SCQF level 6
Unit Specification

XSQA

Sociology: Human Society

SCQF: level 6 (6 SCQF credit points)

Unit code: J2DD 76

Unit outline

The general aim of this Unit is to develop learners' understanding of the sociological approach to studying human societies. This will be achieved by developing and using analytical skills to investigate sociological approaches to studying society, research methods used and the relationships that exist amongst individuals, groups and institutions as viewed from different sociological perspectives and theories.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

1   Evaluate the sociological approach to understanding society
2   Analyse relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions

This Unit is available as a free-standing Unit. The Unit Specification should be read in conjunction with the *Unit Support Notes*, which provide advice and guidance on delivery, assessment approaches and development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Exemplification of the standards in this Unit is given in *Unit Assessment Support*.

Recommended entry

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by one or more of the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

♦   National 5 Sociology Course or relevant Units

Equality and inclusion

This Unit Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information, please refer to the *Unit Support Notes.*

Standards

Outcomes and assessment standards

Outcome 1

The learner will:

1   Evaluate the sociological approach to understanding society by:

1.1   Explaining what is meant by common-sense and sociological approaches to the study of human societies, giving examples of each
1.2   Evaluating one research method that tends to generate quantitative data
1.3   Evaluating one research method that tends to generate qualitative data

Outcome 2

The learner will:

2   Analyse relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions by:

2.1   Explaining features, strengths and weaknesses of structural and action theories
2.2   Analyse similarities and differences between sociological theories
2.3   Applying and justifying choice of a research method to a research scenario

Evidence Requirements for the Unit

Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

The justification of the research method must include reference to structural or action perspective.

Exemplification of assessment is provided in *Unit Assessment Support*.
Advice and guidance on possible approaches to assessment is provided in the *Unit Support Notes.*

Assessment standard thresholds

If a candidate successfully meets the requirements of the specified number of Assessment Standards they will be judged to have passed the Unit overall and no further re-assessment will be required.

The specific requirements for this Unit is as follows:

♦   Candidates do not need to be re-assessed for Assessment Standard 2.3 1 if they do not meet the requirements.

It should be noted that there will still be the requirement for candidates to be given the opportunity to meet all Assessment Standards. The above threshold has been put in place to reduce the volume of re-assessment where that is required.

Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Unit. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Unit are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and are drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Unit where there are appropriate opportunities.

1   Literacy

1.1   Reading
1.2   Writing
1.3   Listening and talking

4   Employability, enterprise and citizenship

4.6   Citizenship

5   Thinking skills

5.3   Applying
5.4   Analysing and evaluating

Amplification of these is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work.* The level of these skills should be at the same SCQF level as the Unit and be consistent with the SCQF level descriptor. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the *Unit Support Notes.*

Appendix: Unit support notes

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing this Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

♦ the *Unit Specification*
♦ the *Unit Assessment Support packs*

Developing skills, knowledge and understanding

Teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

Overarching guidance

There are a wide variety of learning and teaching approaches which can be used to deliver this Unit. The Unit Support Notes provide advice and guidance and some examples of approaches that could be used. At all times, teachers/lecturers should provide opportunities for personalisation and choice to ensure that learning is relevant and motivating. Learning should where possible be relevant to the learners' domestic and everyday life, their overall learning programme and/or work and leisure. Although challenging preconceived ideas about the nature of society is at the heart of this Unit, sensitivity must be exercised when dealing with opinions and beliefs.

Sequencing and timing

This Unit consists of two Outcomes which can be delivered and assessed in a variety of ways. Outcome 1 lays the foundation for the Unit and the study of sociology as a discipline, and so may be the best place to start. Alternatively a holistic approach may be taken by combining evaluation of research methods with analysis of sociological perspectives and theories.

Possible approaches to learning and teaching

A rich and supportive learning environment should be provided to enable a learner to achieve the best they can. This could include approaches which include:

♦   development of critical thinking skills
♦   asking learners to explain or show their thinking
♦   collaborative and independent learning
♦   discussion around new concepts and how they can be applied
♦   using technology where appropriate
♦   learners planning and/or participating in real-life activities involving sociological research methods

Examples of learning and teaching contexts

To evaluate the sociological approach to understanding society teachers/lecturers can exemplify common sense and sociological approaches using examples such as unemployment/poverty. Using a common sense approach, unemployment and poverty could be seen as inevitable or due to individual faults; though a sociological approach could look at national and international economic policies and the relative power of those who take decisions which result in increased unemployment and poverty for others.

It may be useful to use a grid such as:

| | **Sociology** | **Common sense** | |
Characteristics		**Individualistic**	**Naturalistic**
Based on	Theory, evidence, research	Personal experience, anecdotes, opinion	Beliefs, traditional views
Key features	Power, agency, relationships, attempts to be objective	Self, subjective	'factual'
Example: poverty	Economic structure, power relationships, societal function	Lazy, lack of personal responsibility	Poor are always with us

Research methods are crucial to an understanding of the sociological approach and should be considered as part of the examination of the nature of society.

