

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2

CODE DV40 12

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit focuses on the sociological understanding of two substantive areas of human social behaviour. The Unit is divided into four optional topic areas and candidates must study two topics chosen from the following areas — the sociology of the family, the sociology of welfare and poverty, the sociology of crime and deviance and the sociology of the mass media. The Unit focuses on the UK but, wherever possible, cross-cultural or comparative studies may be used for comparison. Where possible, reference should be made to recent research.

The Unit builds on the knowledge and understanding gained from the *Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)* Unit.

This is a mandatory Unit in the Higher Sociology Course. This Unit can also be taken as a free-standing Unit for candidates who wish to gain a sound understanding of two substantive areas of human social behaviour.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe sociological topics and their relationship to human society.
- 2 Evaluate the contribution of key sociological theories to an understanding of sociological topics.
- 3 Evaluate selected aspects of sociological topics using different sociological theories and studies.

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:

- ◆ Intermediate 2 Sociology Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ A Standard Grade in a social subject at Credit level
- ◆ Standard Grade English at Credit level or Intermediate 2 Communication

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 Skill component	Critical Thinking at SCQF Level 6

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in the 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 sociological topics and their relationship to human society

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe sociological topics succinctly and correctly.
- (b) Describe key features of sociological topics succinctly and correctly.

OUTCOME 2

Evaluate the contribution of key sociological theories to an understanding of sociological topics

Performance Criteria

- (a) Correctly apply relevant and contrasting sociological theories to topics.
- (b) Provide a balanced evaluation of the contribution of contrasting sociological theories to understanding topics.

OUTCOME 3

Evaluate selected aspects of sociological topics using different sociological theories and studies

Performance Criteria

- (a) Explain aspects of topics in a balanced way by taking account of different sociological studies.
- (b) Use relevant evidence from a range of sociological studies to support the explanations.
- (c) Develop sociological arguments, based on evidence and examples used in relevant sociological studies.
- (d) Make balanced evaluations that refer to evidence and arguments from contrasting sociological theories.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT

The Appendix to the Statement of Standards details the mandatory content/context for the Unit.

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 of the Unit. The assessment should take the form of an unseen, closed-book, supervised test that should be completed in one hour. The instrument of assessment should take the form of an extended response-type (essay) question.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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The response for the Unit assessment should provide evidence to cover all the Outcomes and Performance Criteria, and should begin with an appropriate introduction addressing definitions and features relating to the topic. The response should then provide contrasting theoretical discussion on the topic, with appropriate analysis and evaluation. A major aspect of the topic should be introduced, followed by two studies, where the main findings and an appropriate evaluation should be given for each study. A summary/conclusion should provide some final evaluation of evidence and argument from contrasting sociological studies.

Two of the four options will be selected for study in this Unit, with candidates being asked to prepare for Unit assessment in any **one** of the topics studied.

The assessment instrument can use an appropriate sample of Unit content. For example, if a candidate demonstrates knowledge, understanding and an ability to analyse and evaluate one topic, then it is inferred that she or he will be able to demonstrate the same level of achievement for the other topic covered in learning and teaching in the Unit. Each topic allows for coverage of all three Outcomes (including all Performance Criteria), ensuring that Unit assessment that samples one topic will provide adequate inferred evidence of overall Unit achievement.

Any requirement for reassessment will be based upon a different sample from the range of content, where appropriate, and candidates must attempt a different instrument of assessment, on either topic, in its entirety.

Achievement will be decided by the use of a cut-off score of 60%. The National Assessment Bank items illustrate the standard which should be applied and also the nature and extent of the sample to be used. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

Candidate responses will be descriptive in nature, and a proportion of analysis and evaluation is required at this level. The split between knowledge and understanding and analysis and evaluation in Unit assessment is 60% knowledge and understanding and 40% analysis and evaluation.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

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 content.

Each substantive topic area of sociology included in the Unit serves to broaden and deepen sociological understanding. The Unit focuses on the UK but, wherever possible, cross-cultural or comparative studies may be used for comparison.

There is a choice of **two from four** sociological topics. These are:

- ◆ the sociology of the family
- ◆ the sociology of welfare and poverty
- ◆ the sociology of crime and deviance
- ◆ the sociology of the mass media.

The main emphasis of the Unit is on the sociology of chosen topics. Outcome 1 should be seen, therefore, as an opportunity to introduce, provide an overview of and contextualise the topics and should not be allocated a disproportionate amount of time or attention.

