Course/Unit Support Notes

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Advanced Higher Modern Studies Course/Unit Support Notes

Contents

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Advanced Higher Modern Studies Course. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering the Course and its Units.

These support notes cover both the Advanced Higher Course and the Units in it.

The Advanced Higher Course/Unit Support Notes should be read in conjunction with the relevant:

Mandatory information:
♦ Course Specification
♦ Course Assessment Specification
♦ Unit Specifications

Assessment support:
♦ Specimen and Exemplar Question Papers and Marking Instructions
♦ Exemplar Question Paper Guidance
♦ Guidance on the use of past paper questions
♦ Coursework Information:
 — General assessment information
 — Coursework Assessment Task*
♦ Unit Assessment Support*

*These documents are for assessors and are confidential. Assessors may access these through the SQA Co-ordinator in their centres.

Related information
Advanced Higher Course Comparison

Further information on the Course/Units for Advanced Higher Modern Studies
This information begins on page 9 and both teachers and learners may find it helpful.

General guidance on the Course/Units

The purpose of Modern Studies is to develop learners' knowledge and understanding of contemporary political and social issues in local, Scottish/United Kingdom and international contexts. In these contexts, learners will develop an awareness of the political and social issues they will encounter in their lives. This purpose will be achieved through successful study of the Course Units which focus on in-depth study of either political issues or social issues and which adopt an international comparative approach.

This Course makes a distinctive contribution to the curriculum by drawing on the social sciences of politics, sociology and economics and, where appropriate, of associated ideas drawn from other social subjects. It thereby adopts a multi-disciplinary approach.

Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

♦ degree courses in social subjects and social sciences or related areas
♦ a diverse range of careers

For many learners, a key transition point will be to further or higher education, for example to Higher National Certificates (HNCs)/Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) or degree programmes. Examples of further and higher education programmes that learners might progress to are Politics, Law, International Relations, Sociology, Social Work, Journalism and Media.

Advanced Higher provides good preparation for learners progressing to further and higher education because learners doing Advanced Higher Courses must be able to work with a degree of independence. Advanced Higher Courses may also allow 'advanced standing' or partial credit towards the first year of study of a degree programme.

This Advanced Higher is part of the Scottish Baccalaureate in Social Sciences. The Scottish Baccalaureates in Expressive Arts, Languages, Science and Social Sciences consist of coherent groups of subjects at Higher and Advanced Higher level. Each award consists of two Advanced Highers, one Higher and an Interdisciplinary Project.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Course

Teachers and lecturers should refer to the *Course Assessment Specification* for mandatory information about the skills, knowledge and understanding to be covered in this Course.

The development of subject-specific and generic skills is central to the Course. Learners should be made aware of the skills they are developing and of the transferability of them. It is this transferability that will help learners with further study and enhance their personal effectiveness.

The skills, knowledge and understanding that will be developed in the Advanced Higher Modern Studies Course are:

♦ applying knowledge and understanding of complex political or social issues in the United Kingdom and adopting an international comparative approach
♦ evaluating, analysing and synthesising a wide range of evidence
♦ structuring and sustaining detailed lines of argument, leading to reasoned conclusions
♦ evaluating the trustworthiness of sources of information
♦ critically evaluating research methods
♦ planning and carrying out independent research into a complex contemporary political/social issue
♦ organising, presenting and referencing findings using appropriate conventions

Approaches to learning and teaching

At Advanced Higher level, learners will begin to develop the ability to work independently. Teachers and lecturers should encourage learners to use an enquiring, critical and problem-solving approach to their learning. Learners should also be given the opportunity to practise and develop research skills and evaluation and analytical skills. Some of the approaches to learning and teaching suggested for other levels (in particular Higher) may also apply at Advanced Higher level.

Learners could engage in a variety of learning activities as appropriate to the subject. These may include, for example:

♦ researching information for their subject rather than receiving information from their teacher or lecturer
♦ using active and open-ended learning activities such as research, case studies and presentation tasks
♦ making accurate and relevant searches for information on the internet and selecting trustworthy websites as sources of information
♦ engaging in wide-ranging independent reading
♦ recording in a systematic way the results of research and independent investigation from different sources
♦ presenting findings/conclusions of research and investigation activities to a group
♦ participating in groupwork with peers and using collaborative learning opportunities to develop teamwork skills
♦ participating in informed debate and discussion with peers where they can demonstrate skills in constructing and sustaining lines of argument
♦ drawing conclusions from complex information gathered from a combination of different media sources, such as television, radio, internet broadcasts, newspaper articles, lectures/talks, books and other relevant sources
♦ using communication and presentation skills to present information
♦ using appropriate technological resources (eg using voice recorders to capture interview responses)
♦ using appropriate media resources (eg making filmed reports to present a structured line of argument about a complex issue)
♦ participating in field trips and visits

Teachers and lecturers should support learners by having regular discussions with them and giving regular feedback. Some learning and teaching activities may be carried out on a group basis and, where this applies, learners could also receive feedback from their peers.

Teachers and lecturers should, where possible, provide opportunities to personalise learning, and enable learners to have choices in approaches to learning and teaching. The flexibility in Advanced Higher Courses and the independence with which learners carry out the work lend themselves to this.

Teachers and lecturers should also create opportunities for, and use, inclusive approaches to learning and teaching. This can be achieved by encouraging the use of a variety of learning and teaching strategies which suit the needs of all learners.

Centres are free to sequence the teaching of the Outcomes, Units and/or Course in any order they wish.

Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

The following skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work should be developed in this Course.

Teachers and lecturers should ensure that learners have opportunities to develop these skills as an integral part of their learning experience.

It is important that learners are aware of the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that they are developing in the Course and the activities they are involved in that provide realistic opportunities to practise and/or improve them.

Reading
Throughout the Course and while undertaking the project, learners will have the opportunity to develop reading skills. They may read a variety of texts, including academic journals, newspaper reports, online articles, etc. This will help learners develop their skills of reading and critically evaluating the ideas contained in written sources, drawing conclusions with justification, constructing arguments in a balanced and structured way and expressing reasoned views about the texts they study. This in turn will further develop their ability to understand and use a wide range of evidence on contemporary issues.

Writing
The Course will provide considerable opportunities to develop writing skills within the Units. Learners should be encouraged to undertake extended writing wherever appropriate in order to develop the necessary skills to support their progression towards higher education and the world of work. For example, the requirements to apply knowledge and understanding about a range of contemporary political or social issues and being able to adopt a comparative approach, provide an ideal opportunity for learners to develop the skill of extended writing.

Information handling
Throughout the Course, candidates will develop skills in information-handling including use/collection of numerical data, written academic reports, press/media texts, etc. Candidates will develop the skills of assessing information for its validity to their research. They will also learn to read sources critically, identifying and dealing with bias, and identifying varying viewpoints on issues.

Citizenship

At Advanced Higher level, learners will develop citizenship through deepening their understanding of issues facing contemporary society. They will be required to apply their knowledge and understanding of factual elements of social and political issues. They will also be required to link these with underlying theoretical or abstract ideas which will require a greater depth and detail of understanding.

Applying, analysing and evaluating

At Advanced Higher level, learners will be required to apply their knowledge and understanding of factual elements of political and social issues. They will also be required to link these with underlying theoretical or abstract ideas which will require a greater depth and detail of understanding. This enables learners to explore challenging abstract ideas by engaging with a wide range of source material, and both evaluating and synthesising information. This depth of study affords them a unique opportunity of intellectual engagement with the subject matter.

The Course will allow learners to use different sources of information including academic literature, sources from political parties or interest groups, newspaper or online articles, blogs, etc. Any piece of information, or source, is capable of yielding more or less relevant input to a study, depending on the skills of the learner. However, teachers/lecturers should direct learners to more complex and potentially richer sources of information.

The project-dissertation

Completing the project-dissertation will provide opportunities for developing and deepening skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Learners will have the opportunity to develop their reading and writing skills as they research their topic and write up or present the outcomes of the activity. They will develop personal learning as they work independently to identify and refine a topic or issue, and carry out research. They will develop citizenship through deepening their understanding of complex issues in contemporary society. Learners will assess the usefulness of different sources, and express reasoned viewpoints supported by evidence. This Course provides opportunities to develop the skill of synthesising information to support conclusions/arguments. The project in particular will provide opportunities for learners to develop their skills in this area.

There may also be opportunities for other additional skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work to be developed in the Course. For example, the use of debating, discussion groups or visits from representatives from political parties, interest groups or the media could develop skills of listening and talking. However, this could vary across centres depending on approaches being used to deliver the Course in a centre, and this is for centres to manage.

Approaches to assessment

There are different approaches to assessment and teachers and lecturers should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, as well as their understanding of their learners and their varying needs, to determine the most appropriate approaches and, where necessary, to consider workable alternatives.