The quantitative methods could be regarded individually and by looking at the commonality of empirical research. It is not necessary to explore positivism per se but this could be done here. Although surveys can often be viewed as synonymous with postal questionnaires (such as the British Crime Survey) and structured interviews, they can be distinct and form a separate method, particularly when the subjects do not need to respond.

Qualitative methods are varied and there are many examples. Documentaries could be viewed and the various ways of conducting unstructured interviews and focus groups could also be used.

Experiential learning by conducting mock research could be utilised. Actual examples of research which has already taken place could be used and these can be used to explore ethics of research and the criteria of reliability, validity, time, cost, ease, sample size, depth, breadth or nature of enquiry. The research process could be examined here, highlighting the role of theory, hypothesis, operationalisation (including the four sub-stages of operationalisation, which are: choosing a method; defining concepts; setting measurements; selecting a sample), fieldwork and processing of results.

To analyse the relationship of individuals, groups, institutions and societies from different sociological perspectives and theories teachers/lecturers can introduce learners to different strands in sociology, including perspectives and theories. The following diagram illustrates the relationship between perspectives and theories that may be used in sociology at this level.
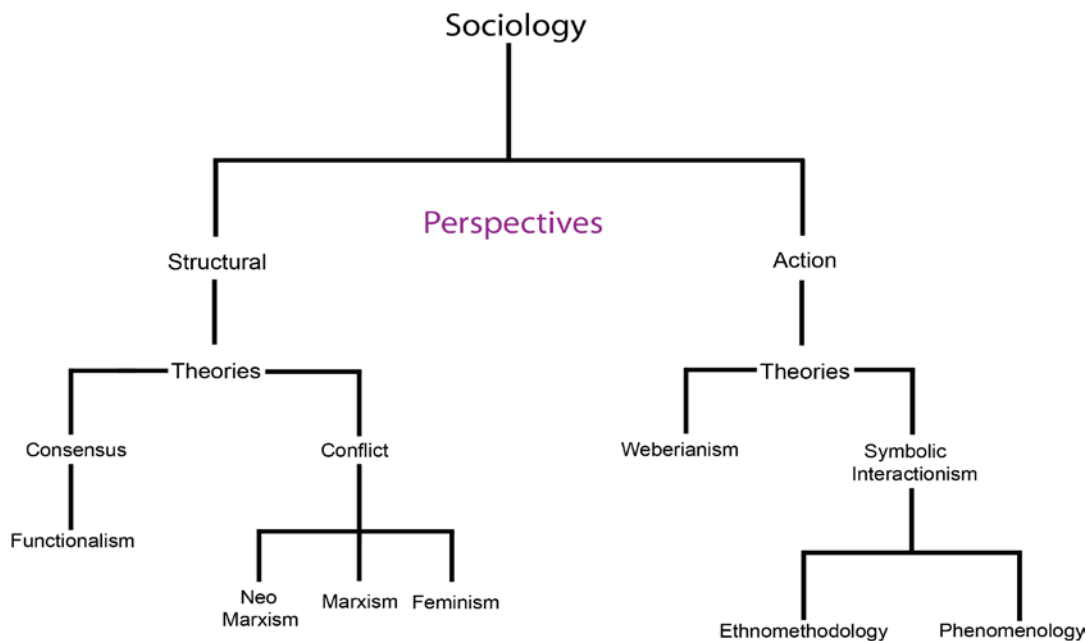
There is scope in this Unit to vary learning and teaching approaches and to exercise personalisation and choice. Assessment methods may also take a variety of formats but the evidence must clearly show that the assessment standards have been met.

Possible approaches to assessment and generating evidence of progress
Evidence of progress can be gathered throughout the Unit. Learners may write up a report on mock research conducted. Co-operative learning groups could offer opportunities for shared evaluation of examples of research studies. Learners should always be clear about what they are trying to learn and what is expected of them. Regular feedback about the quality of work is an important factor in making progress towards Unit Assessment. Structured tasks could be used to enable self-assessment and peer-assessment.

Combining assessment within Units

Assessment could be combined in this Unit by holistically assessing all the Outcomes of the Unit in a single assessment. When assessment within the Unit is holistic, teachers and lecturers should take particular care to track the evidence for each individual Outcome.

Administrative information

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Superclass: EE

History of changes to National Unit Specification

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	Page 3 – inclusion of theories in Assessment Standard 2.1 'Explaining features, strengths and weaknesses of structural and action perspectives and theories'.	Qualifications Manager	August 2015
3.0	Page 3: Assessment Standard 2.1 has been amended to remove sociological perspectives from the Assessment Standard.

Assessment Standard 2.2 has been changed from 'Applying structural and action perspectives and theories to explain relationships among individuals, groups and institutions' to 'Analyse similarities and differences between sociological theories'. | Qualifications Manager | April 2016 |
| 4.0 | Level changed from Higher to SCQF level 6. Unit support notes added. Assessment standard threshold added. | Qualifications Manager | September 2018 |
| 5.0 | Unit code updated | Qualifications Manager | July 2019 |