



Advanced Higher Modern Studies

Course code:	C849 77
Course assessment code:	X849 77
SCQF:	level 7 (32 SCQF credit points)
Valid from:	session 2019–20

This document provides detailed information about the course and course assessment to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the course and the course assessment in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed.

This document is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information required to deliver the course.

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Course overview

This course consists of 32 SCQF credit points, which includes time for preparation for course assessment. The notional length of time for candidates to complete the course is 160 hours.

The course assessment has two components.

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper	90	3 hours
Component 2: project–dissertation	50	see ‘Course assessment’ section

Recommended entry	Progression
<p>Entry to this course is at the discretion of the centre.</p> <p>Candidates should have achieved the Higher Modern Studies course or equivalent qualifications and/or experience prior to starting this course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ degree courses in social subjects and social sciences or related areas◆ further study, employment and/or training

Conditions of award

The grade awarded is based on the total marks achieved across both course assessment components.

Course rationale

National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide time for learning, focus on skills and applying learning, and provide scope for personalisation and choice.

Every course provides opportunities for candidates to develop breadth, challenge and application. The focus and balance of assessment is tailored to each subject area.

This course encourages candidates to develop a greater understanding of the contemporary world and their place in it. They have opportunities to develop important attitudes such as respect for the values, beliefs and cultures of others; openness to new thinking and ideas; and a sense of responsibility and global citizenship.

The course enables candidates to demonstrate autonomy in their learning through researching and analysing, extended writing, independent study skills, and applying critical thinking.

Purpose and aims

The course uses a multidisciplinary approach to develop candidates' knowledge and understanding of contemporary political and social issues in local, Scottish, United Kingdom (UK) and international contexts. Candidates develop the skills to interpret and participate in the social and political processes they encounter in their lives.

The course aims to enable candidates to:

- ◆ analyse the complex political and social processes that lead to an understanding of contemporary society
- ◆ understand and analyse complex political or social issues in the UK and adopt a comparative international approach
- ◆ develop a range of independent practical research skills that allow them to carry out research into a contemporary issue
- ◆ present complex ideas in a range of ways
- ◆ analyse, evaluate, and synthesise a range of sources relating to complex issues
- ◆ develop a knowledge and understanding of social science research methods
- ◆ apply a multidisciplinary approach drawing on analysis from a range of social sciences

Who is this course for?

This course is suitable for a range of candidates, from those who wish to achieve a greater understanding of contemporary society and their place in it, to those who wish to progress to more specialised training, further education or employment.

Course content

The course has three areas of study: Political issues; Law and order; and Social inequality. There is considerable flexibility in the themes that can be studied within each area, to allow for personalisation and choice.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course

The following provides a broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the course:

- ◆ applying knowledge and understanding of complex political or social issues in the United Kingdom and adopting an international comparative approach
- ◆ justifying and analysing complex political or social issues
- ◆ analysing, evaluating, and synthesising a wide range of evidence and arguments
- ◆ analysing and evaluating sources of information and social science research methods
- ◆ planning, researching, collecting and recording information
- ◆ explaining approaches to organising, presenting and referencing findings
- ◆ synthesising information to develop a sustained and coherent line of argument, leading to a conclusion, supported by evidence

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment

The following provides details of skills, knowledge and understanding sampled in the course assessment.

Question paper

The question paper has three optional sections and samples from the skills, knowledge and understanding as follows:

Section 1: Political issues and research methods

In topics A–C, candidates use a comparative approach to analyse and evaluate similarities and differences between the UK (including Scotland) and other international countries in relation to complex political issues. Candidates have flexibility in the international countries they choose to compare with the UK.

In topic D, candidates study social science research methods and issues. Relevant case studies and examples are used from either contemporary contexts, academic contexts, or the candidate's own use of social science research methods.

A: power and influence

- ◆ influences on the political process, including interest groups and the media
- ◆ power and influence of political parties
- ◆ electoral systems and theories of voting behaviour

B: political ideology

- ◆ political ideologies, including Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism and Nationalism
- ◆ contemporary relevance of ideology to political parties, including Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism and Nationalism
- ◆ influence of ideology on contemporary political issues

C: political structures

- ◆ constitutions and political systems
- ◆ relationships between branches of government
- ◆ relationships between levels of government

D: social science research methods and issues

Research methodology

- ◆ analysis, evaluation and comparison of research methods, including:
 - official statistics
 - surveys — postal, telephone and online
 - interviews — structured, semi-structured and unstructured
 - focus groups
 - observation — covert and overt
 - case studies
 - longitudinal studies

Source evaluation

- ◆ critical evaluation of sources of information, including:
 - other researchers' data
 - official statistics and reports
 - private and personal documents
 - surveys
 - interviews
 - focus groups

- non-participant and participant observation
- media outputs
- virtual (internet) outputs
- case studies

Section 2: Law and order and research methods

In topics A–C, candidates use a comparative approach to analyse and evaluate similarities and differences between the UK (including Scotland) and other international countries in relation to complex law and order issues. Candidates have flexibility in the international countries they choose to compare with the UK.

