

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Social Stratification (Intermediate 1)

CODE DV3M 10

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to introduce candidates to sociology by introducing the concept of social stratification and developing knowledge of the ways individuals and groups are classified by socially generated criteria. Its focus is upon the variety and relative nature of the main systems of social stratification.

This Unit seeks to explore the variety of ways in which individuals may be classified into different social groups using socially generated criteria. The five categories of social stratification included in the Unit have considerable impact upon the lives of individuals and social groups.

This is a free-standing Intermediate 1 Sociology Unit, but links well to the Units *Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach* (Intermediate 1) and *Socialisation* (Intermediate 1).

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate a knowledge of the concepts of social stratification.
- 2 Demonstrate a knowledge of the categories of social stratification.

Administrative Information

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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RECOMMENDED ENTRY

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

- ◆ A Standard Grade social subject at Foundation level
- ◆ Standard Grade English at Foundation level

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 1 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4*)

**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

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in this Unit.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

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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 a knowledge of the concepts of social stratification

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the concept of social stratification correctly.
- (b) Describe the sociological significance of social stratification on the UK and other societies.

OUTCOME 2

Demonstrate a knowledge of the categories of social stratification

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe categories of social stratification clearly.
- (b) Describe the effects of social stratification on society and its members correctly.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT

The mandatory content/context for this Unit is detailed in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards.

Evidence Requirements apply to the Unit as a whole and, therefore, apply holistically to all Outcomes of the Unit.

Candidates must produce written and/or oral evidence for all Outcomes and Performance Criteria to achieve the Unit. The assessment should take the form of an unseen, closed-book, supervised test that should be completed in one hour or less. It should be taken on a single occasion. The instrument of assessment should take the form of a range of restricted response type questions, and should make use of stimulus material as a tool with which to help candidates focus on the question(s) posed.

The concept of social stratification will always be assessed as part of the Unit assessment. **Two out of five** categories of social stratification and their effects on society should be studied prior to candidates being asked to prepare for assessment, with candidates only being assessed on **one** of them. Candidates *should not* be informed prior to the Unit assessment which category of social stratification they will be assessed on. Candidate responses at this level will be wholly descriptive — there is no requirement to analyse or evaluate in Outcomes or Performance Criteria.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Sampling

Assessment of the Unit should incorporate appropriate sampling of the Unit content. For example, if a candidate demonstrates knowledge and understanding of one category of social stratification in the UK, she/he should also be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the other category. If a candidate correctly identifies features of structured inequality in one of these categories covered in learning and teaching, it is inferred that she/he can identify features of structured inequality in any other category of social stratification covered in learning and teaching. This would ensure that both Outcomes and all Performance Criteria pertaining to them are achieved.

Any requirement for reassessment will be based upon a different sample from the range of content, including a different category of social stratification, where appropriate. Candidates should attempt a different instrument of assessment in its entirety.

Achievement will be decided by the use of 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 assessments for this Unit, they should be of comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Social Stratification (Intermediate 1)

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

While the exact time allocated to the Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THE UNIT

The Appendix to the Statement of Standards contains the mandatory requirements for this Unit.

This Unit has the same content as the Unit *Social Stratification* (Intermediate 2). However, the Units are differentiated by Outcomes, Performance Criteria and Evidence Requirements.

The Unit, like its Intermediate 2 counterpart, offers an introduction to categories of social stratification and the social inequality it causes. The Unit is intended to introduce candidates to social stratification by encouraging them to draw upon their own life experiences, where possible, in order to help make complicated explanations, more concrete. Candidates should be given the opportunity to discover for themselves the variety of social behaviours within as wide a range of cultural contexts as possible, including the UK. These may include cross-cultural, sub-cultural, anthropological, contemporary and historical settings. Material resources should be made interesting and varied and sociological concepts should be approached in a comparative and descriptive way.

At this level, the introduction to sociological theory is achieved through the understanding of sociological concepts like social stratification. By using a contextual and illustrative approach, it is hoped that candidates will explore for themselves the nature of social inequality, diversity and change.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THE UNIT

It is proposed that the learning experience at this level should be varied, to encourage enthusiasm for the subject and to stimulate and prepare candidates for independent study.

As the Unit has the same content as the Unit *Social Stratification* (Intermediate 2), 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. In other words, the same depth of knowledge and understanding or the same level of skills development will not be expected for Intermediate 1 candidates.

The Unit should be approached using a wide range of stimulus materials and teaching approaches. Candidates should be encouraged to draw on their own experiences, where appropriate, and should have access to resources such as audio-visual material, invited speakers, Internet, ICT and paper-based resources. Where appropriate, the material should be up to date and relevant to the Unit, the level of study and the interests of the candidates. For Intermediate 1 Sociology Units it is recognised that the concepts and explanations covered in the Unit should be approached in a descriptive way.

