasks can be set which allow candidates to demonstrate competence beyond the minimum standard required, evidence gathered for Unit assessment may also be used for grade prediction and for appeals for the Course assessment. For details of the grade descriptions for Grade C and Grade A in the Course assessment, refer to the Modern Studies Higher Course Specification.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Unit Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

UNIT Political Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Study Theme 1A: Devolved Decision Making in Scotland

Descriptor	Coverage
<p>Decision making in Scotland: the Scottish Parliament as an arena for conflict, co-operation and decision making; functions; organisation of and procedures for business. The Scottish Executive; the respective roles of the First Minister and the Cabinet. The effects of the electoral system on decision making for Scotland at Holyrood level.</p> <p>Representation of Scottish interests at Westminster. The distribution of powers between the Scottish Parliament and the UK Parliament; co-operation and conflict between the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive and the UK Parliament. The effects of the electoral system on Westminster decision making for Scotland.</p> <p>Local government in Scotland: role, functions, finance and reform. COSLA, co-operation and conflict with the Scottish Executive. The effects of the electoral system on local authority decision making.</p>	<p>Party representation in the Scottish Parliament; roles of constituency and list members.</p> <p>The effects of the electoral system on decision making for Scotland at Holyrood level.</p> <p>Founding principles of the Scottish Parliament (Accessibility, Accountability, Equal Opportunities and the Sharing of Power).</p> <p>Legislative procedures, parliamentary questions, debates, motions, members' business, decision time.</p> <p>The work of committees.</p> <p>Appointment, role and powers of the First Minister. Factors affecting the functions of the Scottish Executive and the individual and collective role of its members.</p> <p>The effectiveness of the Scottish Parliament in holding the Scottish Executive to account.</p> <p>The devolved and reserved powers; implications of and demand for further devolution (including fiscal autonomy). The extent of co-operation between the Scottish Executive and the UK Parliament.</p> <p>Scottish representation at Westminster.</p> <p>The role of local government in a democracy.</p> <p>The effects of the electoral system on the composition of Scottish councils.</p> <p>Powers and responsibilities of Scottish local authorities.</p> <p>Sources from which local authorities obtain finance.</p> <p>The role of COSLA.</p> <p>The extent of co-operation and conflict between local authorities and the Scottish Executive.</p> <p>Ongoing issues and proposals for change in respect of the above.</p>

UNIT Political Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Study Theme 1B: Decision Making in Central Government

Descriptor	Coverage
<p>The Executive; the respective roles of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; accountability to Parliament; the role of senior civil servants in the UK political system.</p> <p>Parliament (House of Commons and House of Lords) as an arena for conflict, co-operation and decision making; functions; organisation of and procedures for business.</p> <p>Influences on the decision making process in the UK: the extent of these pressures, their impact and legitimacy.</p>	<p>Appointment, powers and role of the Prime Minister. Composition and constitutional role of the Cabinet and Cabinet Ministers: individual and collective responsibility. Cabinet committees and the Cabinet Office.</p> <p>The concept of ‘first among equals’; the impact of the ‘style’ and ‘personality’ of the individual on the office of Prime Minister.</p> <p>The roles of senior civil servants and special advisors.</p> <p>Opportunities for and effectiveness of the House of Commons in supporting/opposing/scrutinising the Executive: motions, debates, divisions, question time, committees, private members’ bills, the whip system, intra-party committees.</p> <p>Composition and role of the House of Lords and its effectiveness in supporting/opposing/scrutinising the Executive.</p> <p>The role of pressure groups (cause and interest) in a democracy: rights and responsibilities.</p> <p>The effectiveness of pressure groups in both influencing the legislative process and holding the Executive to account; insider and outsider groups.</p> <p>The role of the media in both influencing the legislative process and holding the Executive and its members to account.</p> <p>The impact of freedom of information legislation.</p> <p>Ongoing issues and proposals for change in respect of all of the above.</p>

UNIT Political Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Study Theme 1C: Political Parties and their Policies (including the Scottish Dimension)