In topic D, candidates study social science research methods and issues. Relevant case studies and examples are used from either contemporary contexts, academic contexts, or the candidate's own use of social science research methods.

A: understanding the criminal justice system

- ◆ judicial frameworks
- ◆ human rights, civil liberties and the criminal justice system
- ◆ criminal justice issues

B: understanding criminal behaviour

- ◆ definitions, measurements and perceptions of crime
- ◆ contemporary relevance of theories of criminal behaviour including physiological, psychological and sociological theories
- ◆ social and economic impact of criminal behaviour on victims, perpetrators, families and wider society

C: responses by society to crime

- ◆ contemporary relevance of theories of punishment, including deterrence, rehabilitation, incapacitation, retributivism and denunciation
- ◆ preventative responses to crime, including policing strategies, multi-agency approaches and early interventions
- ◆ criminal justice responses to crime, including custodial and non-custodial sentences

D: social science research methods and issues

Research methodology

- ◆ analysis, evaluation and comparison of research methods, including:
 - official statistics
 - surveys — postal, telephone and online
 - interviews — structured, semi-structured and unstructured
 - focus groups
 - observation — covert and overt
 - case studies
 - longitudinal studies

Source evaluation

- ◆ critical evaluation of sources of information, including:
 - other researchers' data
 - official statistics and reports
 - private and personal documents

- surveys
- interviews
- focus groups
- non-participant and participant observation
- media outputs
- virtual (internet) outputs
- case studies

Section 3: Social inequality and research methods

In topics A–C, candidates use a comparative approach to analyse and evaluate similarities and differences between the UK (including Scotland) and other international countries in relation to complex social inequality issues. Candidates have flexibility in the international countries they choose to compare with the UK.

In topic D, candidates study social science research methods and issues. Relevant case studies and examples are used from either contemporary contexts, academic contexts, or the candidate's own use of social science research methods.

A: understanding social inequality

- ◆ definitions, measurements and perceptions of inequality
- ◆ social stratification
- ◆ contemporary relevance of theories of inequality, including individualism, functionalism, structuralism and conflict theory

B: the impact of social inequality

- ◆ impact of inequality at an individual level, including education, employment, mental health and lifestyle
- ◆ impact of inequality at a local level, including social cohesion, reputation, services and businesses
- ◆ impact of inequality at a national level, including healthcare, housing, welfare and unemployment

C: responses to social inequality

- ◆ theories of responses to inequality, including individualism and collectivism
- ◆ government responses to inequality
- ◆ non-governmental organisation responses to inequality

D: social science research methods and issues

Research methodology

- ◆ analysis, evaluation and comparison of research methods, including:
 - official statistics
 - surveys — postal, telephone and online
 - interviews — structured, semi-structured and unstructured
 - focus groups
 - observation — covert and overt
 - case studies
 - longitudinal studies

Source evaluation

- ◆ critical evaluation of sources of information, including:
 - other researchers' data
 - official statistics and reports
 - private and personal documents

- surveys
- interviews
- focus groups
- non-participant and participant observation
- media outputs
- virtual (internet) outputs
- case studies

Project–dissertation

Candidates choose any modern studies topic or issue that refers to a complex, contemporary political or social issue. Their choice is not constrained by the content of the question paper.

Skills, knowledge and understanding included in the course are appropriate to the SCQF level of the course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level, and are available on the SCQF website.

Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

This course helps candidates to develop broad, generic skills. These skills are based on [SQA's Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#) and draw from the following main skills areas:

1 Literacy

- 1.1 Reading
- 1.2 Writing

2 Numeracy

- 2.3 Information handling

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

- 4.6 Citizenship

5 Thinking skills

- 5.3 Applying
- 5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Teachers and lecturers must build these skills into the course at an appropriate level, where there are suitable opportunities.

Course assessment

Course assessment is based on the information in this course specification.