Due to the closely related nature of the Outcomes and Performance Criteria of this Unit, it would be appropriate to deliver the Outcomes and Performance Criteria in an integrative way, where possible.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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The emphasis throughout should be on interactive learning, whether through whole class, small group, or individual activity. The Unit may be delivered on a flexible basis and may also be suitable for open learning and on-line delivery.

The Intermediate 1 Units have been written in such a way that bi-level teaching of the Units and the Intermediate 2 Course is possible, though centres should take into account that Intermediate 1 candidates would not require Course assessment preparation.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THE UNIT

The Evidence Requirements provide specific requirements for Unit assessment.

Outcomes and Performance Criteria should be assessed by means of a single holistic instrument of assessment lasting no more than one hour. The Unit assessment must ensure that *all* Outcomes and Performance Criteria are fully met.

Sampling of content in the Unit assessment is acceptable. In the Unit the sampling will be from the categories of social stratification covered in learning and teaching. NAB materials provide assessment instruments and guidance on implementation. The NAB is made up of restricted response-type questions. Where centres wish to devise their own instruments of assessment, they should refer to the NAB to ensure a comparable standard. It is recommended that centre-devised instruments of assessment should be submitted to SQA for prior moderation.

Evidence should be gathered by means of a single assessment at the end of the Unit. Care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for support and reassessment of candidates if required.

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 SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, September 2004).

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Social Stratification (Intermediate 1)

NB: This Appendix is within the Statement of Standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Content and context

The concept of social stratification

The Unit should begin with definitions of social stratification, such as it being a socially constructed concept, based on structured inequality. The inequality may be in the form of income and wealth, an individual's biological or ethnic make-up, or may be as a result of disability or age. Simple reference can be made to contrasting sociological theories that seek to explain social stratification and resultant social inequality, which would help provide candidates with an appropriate introduction to what is meant by social stratification. Examples of common sense explanations can be drawn from candidates' every day lives to help illustrate the extent of social stratification.

The categories of social stratification

Two out of the **five** categories of social stratification should be covered in learning and teaching, though candidates will only be assessed in Unit assessment in **one** of these categories. Candidates should be made fully aware of the considerable impact the chosen categories of social stratification can have upon the lives of individuals and social groups.

The concept of social stratification in modern society should be introduced through a definition and study of **two** of the following categories of social stratification – social class; gender; race and ethnicity; age; disability.

Some indicative features of these categories are as follows:

(a) **Social Class**

- ◆ distinction between wealth and income and their distribution in society
- ◆ social mobility and the link between class and life chances
- ◆ changing nature of class and its relationship to the economy and occupational structure
- ◆ use of the United Kingdom as an example

(b) **Gender**

- ◆ difference between biological notion of sex and the socially constructed notion of gender
- ◆ nature and consequences of gender role socialisation
- ◆ gender inequalities in terms of occupation, family and social roles and expectations
- ◆ use of the United Kingdom as an example

(c) **Race and Ethnicity**

- ◆ nature, size and distribution of different racial and ethnic groups in modern society
- ◆ inequality relating to race and ethnicity; in particular, discrimination in education, employment and on life chances
- ◆ role of the mass media in the formation of stereotypes and the consequences for ethnic groups
- ◆ use of the United Kingdom as an example

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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(d) Age

- ◆ social construction of the concept of age, including awareness of different notions of childhood, adolescence and old age in different societies
- ◆ inequalities as a result of age, such as employment, unemployment, low pay, access to benefits and restrictions on social behaviour
- ◆ implications of changes in the age structure of modern society
- ◆ use of the United Kingdom as an example

(e) Disability

- ◆ social construction of disability
- ◆ inequality relating to disability; in particular, discrimination in education, employment and on life chances
- ◆ role of the mass media in the formation of negative stereotypes and the consequences for disabled individuals and groups
- ◆ use of the United Kingdom as an example.

In all five categories of social stratification, other relevant features may be used to supplement these features, providing they are widely recognised as being sociologically appropriate.

The sociological significance of social stratification

The hierarchical and unequal ways in which groups can be formed in society should be addressed, with the effect this may have on individuals' or social groups' life chances.

The effects of stratification upon the lives of individuals and groups

The above aspects of social stratification should be studied in order to explore the nature of social relationships, processes, structures and issues. Sub-cultural, cross-cultural, historical, contemporary or anthropological examples (including the UK) should be used wherever possible and candidates should be encouraged to apply sociological insights to current social issues or their own life experiences.