Descriptor	Coverage
<p>Political parties: ideology, membership, organisation and finance; influences on decisions within parties and on the formulating of party policies; the role of party leaders, MPs, party members, the media and voters.</p> <p>Conflict and consensus within and between parties; ideological differences within and between parties; reasons for changes in party ideologies and/or policies. Electoral success.</p> <p>Party policies on taxation, law and order, education and Europe: trends and differences.</p>	<p>In relation to the descriptor, for each of the Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Scottish National parties:</p> <p>Ideology, membership and finance.</p> <p>Organisation.</p> <p>Mechanism for choosing the leader.</p> <p>Policy making mechanism.</p> <p>Party unity/division; factions within the parties.</p> <p>Electoral success: continuity and change; impact of other parties.</p> <p>Similarities and differences in policies in regard to: taxation, law and order, education and Europe.</p> <p>Ongoing issues and proposals for change in respect of all of the above.</p>

UNIT Political Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Study Theme 1D: Electoral Systems, Voting and Political Attitudes

Descriptor	Coverage
<p>The UK, Scottish, European Parliamentary and Scottish local government electoral systems; effects on the distribution of power within and among parties, in elected bodies and between the electorate and the elected.</p> <p>Voting patterns; explanations of voting behaviour.</p> <p>The shaping of political attitudes through the media; opinion polls; referenda; voter participation.</p>	<p>The advantages and disadvantages of: the First Past the Post system; the Additional Member System; the Party List; the Single Transferable Vote.</p> <p>The links between electoral systems and election results.</p> <p>The link between each of: social class, party affiliation, age, gender, ethnicity, issues, personalities, location and voting behaviour. Continuity and change in these links.</p> <p>Ways in which the broadcasting media may raise and influence political awareness, both directly and indirectly.</p> <p>Press party affiliations and consequences; continuity and change.</p> <p>Use made by the political parties of the broadcasting media, the press and the internet (Party Election Broadcasts, sound-bites, spin doctors, press columns, websites, radio and television interviews).</p> <p>Government regulation of the broadcasting media, the press and the internet with regards to Politics.</p> <p>Opinion polls. The use of referenda.</p> <p>The importance of voter participation. Postal and on-line voting. Voter turnout for Scottish Council, Scottish parliament, UK Parliament and European Parliament elections: trends; local, regional and national variations; explanations for and consequences of.</p> <p>Ongoing issues and proposals for change in respect of all of the above.</p>

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Social Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

CODE DV53 12

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit seeks to develop the candidate's ability to relate key social issues to a wider understanding of British society and to analyse and evaluate key social issues using relevant data and a variety of perspectives.

OUTCOME

- 1 Evaluate given complex sources related to the Study Theme.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry to the Course is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Standard Grade Modern Studies or another social subject at Grade 1, 2 (or possibly 3)
- ◆ an Intermediate 2 Course or Unit(s) in Modern Studies
- ◆ a Course or Units at Intermediate 2 in another social subject.

Administrative Information

Superclass: FB

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National Unit Specification: general Information (cont)

UNIT Social Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**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

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skills component	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Social Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Evaluate given complex sources related to the Study Theme.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Complex sources are evaluated relevantly and accurately.
- (b) The analysis of the issue is balanced and includes appropriate conclusions/points of view.
- (c) Relevant background knowledge is used accurately.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

The content for this Unit is specified in Appendix 1 — Statement of Standards.

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment in this Outcome the candidate should produce a report for a decision making exercise involving no more than three sources, though some of these may be composite. A recommendation to deal with the social issue, based on the sources and the candidate's analysis, will be developed and justified using well-argued conclusions/points of view and appropriate background knowledge. The three sources should include at least two of the following forms: written opinion statement; written factual statement; graph(s); statistical table(s). A maximum time of one hour is allowed.

If reassessment is required, it should consist of a fresh assessment instrument.