The course assessment meets the purposes and aims of the course by addressing:

- ◆ breadth — drawing on knowledge and skills from across the course
- ◆ challenge — requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
- ◆ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This enables candidates to:

- ◆ draw on, extend and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired during the course
- ◆ demonstrate depth of knowledge and understanding, and application of skills
- ◆ demonstrate challenge and application through independent research related to an appropriate contemporary issue

Course assessment structure: question paper

Question paper

90 marks

The question paper has a total mark allocation of 90 marks. This is 64% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

The question paper draws on the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired during the course.

It allows candidates to:

- ◆ apply knowledge and understanding of complex political or social issues in the United Kingdom and adopt a comparative international approach
- ◆ justify and analyse complex political or social issues
- ◆ analyse, evaluate and synthesise a wide range of evidence and arguments
- ◆ analyse and evaluate sources of information and social science research methods

The question paper has three optional sections, all worth 90 marks. Candidates choose one section and answer questions in that section only:

- ◆ Section 1: Political issues and research methods. Topics are:
 - A: power and influence
 - B: political ideology
 - C: political structures
 - D: social science research methods and issues

- ◆ Section 2: Law and order and research methods. Topics are:
 - A: understanding the criminal justice system
 - B: understanding criminal behaviour
 - C: responses by society to crime
 - D: social science research methods and issues
- ◆ Section 3: Social inequality and research methods. Topics are:
 - A: understanding social inequality
 - B: the impact of social inequality
 - C: responses to social inequality
 - D: social science research methods and issues

Each section of the question paper has two parts:

- ◆ Part A consists of a question from each topic (A–C). Candidates attempt:
 - two 30-mark extended-response questions from a choice of three
- ◆ Part B consists of questions from topic D. Candidates attempt both questions:
 - one 15-mark question on research methods
 - one 15-mark question about the trustworthiness of a source

Setting, conducting and marking the question paper

SQA sets and marks the question paper. It is conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA.

Candidates have 3 hours to complete the question paper.

All marking is quality assured by SQA.

Specimen question papers for Advanced Higher courses are published on SQA's website. These illustrate the standard, structure and requirements of the question papers. The specimen papers also include marking instructions.

Course assessment structure: project–dissertation

Project–dissertation

50 marks

The project–dissertation has a total mark allocation of 50 marks. This is 36% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

The project–dissertation enables candidates to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding by undertaking independent research into a complex, contemporary political or social issue.

Project–dissertation overview

The project–dissertation allows candidates to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ justifying an appropriate complex, contemporary political or social issue for research
- ◆ evaluating research methodology
- ◆ using a wide range of sources of information
- ◆ analysing the issue
- ◆ evaluating arguments and evidence
- ◆ synthesising information to develop a sustained and coherent line of argument, leading to a conclusion, supported by evidence
- ◆ organising, presenting and referencing findings using appropriate conventions

Setting, conducting and marking the project–dissertation

Teachers and lecturers should provide reasonable guidance on the types of issues which enable candidates to meet all the requirements of the project–dissertation. Teachers and lecturers may also guide candidates as to the likely availability and accessibility of resources for their chosen issue.

Candidates should work on their project–dissertation with minimum support from the teacher or lecturer.

The project–dissertation is managed by centres within SQA guidelines and is conducted under some supervision and control. Candidates produce the evidence for assessment independently, in time to meet a submission date set by SQA.

Evidence is submitted to SQA for external marking.

All marking is quality assured by SQA.

Assessment conditions

Time

This assessment is carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start at an appropriate point in the course, allowing sufficient time to carry out research.

Supervision, control and authentication

Teachers and lecturers must exercise their professional responsibility to ensure that evidence submitted by a candidate is their own work.

The project–dissertation is conducted under some supervision and control. This means that although candidates may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, teachers and lecturers should put in place processes to monitor progress and ensure that the work is the candidate's own, and that plagiarism has not taken place. For example:

- ◆ regular checkpoint and/or progress meetings with candidates

- ◆ short spot-check personal interviews
- ◆ checklists which record activity and/or progress

Teacher and lecturer comments on the selection of a topic and title are appropriate before the candidate starts the task. Once work on the assessment has begun, all the candidate's work must be their own.

Group work approaches are acceptable during the research phase of the project–dissertation. However, the completed project–dissertation must be the candidate's own work.

Candidates may seek clarification regarding instructions for the assessment if they find them unclear. In this case, the clarification should normally be given to the whole class.