Unit assessment

Information about Unit assessment is found within the *Unit Specifications* and Unit assessment support packs.

The purpose of Unit assessment is to ensure that learners have achieved at least the minimum level of competence in the skills, knowledge and understanding required in Advanced Higher Modern Studies.

Teachers and lecturers preparing assessment methods should be clear about what that evidence will look like.

Flexibility in the method of assessment provides opportunities for learners to demonstrate competence in a variety of ways, and so reduces barriers to attainment.

Teachers and lecturers should note that learners' day-to-day work may produce evidence which satisfies assessment requirements of a Unit, or Units, either in full, or partially.

Course assessment

Information about Course assessment is found within the *Course Assessment Specification,* the Specimen Question Paper, and the Coursework information (Task and General).

The purpose of Course assessment is to assess the added value of challenge and application, through the Question Paper and the project-dissertation. In the Question Paper, candidates will apply their knowledge of the mandatory content. The project-dissertation will assess the challenge of going deeper into one area and applying skills of research and presenting findings in the form of a dissertation.

Each Course has additional time which may be used at the discretion of the teacher or lecturer to enable learners to prepare for Course assessment. This time may be used near the start of the Course and at various points throughout the Course for consolidation and support. It may also be used for preparation for Unit assessment and, towards the end of the Course, for further integration, revision and preparation and/or gathering evidence for Course assessment.

Examples of activities which may help learners prepare for course assessment could include:

♦ selecting topics
♦ gathering and researching information
♦ evaluating and analysing findings
♦ developing and justifying conclusions
♦ presenting the information (as appropriate)
♦ reviewing Specimen/Exemplar Question Papers and/or Coursework documents
♦ practising question paper techniques, revising for the question paper
♦ practising source handling skills
♦ organising knowledge to support a detailed argument
♦ discussing the requirements of the project with learners, as well as the amount and nature of the support they can expect

Authenticity

Teachers/lecturers are responsible for ensuring that evidence presented by learners for Course or Unit assessment is the learner's own work. There are a number of techniques and strategies to ensure that learners present work that is their own. Teachers and lecturers should put in place mechanisms to authenticate learner evidence, for example:

♦ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with learners
♦ short personal interviews
♦ checklists which record activity/progress
♦ learners' notes from their independent reading

Group work approaches are acceptable as part of learning and teaching, including preparation for assessment.

For more information, please refer to SQA's *Guide to Assessment*.

Equality and inclusion

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Course/Unit Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Course.

It is important that centres are aware of and understand SQA's assessment arrangements for disabled learners, and those with additional support needs, when making requests for adjustments to published assessment arrangements. Centres will find more guidance on this in the series of publications on Assessment Arrangements on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html.

Further information on the Course/Units

The *Course Specification*, and *Course Assessment Specification* documents provide an overview of the Course, and it may be helpful for learners to read these.

Detailed support about the Question Paper is given in the Specimen Question Paper and accompanying Marking Instructions. The Specimen Question Paper gives an indication of question types to be found in future Question Papers. The Marking Instructions include details of general marking principles, mark allocations, marking criteria and detailed marking instructions for different questions.

For detailed support and guidance on the project-dissertation, please refer to the Modern Studies project-dissertation Assessment Task and the Modern Studies project-dissertation General Assessment Information documents. The Assessment Task document contains a detailed guide for candidates as well as general marking principles, mark allocations, marking criteria and detailed marking instructions.

There is a choice of study theme available within the Course, and an open choice of topic/issue for study within the project-dissertation.

The *Unit Specifications* and Unit assessment support packs give details about each Unit as well as guidance regarding the assessment of Units.

Key Advanced Higher Modern Studies terms

Analysing: identifying parts, the relationship between them, and their relationships with the whole. It can also involve drawing out and relating implications.

Comparing: explaining similarities or differences between two or more things. The term 'comparing' covers the idea of 'compare and contrast'.

Evaluating: making judgements based on criteria, supported by evidence. The outcome of evaluating is rarely expressed in absolute terms.

Synthesising: drawing two or more pieces of information/viewpoints/evidence together to support a structured line of argument.

Validity: the extent to which a source is a true reflection of social reality, the ability to make generalisations about the whole population on the basis of a small survey. In other words is the reasoning within the source sound? In research, the extent to which the research has tested what it actually set out to test.

Reliability: relates to the reputation of the source, consistency in the quality of the research results or the likelihood of the research being repeated with similar results.

For exam purposes, the terms 'validity' and 'reliability' are combined under the term 'trustworthiness'.

Course delivery

Learners will study one of three study themes:

♦ Political issues
♦ Social issues: law and order
♦ Social issues: social inequality

This section covers all three study themes in turn. For each study theme a series of activities are illustrated, which could be utilised in order to allow learners to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding required for Course assessment.

The activities may also allow centres to gather evidence that learners have achieved the Assessment Standards of the Unit Outcomes. When using teaching activities to gather evidence for Units, it is important that each learner produces their own work. Therefore when group work is used, individuals must produce their own analysis, comparison, conclusions and so on from the work done together. In gathering evidence for Units, it is important to follow the guidance within the 'Judging evidence' tables of the Unit assessment support packs for each Unit.

The following paragraphs cover the three study themes in the following order: political issues; social issues: law and order; social issues: social inequality.

While only one of these three study themes should be studied, teachers/lecturers should be encouraged to read across the guidance for all three. This is because a variety of approaches are demonstrated and many of the ideas are applicable to any chosen study theme.

Political issues

Within this context, 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. Centres and learners have flexibility in the international comparisons they make. It is not required that the countries chosen for comparative study have significantly different political systems, structures or issues from those in the United Kingdom. Centres and learners may choose to complete a case study of one or more comparator countries; or to focus on different comparator countries for each issue or topic within an area of study.

The *Course Assessment Specification* provides detailed information about mandatory content and should be regularly consulted. To enable them to prepare for the Question Paper, learners will be required to cover a minimum of two Areas of Study (A, B, C) from within the 'political issues' study theme. All learners must also cover area of study D.

It is a matter for centres to decide which areas of study to focus on, the order and approach to teaching and learning, and the extent of coverage for each area of study.

Study area A: power and influence — interest groups and their impact on the political process

Example 1: assessing the success of interest groups

Learner presentation: 'Interest groups that engage in direct action have limited or no success compared to those who engage in lawful methods.'

A list of interest groups across the UK and comparator countries could be issued to learners to research and critically assess. Learners could also be encouraged to assess the impact of multinational interest groups and global movements such as Occupy Wall Street, Make Poverty History and environmental organisations.

Learners would be expected to adopt a comparative approach by applying the above hypothesis to interest groups in other countries.

It would be expected that the internet would be a strong basis for the information learners need to gather. Learners could be directed, by drawing on a variety and range of internet sources, to reference their sources and critically evaluate the validity and reliability of the internet and of specific websites as research tools.

Findings could be presented at learner-led tutorials with supporting visual presentations and printed notes for distribution to fellow learners.

Critical evaluation processes and criteria could also be established through discussion among the student group prior to delivery, which would allow peer-assessed comment on the quality and content of the presentation.

This approach would provide an opportunity to gather evidence for aspects of Outcomes 1 and 2 as well as Assessment Standard 3.1 and 3.2.

Study area A: power and influence — media and its influence on the political process

Example 2: 'impact of the media'

Placemat activity
Prior knowledge will need to be established about the media and its role in a democracy. Learners should be made aware of theories on pluralism and elitism with regards to the media. A case study of the Leveson inquiry in the UK would be a good starting point for this task. Coverage of the events surrounding Leveson's commissioning, recommendations and the political impact would act as a gateway to this task.

Learners should be provided with an A3 sheet of paper with the issue 'Impact of the media' at the centre with the page then sub-divided into four sections on:

♦ functions and purpose of the media within the selected country
♦ ownership, control, regulation and censorship of the media
♦ nature and impact of use of social media
♦ impact on voting behaviour and government decision-making

Learners should complete this task for the UK and then, with support, assess at least one other country.

To allow international comparisons, stimulus packs could be developed for a comparator country. These could include, for example: newspaper articles, audio-visual clips; election data; statistics on media ownership; articles on media legislation and censorship laws; statistical and graphical representations of social media usage in selected countries, and election outcomes and governance.

Countries from a variety of backgrounds could be assessed, eg the USA, France, Germany, Australia, Japan or South Korea. These may be suitable to assess similar developed, capitalist, social democracies. Comparison could also be made with more authoritarian countries such as Russia, China and Saudi Arabia. Awareness of emergent nations could also be a consideration with support materials on Brazil and/or India.

Learners would be expected to provide detailed overall conclusions on the impact of the media across different political systems by comparing and synthesising information from the four countries of study.

