



Advanced Higher
Course Assessment
Specification



Advanced Higher Modern Studies Course Assessment Specification (C749 77)

Valid from August 2015

This edition: April 2015, version 1.1

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Assessment Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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Course outline

Course title:	Advanced Higher Modern Studies
SCQF level:	7 (32 SCQF credit points)
Course code:	C749 77
Course assessment code:	X749 77

The purpose of the Course Assessment Specification is to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the Course assessment and the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed.

Course assessment structure

Component 1 — question paper	90 marks
Component 2 — project-dissertation	50 marks
Total marks	140 marks

This Course includes eight SCQF credit points to allow preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course.

Equality and inclusion

This Course Assessment Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html.

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment of this Course is provided in the *Course/Unit Support Notes*.

Assessment

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all of the Units as well as the Course assessment. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

Course assessment

SQA will produce and give instructions for the production and conduct of Course assessments based on the information provided in this document.

Added value

The purpose of the Course assessment is to assess added value of the Course as well as confirming attainment in the Course and providing a grade. The added value for the Course will address the key purposes and aims of the Course, as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge, or application.

In this Course assessment, added value will focus on the following:

- ◆ challenge — requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
- ◆ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This added value consists of:

- ◆ drawing on, extending and applying the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired during the Course. This will be assessed by a question paper and a project
- ◆ demonstrating depth of knowledge and understanding and application of skills in the question paper. This will sample knowledge and understanding from the mandatory content of the Course and will require the application of skills
- ◆ demonstrating challenge and application through independent research related to an appropriate contemporary issue in the project

Grading

Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

The Course assessment is graded A–D. The grade is determined on the basis of the total mark for all Course assessments together.

A learner's overall grade will be determined by their performance across the Course assessment.

Grade description for C

For the award of Grade C, learners will have demonstrated successful performance in all of the Units of the Course. In the Course assessment, learners will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course.

Grade description for A

For the award of Grade A, learners will have demonstrated successful performance in all of the Units of the Course. In the Course assessment, learners will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course.

Credit

To take account of the extended range of learning and teaching approaches, remediation, consolidation of learning and integration needed for preparation for external assessment, six SCQF credit points are available in Courses at National 5 and Higher, and eight SCQF credit points in Courses at Advanced Higher. These points will be awarded when a Grade D or better is achieved.

Structure and coverage of the Course assessment

The Course assessment will consist of two Components: a question paper and a project-dissertation.

Component 1 — question paper

The purpose of this question paper is to demonstrate depth of knowledge and understanding and application of skills.

This question paper will give learners an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ analysing, synthesising and evaluating to structure and sustain lines of argument
- ◆ making international comparisons
- ◆ analysing and evaluating sources of information and social science research methods
- ◆ applying knowledge and understanding of complex political or social issues

The question paper has three optional Sections. The question paper will be marked out of 90.

Learners will answer questions from one of the following Sections:

- ◆ Political Issues
- ◆ Social Issues, Law and Order
- ◆ Social Issues, Social Inequality

Section 1: Political Issues

In this Section, learners will answer two extended response questions from a choice of three. Each question will be worth 30 marks. There will be one question from each area of study from the mandatory content specified in the 'Further mandatory information on Course coverage' section of this document.

In addition there will be two mandatory 15-mark questions.

One will be a research methods question, requiring candidates to analyse and evaluate a research method, applying their knowledge of researching social science issues.

One will be a source-based question, requiring candidates to analyse and evaluate the trustworthiness of a source, applying their knowledge of social science research.

Section 2: Social Issues, Law and Order

In this Section, learners will answer two extended response questions from a choice of three. Each question will be worth 30 marks. There will be one question from each area of study from the mandatory content specified in the 'Further mandatory information on Course coverage' section of this document.

In addition there will be two mandatory 15-mark questions. One will be a research methods question, requiring candidates to analyse and evaluate a research method, applying their knowledge of researching social science issues. One will be a source-based question, requiring candidates to analyse and

evaluate the trustworthiness of a source, applying their knowledge of social science research.

Section 3: Social Issues, Social Inequality

In this Section, learners will answer two extended response questions from a choice of three. Each question will be worth 30 marks. There will be one question from each area of study from the mandatory content specified in the 'Further mandatory information on Course coverage' section of this document.

In addition there will be two mandatory 15-mark questions.

One will be a research methods question, requiring candidates to analyse and evaluate a research method, applying their knowledge of researching social science issues.

One will be a source-based question, requiring candidates to analyse and evaluate the trustworthiness of a source, applying their knowledge of social science research.

Command words

In each Section, the three 30-mark questions will use the command word '*...Discuss*'. The two 15-mark questions will use the command word '*To what extent*'.

Scaffolding

Where necessary, questions will be accompanied by appropriate scaffolding which clarifies the demands of the question. Scaffolding will not provide any advice on either the content being sampled, or the structure which a candidate might use in their answer.

Optional questions

In all Sections, candidates will choose two 30-mark questions to answer from a choice of three. The optional questions will be of equal demand and comparable structure. They will be coterminous in scope.

Mandatory questions

In all Sections, both 15-mark questions will be mandatory. Research methods questions should assess the same research methods across all sections.

Component 2 — project-dissertation

The purpose of this project is to demonstrate challenge and application by demonstrating skills, knowledge and understanding within the context of a complex contemporary issue.