Within each topic area, there is an opportunity to select for sociological analysis and evaluation, aspects associated with that topic. **Two** contrasting theories, **two** studies, **two** features, **two** changes and **three** aspects will be covered for each topic. It is envisaged that the three areas associated with the aspects would naturally be covered in the teaching and learning of the three aspects and should not result in an added burden. Teachers/lecturers are, of course, free to encourage candidates to study more than the minimum requirement as listed.

Topic 1: Sociology of the family

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of the family with some of the key features and definitions of the topic. These could include the key functions carried out by the family and changing interpretations of these functions, from sociobiology to the present.

Two or more relevant, contrasting sociological theories from the following list will be discussed in relation to this topic:

- ◆ functionalism
- ◆ Marxism
- ◆ new right
- ◆ feminism
- ◆ Weberianism
- ◆ any other pertinent sociological theory

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

In studying these theories, candidates would examine their main features and analyse their strengths and weaknesses. In each case candidates would analyse **two** studies and apply these theories to the **three** specified aspects.

Topic 2: Sociology of welfare and poverty

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of welfare and poverty with some of the key features and definitions of the topic. Various issues, such as a widening gap between the rich and poor, should be covered.

Two or more relevant, contrasting sociological theories from the following list will be discussed in relation to this topic:

- ◆ functionalism
- ◆ Marxism
- ◆ the New right
- ◆ feminism
- ◆ individualism
- ◆ culture of poverty
- ◆ any other pertinent sociological theory

In studying these theories, candidates would examine their main features and analyse their strengths and weaknesses. In each case candidates would analyse **two** studies and apply these theories to the **three** specified aspects.

Topic 3: Sociology of crime and deviance

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of crime and deviance with some of the key features and definitions of the topic.

Two or more relevant, contrasting sociological theories from the following list will be discussed in relation to this topic:

- ◆ functionalism
- ◆ Marxism
- ◆ New left realism
- ◆ feminism
- ◆ interactionism
- ◆ subcultural
- ◆ any other pertinent sociological theory

In studying these theories, candidates would examine their main features and analyse their strengths and weaknesses. In each case candidates would analyse **two** studies and apply these theories to the **three** specified aspects.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

Topic 4: Sociology of the mass media

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of the mass media with some of the key features and definitions of the topic. Various factors, such as types of newspaper coverage, TV programming, and their purpose should also be discussed.

Two or more relevant, contrasting sociological theories from the following list will be discussed in relation to this topic:

- ◆ functionalism
- ◆ Marxism
- ◆ pluralism
- ◆ feminism
- ◆ interactionism
- ◆ hypodermic syringe model
- ◆ any other pertinent sociological theory

In studying these theories, candidates would study their main features and analyse their strengths and weaknesses. In each case candidates would analyse **two** studies and apply these theories to the **three** specified aspects.

In each topic, where there are substantially different approaches within a theory, the comparisons and contrasts within that theory may be sufficient for the purposes of analysis and evaluation. For example, manipulative and hegemonic Marxist approaches to the role of the mass media, or liberal, radical or Marxist feminist approaches to many areas of sociology.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THE UNIT

For candidates studying this Unit as part of the Higher Sociology Course, advice regarding approaches to learning and teaching are contained in the Course specification. It is suggested 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.

The Unit should be approached using a wide range of stimulus materials and teaching approaches. Candidates should be encouraged to draw upon 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 the Higher Sociology Course it is recognised that certain key sociological commentary and research, regardless of publication, is appropriate. Comparisons with more up to date research should be used, where appropriate. 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.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

The Outcomes are interconnected and should be approached as such. It is recommended that, wherever possible, Outcomes should be covered in an integrated way. An Outcome-by-Outcome approach, which could lead to a compartmentalised view of sociology, should be avoided.

If undertaking this Unit as part of the Higher Sociology Course, it is advised that the *Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)* Unit is delivered first. This would allow for an introduction to theories and research methods, which may then be more effectively applied to the Unit, and for movement between Higher and Intermediate 2 levels in the first few months of the Course.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THE UNIT

The Evidence Requirements provide specific requirements for Unit assessment.

Outcomes and Performance Criteria are assessed holistically. The Unit assessment must cover *all* Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Cut-off scores will be used and the Evidence Requirements, the Appendix and the NABs should be consulted for details.

Sampling of Unit content is acceptable. NAB materials provide assessment instruments and guidance on implementation. The questions require essay-type responses conducted under supervised, closed-book conditions. 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 of one hour, taken towards the end of the Unit. Care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for remediation and reassessment, 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 document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

Appendix: Content and context

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

Two of the following four topics must be covered in terms of learning and teaching in this Unit. For the purpose of Unit assessment, *either* of the topics covered in learning and teaching may be used for the purposes of sampling.