This approach could provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Assessment Standards 1.1, 1.2, as well as 2.1, 2.2, and 3.1.

Study area A: power and influence — political parties and elections

Example 3: 'relevance of political parties'

Public attitude survey

Learners will establish background knowledge and familiarisation with the main UK political parties' policies and manifestos in recent elections. BBC election websites covering recent UK general elections and Scottish parliamentary elections offer good, succinct summaries of these and may act as a starting point for research.

Group discussion of how to plan and conduct surveys will be required and should cover issues including: producing qualitative and quantitative data; use of open, closed and optional questions; sampling and sample size; ethnographic questions; and collating and presenting results of attitudinal surveys.

Introduction to the work of respected polling organisations will help and inspire learners in this task. Ipsos Mori, Gallup and other market research companies' websites can offer a plethora of exemplar material to share with learners. Many can also be contacted and will provide outside speakers to deliver presentations on their work and research methodologies.

In groups or individually, learners will be expected to produce a formal questionnaire to ask members of the public their views on parties' ideas, ideologies, policies, record in government, leadership and image, and prior, current or future voting intentions. A discussion on the method of delivery of questionnaires should take place, with consideration given to the relative merits of postal, face-to-face or online surveys (using SurveyMonkey for example).

Results could be collated and presented to the class.

A checklist of assessable criteria could be issued to learners to allow individual appraisal of the research methodology, questioning, sampling and presentation of results. Self-reflection should also allow learners to comment on ways to improve future delivery of this approach. This could be appended to copies of presentation material.

This approach could provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Outcome 3. Detailed evaluation of results could also cover Assessment Standard 2.1.

Study area B: living political ideas — political theories, thoughts and ideas; the relationship between political ideas and ideologies; the contemporary relevance of political ideas

Example 4: political ideas and their relevance — a series of workshops

Task 1: tutorial on ideology
Learners will be assigned an ideology to prepare a tutorial on. To assist them they will be issued with or will have researched support materials on the major ideologies and thinkers related to:

♦ liberalism/conservatism/socialism/Marxism/nationalism

To these ideologies coverage may be added of:

♦ fascism/feminism/environmentalism

Each learner is expected to deliver a short presentation on their given ideology while other learners take notes. Presenters should be prepared to answer questions on 'their' ideology from other learners. To assess understanding of each ideology, learners could be asked to 'tweet' their interpretations of a single or each philosophy in 140 characters or fewer. This could be uploaded to a shared Twitter feed and/or written up and placed on a class 'Twitter board'.

This approach could provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Assessment Standard 1.1.

Task 2: internet research — selected countries
Learners will be given a list of comparator countries to investigate and make academic-level posters on. Assign **one** country per learner. To allow diversity, choice of a country from each of the following groupings may be useful:

♦ Group 1: UK (indefinable)
♦ Group 2: Sweden, Norway, Finland (Social Democratic — not G20)
♦ Group 3: Germany, France, Italy (Christian Democratic)
♦ Group 4: United States, Japan, Canada (free market)
♦ Group 5: Brazil, India, China, Russia (emergent nations)
♦ Group 6: Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, South Africa (developing nations)

The following headings may help inform the research and information presented:

♦ Dominant political party (parties) in the late 20th and 21st century
♦ Key political thinkers and their ideas
♦ Welfare system provision:
— universal, social insurance or market?
— absolute poverty rates
— relative poverty rates

♦ Taxation approaches:
— progressive or regressive
— income tax rates
— corporate tax rates
— property tax rates
— Value Added Tax rates

♦ Representation in government:
— electoral system and type of constitution
— representation by party
— representation by class (educational attainment/professional background)
— representation by ethnicity
— representation by gender

♦ Legal framework

♦ Environmental policies, for example:
— carbon emission levels
— targets in relation to carbon emissions and renewables
— position on contemporary climate agreements

Learners will then rotate around each other's work in a carousel fashion. Notes or snapshots of work should be taken as appropriate for later use and retrospective notation.

Task 3: hot-seating

After the research process, each learner could face a series of questions on their chosen country and be asked to determine the extent to which ideology plays a role in their country of choice.

Fellow learners or the teacher could develop their own questions, or a prescribed list such as that below could be developed and used:

1. Explain the ideologies you think have informed the development of the country you have researched.
2. How would Marxists view the welfare provision in the country you researched?
3. To what extent does your country adopt redistributive wealth policies?
4. Would free market thinkers like Hayek and Friedman support or oppose the tax system in the country you researched?
5. To what extent do mainstream political parties in your country of study share similar ideological outlooks?
6. Is the political system in your country of study totalitarian, pluralistic or elitist?
7. What evidence is there that nationalism and/or patriotism are a key part in national politics?
8. What does the representation of women and minorities suggest about the influence of feminism?
9. How progressive is your country of study in relation to the environment?
10. Overall, to what extent is ideology important in the country you have studied?

This approach could provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Assessment Standard 2.1.

Task 4: group plenary

In a situation where a group of learners are involved, they may be asked to collectively offer an overall conclusion on the influence of ideology and ideas on politics at a global scale.

This approach would provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Assessment Standard 2.2. Assessors should ensure that each learner produces conclusions of their own if gathering evidence of Unit competence.

Study area C: political structures

Example 5: constitutions and political systems

Revision table

The international comparative approach is well suited to this area of study. In order to deepen and enrich learning, it is advised that learners compare a wide range of countries, venturing beyond those traditionally studied. In order to allow learners to fully engage with a comparison of the wide variety of political structures across the world, it may be useful to compare the UK with Saudi

Arabia (being an absolutist monarchy with a constitution based on the Qu'ran and organised along unitary lines) or China (being a single-party state with a unicameral system and ambiguous divisions between its executive, legislative and judicial branches of government).

Learners will be asked to complete a revision table outlining the constitutional and political systems of the selected countries of study. These can be pre-determined by the teacher or self-selected by learners.

Headings could include the following:

♦ constitutional arrangements (summary of codified or uncodified approaches)
♦ head of state (method of selection and powers)
♦ legislative organisation (unicameral or bicameral)
♦ system of checks and balances
♦ separation of powers
♦ power and jurisdiction of the executive
♦ power and jurisdiction of the legislative
♦ power and jurisdiction of the judiciary
♦ division of power between national and regional governments (unitary/federal/devolved)

This approach would provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Outcome 1.

Example 6: branches of government — the extent of their influence and the relationship between levels of government

Mini-wiki

This would be a collaborative piece of work between learners to produce a co-authored piece of work on the following issue:

The powers of the executive branch of government in the UK are not equally balanced by the powers of the legislature and judiciary.

Each learner could be given responsibility to research an aspect of the topic across different countries or a country on its own.

Learners would then be expected to post research, web links, discussions and selected images. This is a shared activity and can be ongoing.

As an international comparison exercise, learners could develop a case study of at least one other country — each learner focusing on one branch of government. A further wiki could be created using this evidence.

This approach could provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Outcomes 1 and 2. Outcome 3 could be assessed by critically evaluating the sources and the research methods used by each contributor to the wiki.

Social issues: law and order

Within this context, learners will study a range of complex social issues relating to law and order in the United Kingdom (including Scotland).

Throughout their study, an international comparative approach should be adopted. Centres and learners have flexibility in the international comparisons they make. It is not required that the countries chosen for comparative study have significantly different political systems, structures or issues from those in the United Kingdom. Centres and learners may choose to complete a case study of one or more comparator countries; or to focus on different comparator countries for each issue or topic within an area of study.

The *Course Assessment Specification* provides detailed information about mandatory content and should be regularly consulted. To enable preparation for the Question Paper, learners will be required to cover a minimum of two areas of study (A, B, C) within the Law and Order study theme. All learners must also cover Area of Study D.

It is a matter for centres to decide which areas of study to focus on, the order and approach to teaching and learning, and the extent of coverage for each area of study.

Study area A: understanding the criminal justice system — individual human rights and liberty in relation to criminal justice; judicial framework; current criminal justice issues

Example 1 — individual human rights

Transformers — newspaper articles

Having established prior knowledge on human rights and their place within the criminal justice systems of the UK and at least one comparator country, learners could be given a number of newspaper articles looking at challenges to the law and claims of human rights abuses with the legal system.

The newspaper articles could be gathered from printed press or via website news pages which would give the potential to look at stories from international countries too. Each learner would be given responsibility for evaluating one of these articles and analysing the key issues to feed back to the others in the class.

To do this they could analyse, read and highlight their article and then 'transform' the extended text into a much shorter piece of text, in their own words, which makes the main points of the article clear.

This activity could provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Assessment Standards 1.1 and 2.1. If international countries are studied, it may also provide evidence of Assessment Standard 1.2. If the stories are related in topic,

Assessment Standard 2.2 may also be met. Finally, it would be possible to gather evidence of Assessment Standard 3.1 if learners evaluated the reliability and validity of the source.