Resources

There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access.

Reasonable assistance

Centres must ensure that each candidate's evidence for their project–dissertation is their own work. However, reasonable assistance may be provided. The term 'reasonable assistance' is used to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. If a candidate requires more than what is deemed to be 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment, or they may have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

Teachers and lecturers can give reasonable assistance on a generic basis to a class or a group of candidates (for example advice on submission dates). Teachers and lecturers can also give reasonable assistance to candidates on an individual basis.

When assistance is given on a one-to-one basis in the context of something the candidate has already produced, there is a danger that it becomes support for assessment. Teachers and lecturers must be aware that this should not go beyond reasonable assistance.

Evidence to be gathered

The following evidence is required for this assessment:

- ◆ candidate's completed project–dissertation

Volume

The word count for the project–dissertation is 5,000 words. This includes the body of the dissertation and evaluation of research methods but does not include the contents page, bibliography, footnotes or appendices. Candidates must submit the word count with the completed project–dissertation.

If the word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%, a penalty is applied.

Grading

Candidates' overall grades are determined by their performance across the course assessment. The course assessment is graded A–D on the basis of the total mark for both course assessment components.

Grade description for C

For the award of grade C, candidates will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

Grade description for A

For the award of grade A, candidates will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

Equality and inclusion

This course is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs is available on the assessment arrangements web page:

www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Further information

- ◆ [Advanced Higher Modern Studies subject page](#)
- ◆ [Assessment arrangements web page](#)
- ◆ [Building the Curriculum 3–5](#)
- ◆ [Guide to Assessment](#)
- ◆ [Guidance on conditions of assessment for coursework](#)
- ◆ [SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)
- ◆ [Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers](#)
- ◆ [Educational Research Reports](#)
- ◆ [SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools](#)
- ◆ [SQA e-assessment web page](#)
- ◆ [SCQF website: framework, level descriptors and SCQF Handbook](#)

Appendix: course support notes

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance to teachers and lecturers on approaches to delivering the course. Please read these course support notes in conjunction with this course specification and the specimen question paper and coursework.

Developing skills, knowledge and understanding

This section provides advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that teachers and lecturers could include in the course. Teachers and lecturers have considerable flexibility to select contexts that stimulate and challenge candidates, offering both breadth and depth.

Teachers and lecturers should refer to the 'Course content' and 'Course assessment structure' sections of the course specification for the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course and course assessment.

The development of subject-specific and generic skills is central to the course. Teachers and lecturers should make candidates aware of the skills they are developing and of the transferability of them. Transferable skills help candidates with further study and to enhance their personal effectiveness.

Candidates need support and guidance to develop study skills and learning strategies. Teachers and lecturers should encourage them to participate in their own learning by finding information and to generally show initiative, wherever appropriate. The benefits of co-operative learning, peer support and peer feedback can be substantial, and should be encouraged.

The 'Approaches to learning and teaching' section provides suggested approaches that teachers and lecturers can use to develop skills, knowledge and understanding.

Approaches to learning and teaching

At Advanced Higher level, candidates begin to develop the ability to work independently. Teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to use an enquiring, critical and problem-solving approach to their learning, and support them by providing suggested timescales for research. Candidates should have 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.

Candidates might engage in a variety of learning activities as appropriate to the subject, including:

- ◆ researching information for their subject, selecting trustworthy sources rather than receiving information from their teacher or lecturer

- ◆ using active and open-ended learning activities such as research, case studies and presentation tasks
- ◆ engaging in wide-ranging independent reading, ideally from academic texts
- ◆ recording, in a systematic way, the results of research and independent investigation from different sources
- ◆ presenting findings and conclusions of research and investigation activities to a group
- ◆ participating in group work with peers and using collaborative learning opportunities to develop teamwork skills
- ◆ participating in informed debate and discussion with peers, where candidates can demonstrate skills in constructing and sustaining lines of argument
- ◆ researching international comparisons throughout the course and integrating this information where possible
- ◆ drawing conclusions from complex information gathered from a combination of different media sources, such as television, radio, internet broadcasts, newspaper articles, books, lectures and talks
- ◆ using appropriate technological resources
- ◆ participating in field trips and visits

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

Teachers and lecturers should, where possible, provide opportunities to personalise learning and enable candidates to have choices in approaches to learning and teaching. The flexibility in Advanced Higher courses, and the independence with which candidates carry out the work, enables this. Teachers and lecturers should also use inclusive approaches to learning and teaching and can do this by using a variety of strategies which suit the needs of all candidates.