Two contrasting theories, **two** studies, **two** features, **two** changes and **three** aspects will be covered for each topic, as follows:

Topic 1: Sociology of the family

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of the family with some of the key features and definitions of the topic.

Any two relevant, contrasting sociological theories

Any two relevant studies

NB: Some of the points listed below could equally be considered features or changes since many changes become features.

Two features, from:

- ◆ the various family types — single, nuclear, reconstituted, adopted
- ◆ marriage and divorce
- ◆ conjugal roles
- ◆ power and patriarchy

Two changes, from:

- ◆ changes in the provision of key functions of the family
- ◆ changing family patterns
- ◆ the changing structure and organisation of the family

Three aspects:

- ◆ changes in family patterns — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ conjugal roles — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ marital breakdown — an analysis of two features and two studies

The following **areas** must be covered in the teaching of each of the above aspects:

- ◆ the changing role of women in the family
- ◆ the changing role of men in the family
- ◆ power relationships

It is envisaged that the above areas would be taught naturally through each of the aspects and should not result in additional content. Please note that Unit and Course assessment will not specify or focus entirely on these areas.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

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Topic 2: Sociology of welfare and poverty

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of welfare and poverty with some of the key features and definitions of the topic.

Any two relevant, contrasting sociological theories

Any two relevant studies

NB: Some of the points listed below could equally be considered features or changes since many changes become features.

Two features, from:

- ◆ the welfare state and social policies to alleviate poverty
- ◆ indicators of the experience of poverty (eg health, income and wealth, education, housing)
- ◆ those most likely to experience poverty (eg the elderly, children, women, ethnic minorities)

Two changes:

- ◆ definitions and measurement of poverty, for example, absolute to relative measurements of poverty
- ◆ the widening gap between the rich and poor

Three aspects:

- ◆ Poverty and the Welfare State — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ the Welfare State and social inequality — class — an analysis of two features and studies
- ◆ the Welfare State and social inequality — gender — an analysis of two features and studies

The following **areas** must be covered in the teaching of each of the above aspects:

- ◆ health
- ◆ the underclass
- ◆ employment and unemployment

It is envisaged that the above areas would be taught naturally through each of the aspects and should not result in additional content. Please note that Unit and Course assessment will not specify or focus entirely on these areas.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

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Topic 3: Sociology of crime and deviance

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of crime and deviance with some of the key features and definitions of the topic.

Any two relevant, contrasting sociological theories

Any two relevant studies

NB Some of the points listed below could equally be considered features or changes since many changes become features.

Two features, from:

- ◆ definitions of crime and deviance and the socially constructed nature of crime and deviance
- ◆ the measurement and validity of criminal statistics

Two changes, from:

- ◆ more women convicted of crimes
- ◆ new types of crime — eg computer crime, people trafficking
- ◆ nature and definition of crime and deviance, change and diversity

Three aspects:

- ◆ labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy — an analysis of two features and studies
- ◆ crime statistics — an analysis of two features and studies
- ◆ gender — an analysis of two features and studies

The following **areas** must be covered in the teaching of each of the above aspects:

- ◆ poverty
- ◆ the penal system
- ◆ social class

It is envisaged that the above areas would be taught naturally through each of the aspects and should not result in additional content. Please note that Unit and Course assessment will not specify or focus entirely on these areas.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

Topic 4: Sociology of the Mass Media

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of the mass media with some of the key features and definitions of the topic.

Any two relevant, contrasting sociological theories

Any two relevant studies

NB: Some of the points listed below could equally be considered features or changes since many changes become features.

Two features, from:

- ◆ definition of the mass media
- ◆ the types of the mass media
- ◆ role of the mass media
- ◆ media consumption/audiences

Two changes, from:

- ◆ the changing types of the mass media (eg satellite TV, Internet)
- ◆ the changing nature of the mass media (eg ownership and control, trends in organisation)
- ◆ the impact of the mass media on its audience, in terms of ownership, bias and influence

Three aspects:

- ◆ ownership and control — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ socialisation — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ bias, influence and attitude formation — an analysis of two features and two studies

The following **areas** must be covered in the teaching of each of the above aspects:

- ◆ gender
- ◆ ethnicity
- ◆ political bias

It is envisaged that the above areas would be taught naturally through each of the aspects and should not result in additional content. Please note that Unit and Course assessment will not specify or focus entirely on these areas.

In each topic, where there are substantially different approaches within a theory, the comparisons and contrasts within that theory may be sufficient for the purposes of analysis and evaluation. For example, manipulative and hegemonic Marxist approaches to the role of the mass media, or liberal, radical or Marxist feminist approaches to many areas of sociology.