Example 2 — the judicial framework and judicial system overview

Mini trial role play
Initial prior knowledge of how the judicial system works could be achieved by class discussion. This task encourages learners to act out the process of a court case as part of the judicial system and helps learners to explore the links and relationships between different parts of the framework.

A good starting point is to look at this website: http://www.minitrial.org.uk. MiniTrial is an initiative set up and run by Scottish lawyers to help schools find out more about the Scottish legal system, and they run mini trials in the District and Sheriff Courts on an annual basis. Learners assume the roles of the Sheriff, the accused, the witnesses and, using the information provided, they put together a defence and prosecution case. At the end they can have a discussion on the impact of the court system and the legislative process on all of this.

It would be useful for learners to compare their findings on the Scottish system with at least one other country and to present their findings on similarities and differences.

This activity could provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Assessment Standards 1.1 and 2.1.

Study area 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

Example 3: different views of criminal behaviour — over time and internationally

Group presentation on individual learner's views of criminal behaviour
This is a good task to use as a first introduction to the area of study — it will help to establish prior knowledge of each of the learners in the class and get them thinking about the variety of different views that exist when it comes to criminal behaviour.

Learners should study the nature and extent of criminal behaviour and the factors that lead people to becoming criminals. The following activity can help learners to develop an understanding of what crime and deviance actually are, as well as how they impact on society.

It is claimed that perceptions about crime are clouded by the media coverage of particular crimes, and crimes committed by particular people. The teacher could encourage learners to have a discussion/debate looking at whether this is the case. Learners are then given the chance to try to examine some common personal perceptions of crime in the UK and internationally. An interesting international comparison might be to study South Africa or Brazil.

Learners would be expected to put together a presentation of images of crime or criminals. Learners should be encouraged to think 'outside the box' and not just flash up a stereotypical picture from each of these countries. Learners will have to show their pictures to the class and explain *why* they selected them. They can have as many as they want but they should not have any words on their images. It may be appropriate to allow them to use short visual clips too.

The success criterion for this task is that the learner fully explains their viewpoints and uses their images to show the basis for their conclusions. Learners should be encouraged to recognise that there are a variety of viewpoints.

This activity could provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Outcome 1 and Assessment Standard 2.2.

Example 4 — researching the main theories of criminal behaviour

Learner-led tutorials on each of the key theorists
This task is useful in supporting the development of effective collaborative study approaches. It encourages the assimilation of a wide range of information in an effective manner. There are many theories about criminal behaviour; therefore one approach to learning about them is to assign one theorist to each learner. Learners will teach each other about the views of their particular theorist.

Learners should be provided with some materials as a starting point. This task involves leading the class in the same manner as many university tutorials are run: each learner has a small part of the Course to focus on and it is their responsibility to ensure that the key information is explained to everyone. The learners could be expected to take notes during the tutorial, and the 'presenting' learner will be expected to answer any questions the class may have at the end of their tutorial.

Success criteria should be agreed with the whole class in advance of each learner starting their research. You could, for example, ask them to analyse the basics of the theory, examples/statistics used by the theorist, the criticisms of it, relevant examples from the news to suggest that it does in fact hold true today (or that it does not) and their own evaluation of the theory.

This activity could provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Assessment Standards 1.1, 2.1 and 2.2.

Example 5 — evaluation of theories of criminal behaviour

Theorists' hot seating
Prior knowledge will have been established before this activity will work — this could be achieved through example 4 above. The aim of this task is to reinforce the individual learner's knowledge and understanding of the theories.

Learners should create a set of questions to ask a person in a five-minute interview, relating to that theorist's perspective on crime and deviance.

The teacher should give each learner the name of one theorist. They should be given an appropriate period of time to read a stimulus, revise their notes and get a clear overview of the perspective of the theorist they have been given.

The learner will then be placed in the hot seat to answer the questions the class devised at the start of the lesson. They should answer in the role of their theorist.

Each learner could also be asked to produce a 50-word summary of one of the theories.

This activity could provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Outcomes 1 and 2.

Example 6 — impact of criminal behaviour

Placemat on impact of crime in affluent societies
Learners will complete a placemat that explores the impact that crime has on a variety of affluent societies.

Learners should be provided with a sheet of A3 paper, with a circle drawn in the middle and the page should then be divided into four (creating four rectangular segments with a circle that 'cuts into' each of the four rectangles). Learners should also be provided with a stimulus on the impact of crime in four different countries — this should be a variety of different sources where possible, for example a newspaper report, a website, a list of statistics or a video clip.

Learners will make notes on the impact that crime has in four countries (each country has its own rectangle on the A3 sheet) — focus should be on overall impact of crime, as well as the impact on individuals, communities, groups and the private/public sector.

Using the information in the four sections, learners should discuss and identify common themes. The common themes can be put into the middle circle and the impacts that are relevant to just one country can be highlighted. This information will allow learners to make international comparisons in respect of the impact of criminal behaviour. Ultimately, they should recognise that the impact of crime may be different in different countries, even if they are all affluent.

It is encouraged that learners compare and contrast the UK with a range of other countries, for example, Japan, Switzerland, any of the Scandinavian countries,

Russia or Australia. Try to think outside of the norm when it comes to international comparisons.

This activity could provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Outcomes 1 and 2.

Study area B: responses by society to crime — theories and explanations of responses to crime; current responses to crime; evaluation of responses to crime

Example 7: functions of penal system — prevention, deterrence, rehabilitation, punishment, protection

Internet research task
Background reading from organisations such as the Howard League for Penal Reform website allows learners to explore how prisons have evolved in the UK up until the 21st century.

Learners could be asked to analyse changes or similarity in the purpose/aims of prisons over a chosen time period. They should use the information to come to a reasoned conclusion. The information also allows the learners to analyse how conditions in prisons have changed over time — there is a link here to some of the issues in the first area of study, in terms of human rights of prisoners.

A follow-up task might involve learners looking at websites such as the Scottish Prison Service or Her Majesty's Prison Service and equivalent sites from other countries, as appropriate. Learners could be asked to find out the answers to a variety of questions that help them to explore ideological perspectives on responses to crime.

This activity could provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Outcomes 1 and 2 as well as Assessment Standard 3.1. It is also possible that evidence may be generated for Assessment Standards in the *Researching Contemporary Issues* Unit.

Example 8 — alternatives to prison

Debate: the motion to be prepared is: 'Prison does not work — alternatives to prison are the only way forward'
This task could be used as a plenary following study on the challenges faced by prisons and the various non-custodial alternatives, or as a means of encouraging learners to discuss their knowledge as an introduction to the topic area.

Learners could be given a stimulus, for example up-to-date statistics on recidivism rates for prisons and other methods of punishment. Involve every learner in the debate by allocating roles. The debate could be carried out in a variety of formats, with each learner contributing their ideas when called on by the teacher/lecturer. It is important that they do not just read out prepared speeches but instead engage with the debate and one another to synthesise the

evidence presented both in their own study and during the debate in order to come to an overall considered conclusion on the issue.

This activity could provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Outcomes 1 and 2.

Social Issues: Social Inequality

Within this context, learners will study a range of complex social issues relating to social inequality in the United Kingdom (including Scotland).

Throughout their study, an international comparative approach should be adopted. Centres and learners have flexibility in the international comparisons they make. It is not required that the countries chosen for comparative study have significantly different political systems, structures or issues from those in the United Kingdom. Centres and learners may choose to complete a case study of one or more comparator country; or to focus on different comparator countries for each issue or topic within an area of study.

The *Course Assessment Specification* provides detailed information about mandatory content and should be regularly consulted. To enable them to prepare for the Question Paper, learners will be required to cover a minimum of two areas of study (A, B, C) from within the Social Inequality study theme. All learners must also cover Area of Study D.

It is a matter for centres to decide which areas of study to focus on, the order and approach to teaching and learning, and the extent of coverage for each area of study.

Example 1: combining areas of study

It may be appropriate to combine areas of study and coverage within the topic of social inequality.

The example shown below combines the following:

♦ Area of Study A: understanding social inequality — evaluation of theories and explanations of social inequality
♦ Area of Study 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

Focus: to what extent are theories of social inequality relevant in today's society?

The following questions need to be addressed when tackling this issue:

♦ What is meant by social inequality?
♦ Does it mean different things in different countries?
♦ How is social inequality measured in the UK and comparator countries?
♦ How can social inequality be explained in the UK and comparator countries?
♦ Individual/functionalist/structural/conflict
♦ What evidence is there that theories of social inequality are relevant in 21st century?