Achievement can be determined by a cut-off score. The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessment for this Unit, it should be of a comparable standard. It is recommended that such an instrument of assessment should be submitted to SQA for prior moderation.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Social Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

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

While the 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

The content of this Unit is detailed under Course Content in the Course details. An expanded description of the Study Theme contained in this Unit is attached as an appendix to this Unit Specification.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

The following learning experiences will enrich this Unit: exposure to a wide range of resources, especially official statistics, newspapers, both on paper and electronically, as well as television and radio. Group work, discussions and debates can enhance the learning environment. Extended essay writing and report writing need to be developed from an early stage in the Unit. Reading both textbooks and appropriate background materials is encouraged. The local community can be utilised, especially the use of guest speakers.

‘Wealth’ and ‘Health’ need not be taught as separate issues; they can be integrated.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The evidence of attainment of the Outcome for this Unit should be a decision making exercise containing a structured response which demonstrates knowledge and understanding, analysis and evaluation. The report should be structured appropriately and should give a reasoned and balanced recommendation, supported by evidence from the sources and from background knowledge.

The evidence can be gathered during or near the end of the Unit and must be completed under controlled conditions, ie under supervision, and without collaboration, the assistance of notes, or teacher/lecturer advice. Supervision may be carried out by the teacher/lecturer, invigilator or other responsible person. A maximum of one hour is allowed for the decision making exercise.

The marking scheme should reflect the standard embodied in the Performance Criteria. This will allow the evidence to be considered as a whole. The level of attainment required for successful completion of the Unit should represent satisfactory attainment of the Outcomes and, by inference, satisfactory coverage of all Performance Criteria.

Care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for support and reassessment of candidates if required.

Where suitable tasks can be set which allow candidates to demonstrate competence beyond the minimum standard required, evidence gathered for Unit assessment may also be used for grade prediction and for appeals for the Course assessment. This would include short evaluating questions. For details of the grade descriptions for Grade C and Grade A in the Course assessment, refer to the Modern Studies Higher Course Specification.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Social Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Unit Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

UNIT Social Issues in the United Kingdom (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Study Theme 2: Wealth and Health Inequalities in the United Kingdom

Descriptor	Coverage
<p>Evidence of inequalities in wealth and health; causes of inequalities in wealth and health; consequences of inequalities in wealth and health.</p> <p>With reference to ethnicity and gender: the extent of social and economic inequalities; the nature and effect of government responses to deal with these inequalities.</p> <p>The principles of the Welfare State. The debate over the provision of and funding of health care and welfare; individual and collective responsibility.</p>	<p>Background: measuring social class: standard occupational classification system; IPA system (A, B, C1 etc); informal ways of measuring social class. Measuring wealth; absolute and relative poverty; different ways of measuring poverty. (This area will not be examined specifically.)</p> <p>The extent to which class structure has changed in recent years.</p> <p>Founding principles of the Welfare State. The extent to which these are still being met.</p> <p>Causes of inequalities in wealth: unemployment, low income, social exclusion, gender, race, age, geography. Groups vulnerable to poverty. Consequences of these inequalities.</p> <p>Causes of inequalities in health: age, ethnicity, gender, lifestyle, unemployment, low income, social exclusion, geography. Groups vulnerable to ill health. Consequences of these inequalities.</p> <p>Health care and welfare provision: political debate; key issues: funding, means testing, private sector involvement.</p> <p>Reasons for changing levels of poverty.</p> <p>National policies and strategies to deal with inequalities in health. Local policies and strategies to deal with inequalities in health. Individualist and collectivist approaches.</p> <p>National policies and strategies to deal with inequalities in wealth. Local policies and strategies to deal with inequalities in wealth. Individualist and collectivist approaches.</p> <p>Ongoing issues and proposals for change in respect of all of the above.</p>

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT International Issues (Higher)

CODE DV54 12

COURSE Modern Studies (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit seeks to develop the candidate's ability to relate the chosen international issue to a wider understanding of world affairs and analyse international issues using relevant data and a variety of perspectives, and to develop the candidate's understanding of the processes of conflict, co-operation and development through the study of contemporary international issues.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a key international issue from the chosen Study Theme.
- 2 Analyse a key international issue from the chosen Study Theme.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry to the Course is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Standard Grade Modern Studies or another social subject at Grade 1, 2 (or possibly 3)
- ◆ an Intermediate 2 Course or Unit(s) in Modern Studies
- ◆ a Course or Units at Intermediate 2 in another social subject

Administrative Information

Superclass: FB

Publication date: March 2006

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT International Issues (Higher)

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**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

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skills component	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT International Issues (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a key international issue from the chosen Study Theme.

