-SQA- SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE: UNIT SPECIFICATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

-Module Number-   7170055   -Session- 1995-96

-Superclass-   EA

-Title-   PEOPLE AND POLITICS: SCOTTISH SOCIETY

-DESCRIPTION-

GENERAL COMPETENCE FOR UNIT: Relating key political decisions to an understanding of Scottish society and evaluating political issues using relevant data and a variety of political perspectives.

OUTCOMES

1.   explain the working of government in Scotland with reference to a key political decision or issue;

2.   analyse and interpret data relevant to a political issue;

3.   evaluate a political issue using different political perspectives.

CREDIT VALUE: 1 NC Credit

ACCESS STATEMENT: Access is at the discretion of the centre. However, it would be beneficial if the candidate had achieved National Certificate Module 7170005 Introduction to People and Politics, or SCE Standard Grade Modern Studies or Contemporary Social Studies, or equivalent.

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE; UNIT SPECIFICATION

STATEMENT OF STANDARDS

UNIT NUMBER: 7170055

UNIT TITLE: PEOPLE AND POLITICS: SCOTTISH SOCIETY

Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

OUTCOME

1.   EXPLAIN THE WORKING OF GOVERNMENT IN SCOTLAND WITH REFERENCE TO A KEY POLITICAL DECISION OR ISSUE

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

(a)   The explanation of the political decision or issue is clear.
(b)   The description of the decision-making process is clear.
(c)   The description of the circumstances leading to consideration of the issue and/or need to make a decision is clear.
(d)   The explanation of the relevance of political ideas to decision making is clear and makes reference to the policies of different political parties.

RANGE STATEMENT

Political decision or issue: with reference to current policies; with reference to political trends.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written and/or oral evidence which satisfies all of the performance criteria in relation to the structure and organisation of Scottish politics and in respect of a political decision or issue at local, national or international level.

For PC (d) the policies of at least two political parties should be considered.

OUTCOME

> **2.** ANALYSE AND INTERPRET DATA RELEVANT TO A POLITICAL ISSUE

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

> (a) The analysis of the given data is clear.
> (b) The identification of the degree of objectivity of the data is accurate and takes account of bias and accuracy or inaccuracy.
> (c) The interpretation of the relevant data is accurate in terms of its uses and worth.

RANGE STATEMENT

Sources of given data: primary; secondary; media; official.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written and/or oral evidence which satisfies all of the performance criteria in relation to:

(i) the structure and organisation of Scottish politics;

and in respect of one of the following topics:

(ii) finance;
(iii) housing;
(iv) education.

OUTCOME

> **3.** EVALUATE A POLITICAL ISSUE USING DIFFERENT POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

> (a) The identification of a political issue is correct.
> (b) The analysis of the political issue is carried out within the framework of different political perspectives in a balanced manner.
> (c) The selection of data and examples to be used in the analysis is relevant to the issue and reflects value, bias and accuracy or inaccuracy.
> (d) Conclusions drawn from the analysis are valid and can be justified in terms of the data selected.

RANGE STATEMENT

Political issue: current; with reference to the views of at least two political parties.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written and/or oral evidence which satisfies all of the performance criteria for one political issue at local, national or international level in relation to:

(i)   the structure and organisation of Scottish politics;

and another in respect of one of the following topics:

(ii)   finance;
(iii)   housing;
(iv)   education.

ASSESSMENT

In order to achieve this unit, candidates are required to present sufficient evidence that they have met all the performance criteria for each outcome within the range specified. Details of these requirements are given for each outcome. The assessment instruments used should follow the general guidance offered by the SQA assessment model and an integrative approach to assessment is encouraged. (See references at the end of support notes.)

Accurate records should be made of the assessment instruments used showing how evidence is generated for each outcome and giving marking schemes and/or checklists, etc. Records of candidates' achievements should be kept. These records will be available for external verification.

SPECIAL NEEDS

In certain cases, modified outcomes and range statements can be proposed for certification. See references at end of support notes.

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE: UNIT SPECIFICATION

SUPPORT NOTES

UNIT NUMBER: 7170055

UNIT TITLE: PEOPLE AND POLITICS: SCOTTISH SOCIETY

SUPPORT NOTES: This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. None of the sections of the support notes is mandatory.