Since this study theme requires an international comparative approach, the same questions should be posed for the comparator. When choosing comparators, it would be good practice to compare across a number of different societies. In this case, comparing and contrasting the UK with countries like India, Brazil, China, Mozambique or Russia will enrich the learning experience greatly.

In order to establish the impact of inequality on individuals, groups and communities, it is important to first establish the key aspects of society which provide indicators of that inequality, for example:

- health
- education
- crime
- employment
- housing
- income

There are many excellent learning and teaching strategies and several of these have already been discussed in other parts of this document. These can also be used to generate evidence to show that a student has achieved Unit Outcomes and Assessment Standards. The student can be presented with some evidence to analyse, synthesise and draw valid conclusions from. The evidence can be in the form of statistics, reports, academic papers, media articles or research documents such as opinion polls. It should be possible to compare and contrast the UK situation with that of other countries.

This research activity can be carried out individually over a period of time: several periods in class or as ongoing homework. It would also be appropriate to do this where different countries and different aspects (eg housing and health) can be investigated by different groups of learners. The end result could be a discussion or debate. Learners should have choice in the final form of presentation.

The topic can concentrate on a specific country and aspect. Here are some learning objectives for a series of lessons that looks at China and the consequences of economic and social change over the last 20 years. Learners should be focused on social inequality and bear in mind the outcomes they are working towards.

Learners will be able to:

- analyse the key economic changes that China has experienced over the last 20 years
- use a wide range of sources to explore the economic and social consequences of China's modernisation efforts
- synthesise the information from sources to identify the varying impacts of globalisation on Chinese society and how that might lead to social inequality
- evaluate the extent of national and regional inequalities associated with the economic and social changes studied
- draw valid conclusions based on the evidence presented

China can then be compared with the UK and other countries as appropriate (Assessment Standard 1.2). This activity could provide an opportunity to gather evidence for all Outcomes of the *Contemporary Issues* Unit. This activity could also provide an opportunity to gather evidence for Assessment Standards 1.3 and 1.5 from the *Researching Contemporary Issues* Unit if referencing conventions are used in presenting findings.

The above activity can result in overwhelming amounts of information being gathered. A sorting activity using a graphic organiser can be very useful. This would involve the student selecting valid evidence to support a specific point and adding it as appropriate to the organiser diagram, whether that is a flowchart or a web. There are many examples of graphic organisers available on the internet. The follow-up could be an extended writing activity using the evidence in the flowchart, etc. This follow-up activity may also be a valid method for a learner to generate evidence for Assessment Standards from all three Outcomes from the *Contemporary Issues* Unit as well as several Assessment Standards for the *Researching Contemporary Issues* Unit.

Example 2: individual areas of study

It may be preferable or more relevant to cover a single area of study and develop a more focused approach to coverage within the topic of Social Inequality.

The example shown below covers Area of Study B: impact of inequality — the social and economic impact of inequality on aspects of society — health, education, crime, employment, housing and income.

Focus: the impact of inequality on health and social problems

Learners could work individually to research a hypothesis. The hypothesis for study might be:

There is a wide range of evidence to show that there is a great correlation between inequality and social problems in both the UK and Sweden *.

*or any relevant country

This hypothesis can be broken down into a number of main areas/aims:

♦ Is there a wide range of current and relevant evidence from different reliable sources?
♦ What is the correlation between inequality and social problems such as health, crime and unemployment?
♦ Is there a similar correlation in both UK and the comparator country/ countries?
♦ Overall, is the hypothesis proved or disproved?

As the learner progresses through the sources suggested below and addresses these questions, they will be drawing on knowledge and understanding to analyse complex political and social issues in the United Kingdom (Outcome 1 of the *Contemporary Issues* Unit) and be evaluating a wide range of evidence about the complex issue (Outcome 2). As they evaluate the sources they may provide evidence suitable for Assessment Standard 3.1. If they present a report with references, they may also provide evidence for Assessment Standard 1.5 of the *Researching Contemporary Issues* Unit.

Please note that these sources may quickly become out-of-date and newer versions should be used as appropriate. Evaluation of a source which is in danger of becoming dated is, however, a useful exercise which may provide evidence for Assessment Standard 3.1 of the *Contemporary Issues* Unit. Learners can develop their skills in judging whether data in a source is still reliable despite being dated.

1. Report from Joseph Rowntree Foundation:
    www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/inequality-income-social-problems-full.pdf

    Report of September 2011
    Income inequality grew dramatically in the UK in the 1980s and has fluctuated, if not increased still further, since then. While the Labour governments of 1997-2010 placed a high priority on poverty reduction, income inequality was not on the political agenda until Gordon Brown's premiership when, in 2008, Harriet Harman commissioned the National Equality Panel report. The following year, *The Spirit Level* was published (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009a) and soon became widely cited as evidence that inequality caused a large array of health and social problems which affected everyone in society, not just those at the bottom.

2. 'Research by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett has shown that among the richest countries, it's the more unequal ones that do worse according to almost every quality of life indicator.'

    David Cameron, Hugo Young Lecture, 10 November 2009

3. 'The gap between rich and poor does matter. It doesn't just harm the poor, it harms us all.'

    Ed Miliband, speech to Labour Party conference on becoming Labour leader, 28 September 2010

4. Life expectancy at age 65 for men and women by social class, 2004-06 in England and Wales

    Source: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_238743.pdf

Table 1. Life expectancy at birth: by sex and country, 2004-06 to 2008-10

| | | | | | Years |
Country	2004-06	2005-07	2006-08	2007-09	2008-10
Males					
United Kingdom	77.0	77.3	77.5	77.9	78.2
England and Wales	77.2	77.5	77.8	78.1	78.5
England	77.3	77.6	77.9	78.3	78.6
Wales	76.6	76.8	77.0	77.2	77.6
Scotland	74.6	74.8	75.0	75.4	75.8
Northern Ireland	76.2	76.2	76.4	76.8	77.1
Females					
United Kingdom	81.3	81.5	81.7	82.0	82.3
England and Wales	81.5	81.7	82.0	82.2	82.5
England	81.6	81.8	82.0	82.3	82.6
Wales	81.0	81.2	81.4	81.6	81.8
Scotland	79.6	79.7	79.9	80.1	80.4
Northern Ireland	81.0	81.3	81.3	81.4	81.5

1. Three-year rolling averages, based on deaths registered in calendar years and mid-year population estimates.
2. Figures for England and Wales include deaths of non-residents. Figures for England and Wales separately exclude deaths of non-residents.

p = provisional

5.   Marmot review: http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org

Here are some of the key messages from the Marmot review:

Key messages of *Fair Society Healthy Lives*:

1. Reducing health inequalities is a matter of fairness and social justice. In England, the many people who are currently dying prematurely each year as a result of health inequalities would otherwise have enjoyed, in total, between 1.3 and 2.5 million extra years of life.
2. There is a social gradient in health — the lower a person's social position, the worse his or her health. Action should focus on reducing the gradient in health.
3. Health inequalities result from social inequalities. Action on health inequalities requires action across all the social determinants of health.
4. Focusing solely on the most disadvantaged will not reduce health inequalities sufficiently.

6.   Closing the health inequality gap: an international perspective:

Abstract
This report presents an analysis of official documents on government policies to tackle inequalities in health from 13 developed countries. All countries recognize that health inequalities are caused by adverse socio-economic and environmental circumstances. However they differ in their definitions of inequalities and in their approaches to tackling the problem. Sweden and Northern Ireland have structured their overall public health policy to tackle the underlying determinants of inequalities in health.

Unit delivery

Within Advanced Higher Modern Studies there are two Units:

♦ Contemporary Issues
♦ Researching Contemporary Issues

These Units stand alone as qualifications in their own right. In order to gain the Course award, learners must achieve both Units in addition to the Course assessment — Question Paper and project-dissertation.

There is no recommended teaching order for the Units in this Course. Different combinations or orderings of Unit delivery will be appropriate in different contexts. This is for centres to manage.

The following pages provide advice and guidance on both of these Units, with a focus on demonstrating how to direct the study of the Units towards supporting the production and gathering of evidence to meet the Outcomes and Assessment Standards.

Contemporary Issues Unit

This section provides information on key aspects of the Outcomes and Assessment Standards by providing general guidance on the level of demand required at Advanced Higher Unit assessment.

The judging evidence tables in the Unit assessment support packs give detailed explanations about meeting Assessment Standards.

Outcome 1:
Draw on knowledge and understanding to analyse complex political and social issues in the United Kingdom by:

    1.1 Analysing a complex political or social issue in the United Kingdom
    1.2 Making international comparisons about a complex political or social issue

Outcome 2:
Draw well-reasoned conclusions about a complex political or social issue by:

    2.1 Synthesising evidence to produce a coherent line of argument about a complex political or social issue
    2.2 Evaluating evidence to support a well-reasoned conclusion about a complex political or social issue

Outcome 3:
Critically evaluate social science research by:

    3.1 Evaluating the reliability and validity of a source in the context of a political or social issue
    3.2 Evaluating a research method in the context of a political or social issue
    3.3 Analysing ethical issues arising from a social science research method

Here is an example of a political issue that is complex:

Is society broken?