Performance Criteria

- (a) The issue is described accurately.
- (b) The description makes reference to factors/institutions/examples that are relevant.

OUTCOME 2

Analyse a key international issue from the chosen Study Theme.

Performance Criteria

- (a) The analysis of the issue is made in a balanced way with relevant exemplification.
- (b) Conclusions reached are valid and appropriate.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

The content for this Unit is specified in Appendix 1 — Statement of Standards.

Although two Study Themes should be undertaken, the assessment evidence for this Unit need cover only one of these Study Themes.

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment in these Outcomes the candidate should answer one structured question assessing both knowledge and understanding (Outcome 1) and analysis (Outcome 2) during or near the end of the Unit. This will include written or equivalent evidence which satisfies both Outcomes for the chosen Study Theme. A maximum time of 35 minutes is allowed.

If reassessment is required, it should consist of a fresh assessment instrument. This may sample another area of the same Study Theme, or content from the second Study Theme taken in the Unit.

The assessment of the Outcomes should be based on a holistic approach. Achievement can be determined by a cut-off score. The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessment for this Unit, it should be of a comparable standard. It is recommended that such an instrument of assessment should be submitted to SQA for prior moderation.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT International Issues (Higher)

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

While the 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

The content of this Unit is detailed under Course Content in the Course Details. Expanded descriptions of the Study Themes contained in this Unit are attached as an appendix to this Unit Specification.

GUIDANCE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

The following learning experiences will enrich this Unit: exposure to a wide range of resources, especially official statistics, newspapers, both on paper and electronically, political cartoons, as well as television and radio. Extracts from films can help the understanding of many international issues. International organisations such as the European Union, the United Nations and its associated agencies, and many non-governmental organisations produce and disseminate a variety of relevant information. Group work, discussions and debates can enhance the learning environment. Extended essay writing and report writing need to be developed from an early stage in the Unit. Reading both textbooks and appropriate background materials is encouraged. There is often a close relationship between political, social and economic issues, and these can be taught in an integrated manner.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The evidence of attainment of both Outcomes for this Unit should be provided in the form of one structured answer for one Study Theme. The evidence can be gathered during or near the end of the Unit and must be completed under controlled conditions, ie without collaboration, the assistance of notes or teacher/lecturer advice. Supervision may be carried out by a teacher/lecturer, invigilator or other responsible person. A maximum time of 35 minutes in total is allowed for assessment of an item covering both Outcomes.

The marking scheme should reflect the standard embodied in the Performance Criteria. This will allow the evidence to be considered as a whole. The level of attainment required for successful completion of the Unit should represent satisfactory attainment of the Outcomes and, by inference, satisfactory coverage of all Performance Criteria.

Care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for support and reassessment of candidates if required.

Where suitable tasks can be set which allow candidates to demonstrate competence beyond the minimum standard required, evidence gathered for Unit assessment may also be used for grade prediction and for appeals for the Course assessment. For details of the grade descriptions for Grade C and Grade A in the Course assessment, refer to the Modern Studies Higher Course Specification.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT International Issues (Higher)

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Unit Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

UNIT International Issues (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Study Theme 3A: The Republic of South Africa