NOTIONAL DESIGN LENGTH: SQA allocates a notional design length to a unit on the basis of time estimated for achievement of the stated standards by a candidate whose starting point is as described in the access statement. The notional design length for this unit is 40 hours. The use of notional design length for programme design and timetabling is advisory only.

PURPOSE   This module has been designed as part of a series of modules at different levels of demand which accredit competence in the Social Sciences. The series was designed to facilitate entry to Higher Education. However, the modules in the series may be used in their own right with senior school pupils, adult returners and those whose employment requires them to develop a broad social perspective. Social Science modules may also be useful in adding breadth and ensuring balance in modular programmes.

SQA publishes summaries of NC units for easy reference, publicity purposes, centre handbooks, etc. The summary statement for this unit is as follows:

This module will introduce you to the political perspective and will put you in a position to undertake further modules in this area or to progress to do a practical investigation.

CONTENT/CONTEXT   Corresponding to Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

The following topic must be studied:

(i)   The political structure and organisation of Scottish Society.

         Local authorities; officials; councillors; accountability; local democracy; provision of services; national issues; role of COSLA; relationship with Scottish Office; devolution/Scottish Assembly.

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Corresponding to Outcomes 2 and 3:

One of the following topics must be studied in addition to (i) above. These set the parameters from which both the historical and current aspects of issues may be taken. Ideally, all topics should be introduced but only one studied in depth after negotiation with the candidate.

(ii)   Finance

         Domestic and non-domestic rates; local taxes; central government grants.

         Local government income.

         Local government expenditure.

         Breakdown of services and costs; subsidies; 'rate-capping' by central government.

(iii)   Housing

         Council house provision: modernisation and renewal; housing for specific groups; statutory responsibility problems related to housing estates; sale of council houses.

         Alternative provision: housing associations; privatisation.

(iv)   Education

         Local authority provision; nursery; primary; secondary; community education; educational initiatives; school boards; Parents Charter.

         Alternative provision: private school sector; F.E. colleges; higher education; policies and controls.

Political Issues

All of the above topics are affected by changing policies at local, national and international level. Issues chosen for study should be relevant, should reflect changing political trends and should arise out of current policies in the topic area. They should also reflect the political system within Scotland.

The following concepts should also be introduced as and when appropriate to the topic and society being studied:

(a)   representation;
(b)   participation;
(c)   power and authority;
(d)   ideology;
(e)   rights and responsibilities.

APPROACHES TO GENERATING EVIDENCE   The following approaches are recommended: discussion, case study, tutor/trainer exposition etc. These would involve an examination of a wide range of materials, including TV documentaries, media artefacts, articles, journals, census materials and social statistics. Candidates should be encouraged to reflect politically on their own experiences. Negotiation of issues should be a central feature of this module.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES   Centres may use the instruments of assessment which are considered by tutors/trainers to be the most appropriate. Examples of instruments of assessment which could be used are as follows:

Corresponding to outcomes:

1.   Restricted response.

2.   Structured question. One question for each performance criterion.

3.   Extended response. This should cover all aspects of the performance criteria.

PROGRESSION   This unit belongs to the intermediate grouping in a series of units on People and Politics. Successful candidates may wish subsequently to progress to unit 7173070 Practical Investigation in the Social Sciences: People and Politics which sets more demanding targets. Alternatively, candidates may wish to do another unit at the same level from the following:

      People and Politics: British Society
      People and Politics: European/EU Society
      People and Politics: Global Society
      People and Politics: Optional Society

Unit 7170005 Introduction to People and Politics sets less demanding targets for candidates.

RECOGNITION   Many SQA NC units are recognised for entry/recruitment purposes. For up-to-date information see the SQA guide 'Recognised Groupings of National Certificate Modules'.

REFERENCES

1.   Guide to unit writing.
2.   For a fuller discussion on assessment issues, please refer to SQA's Guide to Assessment.
3.   Procedures for special needs statements are set out in SQA's guide 'Students' with Special Needs'.
4.   Information for centres on SQA's operating procedures is contained in SQA's Guide to Procedures.
5.   For details of other SQA publications, please consult SQA's publications list.