This would be considered a complex issue because there are many questions that need to be considered before the issue could be addressed. Some of these might be:

- What is meant by 'society'?
- Do we all have a common understanding of what society is supposed to be?
- What keeps society in balance?
- What is meant by 'broken'?
- Does the answer depend on your social status?
- What can be broken in society?
- Which groups thrive in society and why?
- Can society be broken?
- What evidence is there to support/refute the claim?
- How secure is the evidence?

Since this area of study is comparative, it would be necessary to compare and contrast the UK with at least one other country.

Note that there are varying degrees of complexity.

Here is an example of a political issue that is complex:

The media drives the political agenda in the UK to a much greater extent than it does in China.

In this case, many additional questions need to be addressed. Here are some that might be considered:

- What aspects of the media should be considered and why?
- What aspects of the political agenda should be considered and why?
- What do we mean by 'drive the political agenda'?
- What evidence is there to support and refute the claim
- Why choose China as a comparator?

Understanding the Outcomes — evidence-gathering

A variety of methods can be used to gather evidence that learners are meeting each of the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Methods of assessment need not be restricted to traditional question and written response techniques, although such practice is still necessary as preparation for the Question Paper. The emphasis should be on allowing learners to demonstrate evidence of their competency and they should be encouraged to express this in a manner best suited to their abilities. The focus during Unit assessment should be on a learner's Modern Studies skills and knowledge rather than just their ability to perform under timed conditions in a written format.

Assessment should be meaningful and may be part of the learning experience. It may well be the case that a candidate may naturally generate evidence for more than one Assessment Standard in a single piece of work.

Candidates need to demonstrate that they understand the key issues in an in-depth manner. This might take the form of an extended piece of writing exploring both sides of an argument, backed up by relevant examples, statistics, quotes from books, newspapers, reports. It is essential at this level that each point is explored in detail and not simply stated as one short point/in one sentence.

In the example below, the learner has applied in-depth knowledge and understanding of a complex political issue to their analysis of the issue (Assessment Standard 1.1) and making an international comparison with the USA (Assessment Standard 1.2). This shows that they have achieved Outcome 1.

The learner has also shown evidence of achieving both Assessment Standards of Outcome 2 as they have discussed a number of different viewpoints therefore synthesising the relevant information and evaluated evidence (2.1). They have also made an overall judgement and thereby reached an appropriate conclusion (2.2).

As we see the expansion of social media on the UK political scene, all of this comes as a direct result of the overwhelming success that President Barack Obama has found in using social media to connect with the electorate. What Obama did was to strategically correlate both his offline and online campaigns under one simple message — 'Change'. So whilst Obama was able to build relationships with his target audience, he understood that it was not enough to simply get the message out but rather that he had to both inspire and provide the means for people to get involved. This was achieved in a variety of unique and engaging ways. The website 'Change.Gov' was created in an effort to give people a platform to share their thoughts (over 5,000 people commented on a video asking for ideas on healthcare reform). Obama's campaign was also actively involved in 15 social networking sites to spread any news in 'real time.'

This strategy proved immensely popular as he racked up 1.3 million Twitter followers and 3 million Facebook fans. (Evaluation)

All of these strategies paid dividends as they created a buzz round his campaign that subsequently gave him the majority of the momentum heading into the election. Therefore it is highly likely that if it were not for Obama's embrace of new age media, the very face of American politics would be highly different to the one we see today. (Synthesis)

So whilst we have examined some of the success that embracing social media can bring to political parties on both sides of the Atlantic, it is worth exploring the belief that connecting with the electorate via social media is actually worthless and, in fact, is not the agenda-defining factor in modern politics that many would have us believe. (Conclusion)

Outcome 1

The learner will:

Draw on knowledge and understanding to analyse complex political or social issues in the United Kingdom by:

1.1 Analysing a complex political or social issue

At Advanced Higher, learners should develop the skills to analyse a complex issue in detail. This might include identifying the key arguments on either side of a debate, or the most relevant factors affecting an issue. Learners should be able to relate the arguments, aspects or factors to the issue as a whole.

1.2 Making international comparisons about a complex political or social issue

At this level, learners should be capable of comparing issues between countries. Encourage learners to avoid the obvious comparisons and look further afield, for example Indonesia, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Australia and Russia all offer opportunities. Any country is valid, as is the EU (one of the G20, acceptable at Higher level).

It is often easiest to look at the issue to see what best compares with the UK. This means that comparisons from as many countries as you want can be used. If learners wish to research one county as a case study, results could be shared and useful comparative examples collected as a group.

Outcome 2

The learner will:

Draw well-reasoned conclusions about a complex political or social issue by:

2.1 Synthesising evidence to produce a coherent line of argument about a complex political or social issue.

Learners should be able to demonstrate their ability to synthesise at least two pieces of information in order to make a point or develop a line of argument. A way to gather evidence for this might be to conduct a mini-trial or to carry out a case study of a recent local trial. All the witnesses provide their own separate version of events and provide different evidence. The 'jurors' (learners) draw together points from the different accounts, opinions, evidence and so on to come to a conclusion. Another method might be to provide learners with two newspaper articles on the same topic/story. Learners could then synthesise the information and give a short presentation. Essentially, they are expected to be able to say 'Source 1 says… Source 2 says… Therefore…'

2.2 Evaluating evidence to support a well-reasoned conclusion about a complex political or social issue

Learners should explore a variety of sources of information, from written articles, to graphs/tables and extracts of official reports. It is important that they demonstrate an ability to evaluate the information contained therein. Ipsos Mori and YouGov are good sources for this kind of information. These sources are regarded as complex in terms of the quantity of data, the intricacy of detail and inclusion of technical terms.

Three examples give an idea of the complexity learners should expect:
http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Publications/sri-crime-what-do-the-electorate-think-of-the-key-crime-policies-may-2010.pdf (pages 40, 9, 33)

In order to develop the skills of making well-reasoned conclusions, learners could be provided with a pack of information detailing, for example, the positive and negative views of police and crime commissioners, and they could be asked to put together a leaflet making a judgement about the relative merits of this new system. Or they could be asked to lead a tutorial lesson where they present sources of information on a variety of theories of crime, leading members of the class to reach conclusions on which is most relevant in the 21st century.

Outcome 3

The learner will:

Critically evaluate a range of social science research by:

3.1 Evaluating the reliability and validity of a source in the context of a political or social issue

Assessing the reliability and validity of a given source
Learners should consider primary and secondary research and reliability and validity of quantitative and qualitative research.

Learners should be given a complex source and asked to assess its validity and reliability. The lesson could begin by discussing the meaning of the two terms and then systematically 'pulling apart' a source to see whether valid and reliable conclusions can be drawn from the source.

In terms of assessing the reliability and validity of the source, learners should then look at **all** of the elements of the source to come to a judgement. The following are good questions to ask:

Who has produced it? Is it reputable? Is it biased? Is it outdated? Has the data been repeatedly tested over a period of time? Does the information make sense? Is the information clear? Is there any ambiguity? Is there information missing? Can references be followed up? What is the sample size? What is the sample frame? Do the results measure what the question asks? Overall, to what extent would a social science researcher trust the source?

The following sources are good examples to use to practise this skill:

http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Publications/sri-crime-what-do-the-electorate-think-of-the-key-crime-policies-may-2010.pdf (page 27)
and:
http://www.ipsos.com/public-affairs/sites/www.ipsos.com.public-affairs/files/documents/closing_the_gaps.pdf (page 43)

3.2 Evaluating a research method in the context of a political or social issue
Learners should be able to evaluate the strengths/weaknesses of a research method if used to research a particular topic. Learners should understand how each of the following methods work, the advantages and disadvantages of each and the extent to which they can provide reliable and valid evidence.

♦ Gathering of official statistics
♦ Social surveys and questionnaires; sampling, designing and conducting surveys
♦ Document research; using official documents from the state and from private sources, personal documents

- ◆ Gathering data from media outputs, virtual (internet) outputs
- ◆ Using case studies
- ◆ Interviewing: designing and conducting structured, semi-structured and unstructured, group/focus interviews
- ◆ Participant observation

3.3 Analysing a social science research method from an ethical perspective

Learners should be able to draw out the key ethical issues affecting a research method including, but not limited to: confidentiality, informed consent, harm, deception and invasion of privacy. Learners need to be able to provide examples of real and recent research that shows how these ethical issues have been addressed.