Descriptor	Coverage
<p>The South African political system: the role and powers of the South African government at national, provincial and local levels.</p> <p>Political issues: participation and representation. Political parties and support from different groups. Political trends.</p> <p>Social and economic issues: the nature and extent of social and economic inequalities; demands for change; the effectiveness of government responses and the consequences among and within different racial groups.</p>	<p>Background: South Africa's land, people, economy and ideology. (This area will not be examined specifically.)</p> <p>Relationship between President, National and Provincial assemblies and the Constitutional Court.</p> <p>Recent elections: turnout, outcomes and impact; changing political party support; relationships within and between parties.</p> <p>The role of the media and pressure groups.</p> <p>The Politics of Transformation; the conduct of political parties and the government.</p> <p>Social and economic issues: the nature and extent of social and economic inequalities and their consequences, government responses to the effectiveness of these responses in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ health; HIV/AIDS ◆ education ◆ housing ◆ crime and the law ◆ land distribution ◆ employment; Black economic empowerment ◆ economic development ◆ the creation of a Black elite and the widening gap between rich and poor South Africans ◆ problems of the Afrikaner community <p>Ongoing issues and proposals for change in respect of all of the above.</p>

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) Appendix 1

UNIT International Issues (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Study Theme 3B: The People's Republic of China

Descriptor	Coverage
<p>The Chinese political system: the role and powers of the Chinese government at national, regional and local levels.</p> <p>Political issues: participation and representation. The role of the Chinese Communist Party and the extent of political opposition. Political trends.</p> <p>Social and economic issues: the nature and extent of social and economic inequalities; demands for change; the effectiveness of government responses and the consequences for different groups.</p>	<p>Background: China's land, people, economy and ideology. (This area will not be examined specifically.)</p> <p>The structure of the Chinese government and Communist party at national, regional and local levels. The relationship between the CPC and the Chinese government and other political groups.</p> <p>Opportunities for political participation; democratisation.</p> <p>The extent of opposition to the CPC: dissidents, separatist and nationalist movements, middle and business classes, Hong Kong.</p> <p>Freedom of expression, political protest and the media.</p> <p>Progress towards a market economy: the decline of state ownership; the growth of private companies; foreign investment; agricultural reform; the impact on the environment; changing role in the world economy.</p> <p>Social and economic issues: the nature and extent of social and economic inequalities and their consequences, government responses, the effectiveness of these responses in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ urban/rural differences ◆ employment and unemployment ◆ housing and urban overcrowding ◆ health ◆ crime and the law ◆ education <p>Human rights: women, population control, law and order. Minorities.</p> <p>Ongoing issues and proposals for change in respect of all of the above.</p>

UNIT International Issues (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Study Theme 3C: The United States of America

Descriptor	Coverage
<p>The USA political system: the role and powers of the USA government at federal, state and local levels.</p> <p>Political issues: participation and representation; immigration. Political parties and support from different groups. Political trends.</p> <p>Social and economic issues: (case study: ethnic minorities) the nature and extent of social and economic inequalities; demands for change; the effectiveness of government responses and the consequences for different groups.</p>	<p>Background: the USA’s land, people, economy and ideology. (This area will not be examined specifically.)</p> <p>Role and powers of the President; the separation of powers; relations between the President and the Congress and the Supreme Court (checks and balances). The division of powers between federal and state governments.</p> <p>The Democrat and Republican parties and their electoral support.</p> <p>Voter registration, turnout and representation: factors influencing these.</p> <p>The political debate over immigration.</p> <p>The effectiveness of government responses to inequalities in participation and representation.</p> <p>Social and economic issues – case study of ethnic minorities: the nature and extent of social and economic inequalities and their consequences and the effectiveness of government responses at federal, state and local level in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ employment ◆ income and wealth/poverty ◆ health ◆ education ◆ crime and the law ◆ housing ◆ immigration <p>Ongoing issues and proposals for change in respect of all of the above.</p>

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) Appendix 1

UNIT International Issues (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Study Theme 3D: The European Union