This project-dissertation will give learners an opportunity to undertake independent research in order to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

In presenting their findings, candidates will:

- ◆ justify an appropriate, complex, contemporary political/social issue for research
- ◆ evaluate research methodology
- ◆ use a wide range of sources of information
- ◆ analyse the issue

- ◆ evaluate arguments and evidence
- ◆ synthesise information to develop a sustained and coherent line of argument, leading to a conclusion, supported by evidence
- ◆ organise, present and reference findings using appropriate conventions

The project-dissertation will have 50 marks.

Setting, conducting and marking of assessment

Question paper

This question paper will be set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. Learners will complete this in 3 hours.

All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

Controlled assessment — project-dissertation

This project-dissertation will be managed by centres within SQA guidelines and conducted under some supervision and control. The evidence for assessment will be produced independently by the learner in time to meet a submission date set by SQA.

Further mandatory information on Course coverage

The following gives details of mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Advanced Higher Modern Studies Course. The Question Paper will sample this knowledge and understanding and assess the skills.

Learners will study **one** of three study themes:

- ◆ Political Issues
- ◆ Social Issues, Law and Order
- ◆ Social Issues, Social Inequality

Political Issues

Within this study theme learners will study a range of complex political issues in the United Kingdom (including Scotland). Throughout their study, an international comparative approach should be adopted.

Candidates will make judgements about sources of information and about social science research methods.

Candidates will be required to answer:

- ◆ one 15-mark question on Research Methods
- ◆ one 15-mark question about the trustworthiness of a source
- ◆ two 30-mark questions from a choice of three which will be sampled from the areas of study below

Each 30-mark question will sample content from one of the following areas of study A, B and C:

A. Power and Influence

- ◆ interest groups and their impact on the political process
- ◆ media and its influence on the political process
- ◆ political parties and elections

B. Living Political Ideas

- ◆ political theories, thoughts and ideas
- ◆ the relationship between political ideas and ideologies
- ◆ the contemporary relevance of political ideas

C. Political Structures

- ◆ constitutions and political systems
- ◆ branches of government and their influence in the political process
- ◆ relationships between levels of government

D. Researching Social Science Issues

- ◆ critically evaluating research methodology
- ◆ critically evaluating sources of information

Social Issues, Law and Order

Within this study theme learners will study a range of complex social issues in the United Kingdom (including Scotland). Throughout their study, an international comparative approach should be adopted.

Candidates will make judgements about sources of information and about social science research methods.

Candidates will be required to answer:

- ◆ one 15-mark question on Research Methods
- ◆ one 15-mark question about the trustworthiness of a source
- ◆ two 30-mark questions from a choice of three which will be sampled from the areas of study below

Each 30-mark question will sample content from one of the following areas of study A, B and C:

A. Understanding the criminal justice system

- ◆ individual human rights and liberty in relation to criminal justice
- ◆ judicial framework
- ◆ current criminal justice issues

B. Understanding criminal behaviour

- ◆ the nature and extent of criminal behaviour
- ◆ evaluation of theories of criminal behaviour
- ◆ the social and economic effects of criminal behaviour

C. Responses by society to crime

- ◆ theories and explanations of responses to crime
- ◆ current responses to crime
- ◆ evaluation of responses to crime

D. Researching Social Science Issues

- ◆ critically evaluating research methodology,
- ◆ critically evaluating sources of information

OR

Social Issues, Social Inequality

Within this study theme learners will study a range of complex social issues in the United Kingdom (including Scotland). Throughout their study, an international comparative approach should be adopted.

Candidates will make judgements about sources of information and about social science research methods.

Candidates will be required to answer

- ◆ one 15-mark question on Research Methods
- ◆ one 15-mark question about the trustworthiness of a source
- ◆ two 30-mark questions from a choice of three which will be sampled from the areas of study below

Each 30-mark question will sample content from one of the following areas of study A, B and C:

A. Understanding social inequality

- ◆ the nature and extent of social inequality
- ◆ theories and explanations of social inequality

- ◆ evaluation of theories and explanations of social inequality

B. Impact of inequality

- ◆ the social and economic impact of inequality on individuals and groups in society
- ◆ the social and economic impact of inequality on aspects of society
- ◆ current inequality issues

C. Responses to social inequality

- ◆ theories and explanations of responses to social inequality
- ◆ current responses to social inequality
- ◆ evaluation of responses to social inequality

D. Researching Social Science Issues

- ◆ critically evaluating research methodology,
- ◆ critically evaluating sources of information

Administrative information

Published: April 2015 (version 1.1)

History of changes to Course Assessment Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	1.1	<p>'Structure and coverage of Course assessment' — Component 1: additional detail added to explain skills required, question paper structure, commands words used, optionality and scaffolding.</p> <p>Re-structuring of Sections to show that Social Issues, Social Inequality, is a section in its own right.</p> <p>Component 2: skills, knowledge and understanding updated.</p> <p>'Further mandatory information on Course coverage': 'contexts' replaced by 'study theme'; other wording updated for clarity.</p> <p>The phrase 'and Research Methods' removed across all study theme titles.</p> <p>Area of Study 'D' changed, across all study themes to 'Researching Social Science Issues'; bullet points for this area of study are: critically evaluating sources of information; critically evaluating research methodology.</p>	Qualifications Development Manager	April 2015

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Note: You are advised to check SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of the Course Specification.

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