Ethics — analysis of covert studies

Having introduced the concepts of confidentiality, informed consent, harm, deception and invasion of privacy, learners should be given the opportunity to look at examples of these moral and ethical problems in practice.

Learners should decide whether they think ethics or the information gleaned from undercover research is more important. They could be given access to the following research (or similar recent examples) and ask them to draw conclusions relating to the moral and ethical concepts they have been learning about in class:

Political activists sue Met over relationships with police spies
http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/nov/21/met-police-spies-women-undercover

The Hell's Angels
http://www.openculture.com/2011/07/hunter_s_thompson_gets_confronted_by_the_hells_angels.html

Researching Contemporary Issues Unit

Unit Outcome:

Develop independent research skills in the context of complex political or social issues

This unit gives learners the opportunity to develop the skills required to plan and carry out a research project. This will be useful in the project (dissertation) component of the Course assessment in that it supports the learner as they prepare their research for their dissertation.

Below are some illustrative examples of how teaching and learning may assist the gathering of evidence for the Unit Outcomes and Assessment Standards whilst preparing learners for the project (dissertation) component of Course assessment.

Using the Researching Unit to prepare for the Modern Studies project - dissertation

1.1 Justifying an appropriate complex contemporary issue for research

When using this Unit to support preparation for the project (dissertation), learners should identify an appropriate area of study and agree this with the teacher/lecturer. Careful consideration should be given to selecting an issue which the learner finds sufficiently interesting and challenging to spend a considerable amount of time researching in depth.

A complex issue requires analysis and qualitative judgement, rather than a descriptive and narrative approach. The issue may be worded as a question, statement or hypothesis or a description of the area of study and should be such that the learner is challenged to provide a convincing overall conclusion to the issue(s) raised. It is likely that a suitable issue will give rise to a number of subsidiary questions or sub-issues or aims which will need to be considered in order to reach an overall conclusion providing a robust synthesis and a qualitative judgement. An appropriate complex issue is also one which will enable the learner to interrogate differing social or political perspectives or points of view. In some areas this may encompass significant debate — including major differences in the interpretation of social or political developments.

Possible ways of generating evidence using the project (dissertation)
Evidence for this Assessment Standard can be generated in a variety of ways, such as a checklist, like the one provided towards the rear of this document, indicating the chosen dissertation issue and describing the process of choosing it. A short rationale could be produced to justify the issue selected. Alternatively, a rough draft, from the dissertation, of the learner's justification for the issue may also provide evidence.

1.2 Planning a programme of research

Once the issue has been agreed, the learner should begin planning a programme of research. This could include a variety of steps, such as:

♦ developing knowledge of the social or political context relevant to the chosen issue
♦ making decisions about the way in which the chosen issue will be tackled
♦ identifying a suitable range of resources
♦ agreeing key deadline dates for the completion of the different stages involved in researching the issue
♦ planning timescales for each part of the researching process
♦ developing knowledge of the political or social context relevant to the chosen issue

This might involve reading, for example a textbook, online resources, newspaper articles, chapters or articles from journals or other similar sources. Teachers and lecturers may need to help learners identify suitable background reading at this early stage, as well as establishing a time-frame for completion.

Making decisions about the way in which the chosen issue will be tackled
Care should be taken to ensure that a sensible range of factors/views/outcomes is considered, and that concentration on an isolated factor/view/outcome does not exclude consideration of alternative explanations. The individual learner may find it helpful to mind-map possible issues at this stage. Alternatively, an individual presentation could be made to peers, followed by a brainstorming session during which other learners contribute possible alternative approaches/interpretations.

To ensure that the approach taken is sufficiently in-depth, it may be useful to include no more than three or four main issues in the final plan. This may mean conflating some smaller issues into a single overarching issue or justifying the exclusion of some relatively minor issues. Mind mapping can prove a useful tool in suggesting how subsidiary issues relate to each other and to the overall chosen issue. Learners should be encouraged to be discerning about which information they choose to include, and their critical thinking skills can be shown by explaining why they are using or rejecting particular points.

Good planning is essential to researching the chosen issue as it provides a structured focus for collecting information. However, modification of the plan may be necessary, for example if new evidence emerges or the learner wishes to change the focus of their research. This should be seen as an integral part of planning a programme of research and learners should be encouraged to recognise that this need to amend elements of the original plan is a valid aspect of almost all independent research.

Identifying a suitable range of resources
Researching social subjects issues at this level should involve a wide range of academic reading and it is therefore important that the learner plans ahead to ensure that the resources they need are available when they need them. The

starting point is likely to be resources held within the department but school and public libraries may also be able to help with accessing resources. Some university libraries provide reference facilities to final year school learners.

Sources might include online journals/papers, newspaper or press articles or press releases and blogs.

For some issues there are published works and learners may need teacher/lecturer guidance to help them select appropriate reading. Learners may also need help to distinguish between school textbooks (or books written for the general reader) and those written by academics with specialist knowledge of the topic. While the former often provide an excellent starting point, research at this level should involve using up-to-date academic works as well. In the course of researching for the project, a good range of academic work should be consulted and learners should be able to recognise that different approaches and perspectives on Modern Studies issues may involve subtly different interpretations of events or ideas and will require careful reading.

Different subject disciplines use different research methods to create new knowledge and learners should be aware of some of these differences, for example the differences between qualitative and quantitative data. Research methodology shapes thinking so this will help learners to 'think like' or 'think within' this particular subject discipline. This will help learners become competent, critical users of information.

Agreeing key deadline dates for the completion of the different stages involved in researching the issue
Many learners will find the process of researching independently a challenge. Therefore it may be helpful for the teacher/lecturer and learner to agree dates at which progress will be reviewed. Key dates might include:

♦ selection of an issue
♦ completion of a plan
♦ reviews/discussion of the collecting and recording evidence

Where this Unit is being taken as part of the Advanced Higher Modern Studies Course, the planning could also take account of:

♦ submission date for a first draft of the project: dissertation
♦ submission date for the final version of the project: dissertation, possibly at least a week before the SQA deadline date

Possible ways of generating evidence using the project (dissertation)
Evidence for this Assessment Standard can be generated using research for the project (dissertation) in a variety of ways. For example, copies of dissertation planning notes, a written plan, a mind map, discussion notes or a recording of a discussion or progress interview.

The checklist provided towards the rear of this document suggests one way of recording when progress checks have taken place.

1.3 Researching, collecting and recording information in an organised way

Many learners will find it helpful to focus research on one aspect of the chosen issue at a time, rather than attempting to research, collect and record information relating to the whole issue at the same time. For example, where the chosen issue involves an isolated factor, the learner may choose to start with research focused on this aspect of the issue. Researching one aspect at a time can help to break the task up into more manageable sections and facilitates periodic reviews of progress. A progress review sheet could be used to support this process.

Once a starting point has been identified, the learner will decide how best to record information gathered. For many, word-processed or hand written note-making will be the most straightforward way of proceeding. Although many learners will have had some prior experience of collecting and recording information it is worth emphasising that it is good practice to:

♦ use the list of contents/index to identify sections relevant to the issue being studied
♦ skim read to identify the most important and relevant material
♦ be aware that many academics summarise their arguments at the end of a section or chapter — alternatively, their views may be outlined in the introduction or in the conclusion to the book or article

Learners could complete a simple task like the one provided below to become familiar with different sources of information and bibliographic format. Teachers/lecturers could produce a short guide to conducting research and observing ethical standards in research to help learners realise the importance of acknowledging sources and/or using sensitive information.

There is no single approved way of collecting and recording information but the following advice may prove useful.

Always note the author and title of the book/article being consulted. If a published work, the date of publication should also be recorded.

If the information is from an online source, note the URL and the date when accessed.

Summarise relevant factual evidence briefly, noting page references. By summarising, rather than quoting directly, learners will both save themselves time and avoid unintended plagiarism. Similarly, there is no need to write in sentences and abbreviations can speed up the note-making process, although it is important that the learner him/herself can subsequently make sense of the notes taken.

Record statements of the author's views by using phrases such as 'According to Jones, "…".' The recording of **brief** direct quotations may be helpful but these should be limited to a few words or phrases. Lengthy quotations are unhelpful.

Page references for views/quotations should be noted to facilitate footnoting at a later stage.

Academics often refer to the views/evidence cited by other academics. Noting references to these may help learners understand more about different academic interpretations, and aid the development of a convincing personal line of argument at a later stage.

Checks on progress could take the form of a discussion between teacher/lecturer and learner; peer-review; or individual presentation to the group. In any discussion of progress made, it may be helpful for the teacher/lecturer to make sure that the learner is using evidence analytically and that a line of argument is emerging.

Learners should be exposed to a range of sources of information. Pictures, maps, tables of statistics and written sources may all be relevant and learners can be encouraged to look closely and to pick out what is relevant to their chosen issue. It is important that, having analysed the information and identified the viewpoints presented in the sources, learners take a critical view of the details they have collected. This will include evaluating the validity of the information presented and a judgement on the interpretative perspective of the sources.