Descriptor	Coverage
<p>Aims, growth and achievement of the European Union (EU). The main institutions and their influence within the Union.</p> <p>Co-operation and conflict with reference to political, social and economic issues: constitutional arrangements; enlargement; the single market and single currency; regional and social policy.</p> <p>Case study of the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy.</p>	<p>Background: overview of the original aims of the EU, viz., to create a prosperous and peaceful Europe. The early growth of the EU. (This area will not be examined specifically.)</p> <p>Achievements and the current aims of the EU. Decision making in the EU in the context of: the constitution, the Council of Ministers, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Court of Justice.</p> <p>Interactions between institutions and member states.</p> <p>Political issues: democracy; stability; demands for/against further integration; foreign policy.</p> <p>Economic issues: the effects of the single market and single currency; enlargement in relation to new and existing members; the effects of regional policy.</p> <p>Social issues: free movement of citizens; effects of the social policy; concerns over crime; concerns over immigration.</p> <p>CAP: aims; policies and their effects: social, economic, political, environmental reforms.</p> <p>CFP: aims; policies and their effects: social, economic, political, environmental reforms.</p> <p>Ongoing issues and proposals for change in respect of all of the above.</p>

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont) Appendix 1

UNIT International Issues (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Study Theme 3E: The Politics of Development in Africa (with the exception of the Republic of South Africa)

Descriptor	Coverage
<p>Health and health care issues; access to education, food and safe water. The links between health, education, food and development.</p> <p>Economic, political and social factors affecting development.</p> <p>The respective roles of African governments, African Union, the European Union, Non-Governmental Organisations, the United Kingdom and the United Nations in promoting development.</p>	<p>Background: overview of geographical and historical factors affecting development. (This are will not be examined specifically).</p> <p>Health and development: water supply; availability and accessibility of healthcare; specific health issues: malaria; HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Education and development: availability and accessibility of primary, secondary and tertiary education. Gender differences.</p> <p>Food and development: the effects of shortages: starvation/malnutrition; food production and distribution.</p> <p>Conflict: examples of recent conflicts and their effect on development.</p> <p>Debt, cash crops, terms of trade and exchange rates.</p> <p>Land tenure: ownership and management; the role of women; links with education.</p> <p>Domestic policies of African Governments: effects on development.</p> <p>The roles and effectiveness of the AU, EU, NGOs, UK government and UN specialist agencies in promoting development.</p> <p><i>Exemplification of the above should relate to a specific African country or countries, with the exception of the Republic of South Africa.</i></p> <p>Ongoing issues and proposals for change in respect of all of the above.</p>

UNIT International Issues (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Study Theme 3F: Global Security

Descriptor	Coverage
<p>The organisation and role of the United Nations (UN): aims, membership, institutions, decision making procedures, reforms/changes. The role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO): international role, reforms/changes.</p> <p>Origins and consequences of recent threats to peace and security, including international terrorism, demanding an international response.</p> <p>International responses: the EU, NATO and the UN responses to recent threats to peace and security including international terrorism.</p>	<p>Background: the origins of the UN: the creation of a more peaceful world; the origins of NATO: to contain Soviet Communism. (This area will not be examined specifically.)</p> <p>UN organisation: the Security Council (permanent and non-permanent members) proposed changes: procedures and powers. Membership, procedures and powers of the General Assembly. Dominant role of the USA.</p> <p>The Secretary General's role as head of the UN bureaucracy; implementation of resolutions; organisation of peace-making and peace-keeping strategies; UN forces.</p> <p>NATO: the implications of changes/growth in membership. Changes in role: peace-making and peace-keeping in Europe and beyond. The Partnership for Peace.</p> <p>Changing forces: reduction in nuclear and large scale armoured forces, emphasis on rapid response, mobility, specialist forces, counter-terrorism.</p> <p>Examples of recent ethnic, religious and/or political conflicts demanding an international response: origins and consequences: open warfare, insurgency and terrorism.</p> <p>Responses to threats by any one or a combination of EU, NATO, UN and USA and its allies: factors which influence these responses; difficulties and successes/failures; issues of peace-making and peace-keeping.</p> <p>The role and influence of the USA.</p> <p>Ongoing issues and proposals for change in respect of all of the above.</p>