

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT	Political Theory: An Introduction (Intermediate 1)
NUMBER	D389 10
COURSE	Politics (Intermediate 1)

SUMMARY

This is a mandatory component unit of Intermediate 1 Politics but it can also be offered as a free standing unit.

It offers a basic introduction to politics for post-16 candidates covering elementary knowledge and understanding of political concepts and principles. It also introduces candidates to simple analysis and comparison of different political models and encourages the development of basic analytical, interpretive and critical skills.

Successful candidates will have gained basic knowledge and understanding of a range of concepts, principles and models which they can use to interpret and make judgements about political developments and events. By examining different political contexts they can make better sense of their world and interpret new information. They will be able to contribute to debates on political issues, recognise bias and appreciate alternative points of view.

The unit is designed to meet the needs of:

- candidates undertaking an Intermediate 1 course in Politics
- candidates undertaking a Scottish Group Award at Intermediate 1 or 2
- candidates who seek an introduction to Politics and who wish to undertake a free-standing unit in the subject

Administrative Information

Superclass:	EA
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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Political Theory: An Introduction (Intermediate 1)

OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe, in brief, key political concepts.
- 2 Describe, in brief, key political ideas.
- 3 Analyse, at a basic level, political models in different political contexts.
- 4 Evaluate simple evidence and reach conclusions on an issue related to political theory.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. However, it would be beneficial if candidates had attained the following:

- a Standard Grade social subject at grade 5 or 6, or relevant Access units
- Standard Grade English at grade 6 or above or Communication at Access 3
- any other relevant qualification at an appropriate level

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 1.

CORE SKILLS

This unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete core skills for the unit	None
Core skills components for the unit	Critical Thinking Int 1

Additional information about core skills is published in *Automatic Certification of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 1999).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Political Theory: An Introduction (Intermediate 1)

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

Describe, in brief, key political concepts.

Performance criteria

- a) Key political concepts are identified correctly.
- b) Key political concepts are described simply and correctly.
- c) Key political concepts are applied simply and correctly in different political contexts.

Evidence requirements

PC (a) written or oral identification of three concepts from those listed below.

PC (b) simple written or oral description of one concept from those listed below.

PC (c) simple written or oral description of the application of one concept in two different political contexts.

Concepts: choose **three** from democracy, power, authority, representation, responsibility, constitution, the state, ideology.

Political contexts: choose **two** from local, national or international, contexts for each concept.

OUTCOME 2

Describe, in brief, key political ideas.

Performance criteria

- a) Key political ideas are identified correctly.
- b) Key political ideas are described simply and correctly.
- c) Key political ideas are related simply and correctly in different political contexts.

Evidence requirements

PC (a) written or oral identification of two ideas from those listed below.

PC (b) simple written or oral description of one idea from those below.

PC (c) simple written or oral description of the application of one political idea in different political contexts.

Political ideas: choose **two** from freedom, rights (natural, human and legal), equality, justice.

Political contexts: choose **two** from local, national or international, contexts for each idea.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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OUTCOME 3

Analyse, at a basic level, political models in different political contexts.

Performance criteria

- a) Key political models are identified correctly.
- b) The relationship between political models and political parties is described simply and correctly.

Evidence requirements

PC (a) written or oral identification of two political models chosen from those listed below.
PC (b) simple written or oral description of two political models and parties from different contexts.

Political models: choose **two** from conservatism, liberalism, socialism, nationalism.

Political contexts: choose **two** from local, national or international, contexts for each model.

OUTCOME 4

Evaluate simple evidence and reach conclusions on an issue related to political theory.

Performance criteria

- a) Contrasting views on an issue related to political theory are identified correctly.
- b) Contrasting views on an issue related to political theory are described simply and correctly.
- c) Examples of bias are recognised and described simply and correctly.
- d) Conclusions reached are valid.

Evidence requirements

PC (a) written or oral identification of two contrasting views.
PC (b) simple written or oral description of two contrasting views.
PC (c) simple written or oral description of one example of bias.
PC (d) simple written or oral conclusion which must be related to the points made in PC (b) and PC (c).

Political issues: choose **one** from the individual and the state, equality, responsibility and accountability, freedom and rights.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Political Theory: An Introduction (Intermediate 1)

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

This unit has the same content as Introduction to Political Theory (Int 2). However, the units are differentiated by outcomes, performance criteria and evidence requirements. It follows that in a bi-level class, while candidates will cover the same content they will not be expected to master it in the same way, ie, to the same depth of knowledge and understanding or level of skill development.

This unit, like its Intermediate 2 partner, offers an introduction to Politics and is set in the context of political theory. Full details of the content of this unit are set out in the course specification for Intermediate 1 Politics.

It is intended to introduce candidates to basic political theories and to encourage them, where appropriate, to relate these theories to their own experiences. Most importantly candidates will begin to appreciate that the political process involves the resolution of conflicts and collective decision making within different political contexts and from different political perspectives.

At this level, the introduction to political theory is achieved through the understanding of political concepts such as democracy, power, representation and responsibility. By using a contextual and illustrative approach, candidates will explore for themselves the nature of Politics and political theory at an introductory level.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Proposals regarding approaches to learning and teaching are contained in the course specification for Intermediate 1 Politics, but for this unit particular emphasis should be placed on active learning methods and a candidate-centred approach. A good variety of resources is critical for this approach. These should be interesting, accessible and manageable, and reflect the experiences of candidates working at this level.

The outcomes are interconnected and should be approached as such. It is recommended that, wherever possible, outcomes should be covered in an integrated way, eg, the study of a liberal political model may be used as a context to cover all concepts, principles and outcomes. By adopting this approach, candidates will become aware of the interdependent nature of political theories and models.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Political Theory: An Introduction (Intermediate 1)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence of attainment of the outcomes in this unit may be provided by a variety of methods of assessment. Matching exercises, simple structured questions, short responses, assignments or a project may all be used. Where more open-ended assessments are used, candidates working at this level will require careful briefing and clear records must be maintained to note the achievement of outcomes. Account should be taken of the nature of the class group at this level in deciding which form of assessment should be adopted. Wherever possible, a holistic strategy should be used and an outcome by outcome approach avoided. However, where an integrated approach is used for assessment it will be necessary to identify where in the candidate's response each outcome has been met.

If the evidence is gathered by means of a single assessment towards the end of the unit, care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for remediation and reassessment if required.

Where assessments are set which allow candidates to demonstrate performance beyond the minimum standard required, evidence gathered for internal unit assessment may also be used for grade prediction and for appeals for external course assessment. (For details of the grade descriptions for external assessment, refer to the Intermediate 1 Politics course details.)

SPECIAL NEEDS

This unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special 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 SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment and Certification Arrangements for Candidates with Special Needs/Candidates whose First Language is not English* (SQA, 1998).