When using and reviewing sources it may be helpful to remind learners to take the following points into account:

♦ Consider first of all the **author**; what is the author's level of expertise — how much did/does he or she know about the issue?
♦ **Bias**, or point of view, does need to be borne in mind. But it should not be assumed unless the words of the source do actually show bias.
♦ The **purpose** of the source is as important when it comes to assessing reliability. Is it to persuade, to inform, to develop, to reject? Who are/were the intended readers?
♦ The **date** of a source might also be relevant as is the **context** in which it was written.

One more test of the value of a source is the extent to which it is supported or contradicted by other sources. Sources can be thought of as pieces of jigsaw; they are much more valuable in building up a complete picture if they can be fitted in with other sources. Learners should be actively encouraged to use sources to develop and support their arguments. They should be encouraged to see that this will strengthen their lines of argument, and to appreciate that proper referencing of sources helps the learner avoid plagiarism. Identifying sources will also help the reader to see the range of sources used.

Learners should be encouraged to evaluate academic writing critically and use their own understanding and critical thinking skills to interrogate the sources they use. Learners should be helped to realise that knowledge is usually subjective and that, within the social subjects, 'truth' is often influenced by context, perception and circumstances.

The following questions can help to make judgements about a source and help develop skills of critical analysis.

♦ How relevant is the source to my question or issue?
♦ What is the evidence used in this source to support this conclusion?
♦ Which of these bits of evidence does this source regard as decisive?
♦ Is it justifiable to draw the conclusion from the evidence as this source does?
♦ Does this source give less weight to, or ignore altogether, other pieces of evidence that have a bearing on the issue?
♦ How does this argument compare with the rival arguments of other sources, which have been similarly evaluated?

Any source should always be carefully evaluated. Learners may find it useful to apply the following questions when reading sources.

♦ Is the author a serious and respected scholar?
♦ Is the publisher/website politically neutral or is it linked to or sponsored by some political cause?
♦ If a website, is it managed by some responsible academic institution — typically a university or a national archive?
♦ Does the work include any apparatus of scholarship (references, footnotes, bibliography)?
♦ Does the design of the website or publication suggest that the digital special effects are more important than the words on the screen?

Possible ways of generating evidence using the project (dissertation)
Evidence for Assessment Standard 1.3 - Researching, collecting and recording information in an organised way - can be generated in a variety of ways.
One method is a literature review. A literature review matrix can help group together resources which address the same topic. The issues and themes emerging from the literature can be recorded and act as a framework for a literature review. An example is provided towards the end of the document. Another form of evidence could be a copy or a section of the learner's dissertation research notes which could be retained as evidence of researching, collecting and recording information. The learner could be advised to keep a log as they go through the research project for the dissertation. They should record sources they have used during their research project: the author, page references and publication date. All learners should keep a record of this referencing for Unit assessment evidence.

1.4 Explaining approaches to organising, presenting and referencing findings using appropriate conventions
And
1.5 Correctly referencing a source using an appropriate referencing system

Learners should be able to explain possible approaches to organising and referencing their work.

Organising

A key issue in communicating the ideas synthesised from the research is to be able to structure the findings appropriately. This will normally involve laying out various sub-issues relevant to the question in a logical manner which develops a clear line of argument and leads to a conclusion which can be supported. This may mean going into detail on the various areas. These might well include:

♦ matters of precise definition that arise from the issue
♦ alternative interpretations that have been produced by different academics or academic traditions
♦ detailed analysis of particular pieces of evidence that have a substantial bearing on the issue
♦ a wide-ranging consideration of all aspects of the issue

It may be appropriate for learners to use sub-sections/chapters/aims to keep their material under control. These sub-sections will normally arise from the sub-issues identified at the planning stage but are not a requirement. Successful use of sub-sections will normally depend on the following:

♦ keeping sections to an appropriate number
♦ sub-sections that are linked together coherently

Formal language and tone is encouraged. For example, instead of learners using phrases like, 'I think that…', it may be more appropriate for learners to express themselves in a more academic way, for example, 'this evidence is used to support and elaborate on…'.

Presenting
It is also important to develop skills in the appropriate conventions when making an academic presentation.

♦ A dissertation requires use of controlled language. Learners should aim to develop the skill of presenting an argument or making a point thoughtfully and clearly.
♦ Main text should be clear and uncluttered.
♦ Learners should make sure they are aware of any requirements for presenting their findings. These may include page numbering and including word counts.
♦ Footnotes should contain supplementary information only. They are not part of the body of the dissertation.
♦ Text contained in diagrams may be smaller or larger but must be legible.

Referencing
Learners should be able to use appropriate referencing conventions. Learners should be accurate in their references.

♦ All quotations should be referenced.
♦ Specific facts such as statistics should usually be referenced unless they are the common currency of all books on the subject.
♦ If a paragraph is based in its entirety on one book, then that should be referenced, even if there is no direct quotation.

The style of referencing can be the straightforward one of: Author, Date, *Title*, page number.

Example: Gillespie, R. (2011) *Critical Navigation Skills*, p93

Learners may use the conventional *ibid* and *op cit* as appropriate.

Research findings should be accompanied by a bibliography. As with references, learning how to construct and present a proper bibliography is part of the development provided by this Unit. The bibliography should be a genuine note of all works used. It is important that the author's name and the title are entered correctly. The date and publisher should also be included.

Most university websites have advice on setting out a bibliography. Some well-known standard formats include Harvard, MLA and APA. The main point is that learners should be consistent in the format they choose to use and which is most appropriate for their area of research.

Websites should also be recorded in the bibliography. Web addresses should be listed, with the dates at which they were accessed. This is done because websites are subject to frequent alteration.

Possible ways of generating evidence for Assessment Standard 1.4 using the project (dissertation)
♦ Evidence can be generated using an annotated bibliography detailing reasons for organising, presenting and referencing using appropriate conventions.

Possible ways of generating evidence for Assessment Standard 1.5 using the project (dissertation)

♦ Evidence could be in the form of an extract, or rough copy bibliography.

Checklist

Below is a checklist which may be of use to centres and learners in tracking progress.

Learner's name _____

Research activity	Notes	Date completed
Key dates agreed and issued		
Proposed issue		
Discussion/negotiation on issue		
Issue finalised and agreed		
Planning a programme of research	Agreed plan attached	
Agreed amendments to the plan (if any)		
Initial sources		

Review of progress (1) including evaluation and analysis of evidence so far		
Review of progress (2)		

Bibliographic format

Academic book	
Education journal	
Media source	
Internet source	

Literature review — using a matrix

This table shows a potential way of approaching a literature review. The text under each heading is an illustrative example of the issues that may be identified within a review of a particular piece of literature.

Study	Aim of study OR research question	Viewpoint of author	Main themes or points emerging	Main conclusion Any limitations?	Any future research suggested?
Author 1	To investigate factors which…	Author believes that…	Factors impacting are…	The key factor was…… Limitations: Supporting evidence not clearly cited – hard to follow up. Does this matter? Does it compromise the…	Should look at… Could extend scope of research to…
Author 2	To explore issues related to…	Author believes that…	Main evidence is…	The main impact was… Limitations: Data is now several years old. Does this matter? Is it still the most important / relevant data?	Need more research to see if there is newer / more relevant data… Could extend research into…

Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

♦ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications are available on SQA's website at: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html.
♦ Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work
♦ Building the Curriculum 5: A Framework for Assessment
♦ Course Specifications
♦ Design Principles for National Courses
♦ *Guide to Assessment*
♦ Overview of Qualification Reports
♦ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
♦ *SCQF Handbook: User Guide* and SCQF level descriptors
♦ *SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*
♦ *Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool*
♦ *Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*

Administrative information

Published: May 2015 (version 2.0)

History of changes to Advanced Higher Course/Unit Support Notes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	**General guidance on the Course/Units**: main aims updated **Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Course**: updated in line with mandatory documents **Approaches to learning and teaching**: wording updated for clarity; clearer distinction made between media and technological sources **Further information**: 'context' replaced with 'study theme' in line with mandatory documents; titles updated across all three study themes; Study Area D mandatory content updated **Contemporary Issues Unit**: Outcomes and Assessment Standards updated in line with mandatory documents; AS 3.1 — advice to assess quantitative as well as qualitative data inserted; AS 3.2 — advice updated and more accurate list of research methods inserted; AS 3.3 — wording clarified **Researching Contemporary Issues Unit**: AS1.6 — list of research methods clarified and updated **Unit Coverage:** title changed to Course Coverage; further information about comparator countries inserted; details about Study Area D updated across all study themes	Qualifications Development Manager	May 2015