There is no recommended teaching order for this course. However, candidates should have the opportunity to study a range of topics before they choose a topic or issue for their project–dissertation. The development of skills should be a part of teaching and learning from the start to help candidates build up their skills throughout the course.

Preparing for course assessment

The following tables show the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment (left column) and examples of ways this content could be covered (right column). These illustrative examples are non-mandatory, for advice only, and are not exhaustive.

Candidates should adopt a comparative international approach throughout their study and have flexibility in the international comparisons they make. The countries they choose for comparative study do not need to have significantly different political or social systems, structures or issues from those in the United Kingdom. Candidates 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.

Section 1: Political issues and research methods

A: power and influence

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment	Examples of possible approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ influences on the political process, including interest groups and the media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ interest groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — function and purpose — relationships with political parties and government — insider or outsider role in policymaking — influence and effectiveness ◆ the media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — function and purpose — relationships with political parties and government — media partisanship, ownership, regulation, and control — influence and effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ power and influence of political parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ function and relevance ◆ internal democracy and policymaking ◆ membership and activism ◆ influence of smaller parties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ electoral systems and theories of voting behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ electoral systems: plurality, proportional and/or majoritarian systems ◆ elections and the distribution of power ◆ models and theories of voting behaviour ◆ influence of the media on elections ◆ outcomes

B: political ideology

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment	Examples of possible approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ political ideologies, including Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism and Nationalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ key features of each ideology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — role of the state — views on human nature — sovereignty — freedoms or human rights — the economy ◆ relevant theorists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Liberalism: Locke and Mill — Conservatism: Burke and Disraeli — Socialism: Marx and Lenin

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Nationalism: Mazzini and Von Herder ◆ comparative analysis of similarities and differences between ideologies
◆ contemporary relevance of ideology to political parties, including Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism and Nationalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ current political party policy and direction ◆ comparison with parties' traditional ideology ◆ similarities and differences between political parties' core values and policies
◆ influence of ideology on contemporary political issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ human rights and civil liberties ◆ security ◆ national sovereignty ◆ taxation ◆ welfare ◆ economic policy ◆ authority and power ◆ political representation
C: political structures	
Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment	Examples of possible approaches
◆ constitutions and political systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ codified and uncodified constitutions ◆ parliamentary, presidential and authoritarian systems ◆ federal, unitary and devolved systems ◆ bicameral and unicameral legislatures
◆ relationships between branches of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ legislative ◆ executive ◆ judiciary
◆ relationships between levels of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ local, city, state and national governments ◆ devolved administrations and central governments ◆ state governments and central governments ◆ national governments and supranational institutions
D: social science research methods and issues	
Research methodology	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ analysis, evaluation and comparison of research methods, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — official statistics — surveys — postal, telephone and online — interviews — structured, semi-structured and unstructured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ critical evaluation of research methods, including consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — the suitability of the method(s) — specified scenarios — ethical issues — alternative methods and/or approaches

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — focus groups — observation — covert and overt — case studies — longitudinal studies <p>Source evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ critical evaluation of sources of information, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — other researchers' data — official statistics and reports — private and personal documents — surveys — interviews — focus groups — non-participant and participant observation — media outputs — virtual (internet) outputs — case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ critical evaluation of sources of information, focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — reliability and validity of source evidence — knowledge of conducting social science research — reference to relevant additional research or sources — alternative approaches which enhance trust
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Section 2: Law and order and research methods	
A: understanding the criminal justice system	
Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment	Examples of possible approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ judicial frameworks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ judicial systems ◆ the rule of law and values underpinning the judicial framework ◆ relations between the judiciary, other branches of government and political institutions ◆ judicial review and challenges to the rule of law ◆ judicial independence and appointment processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ human rights, civil liberties and the criminal justice system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ human rights and civil liberties ◆ human rights and constitutional arrangements ◆ impact of human rights legislation ◆ challenges to human rights and civil liberties ◆ effectiveness of the criminal justice system in protecting human rights and civil liberties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ criminal justice issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ national security ◆ equality within the criminal justice system ◆ policing ◆ surveillance
B: understanding criminal behaviour	
Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment	Examples of possible approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ definitions, measurements and perceptions of crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ defining crime and deviance ◆ measuring criminal behaviour ◆ perceptions of crime ◆ the media and moral panics ◆ crime over time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ contemporary relevance of theories of criminal behaviour including physiological, psychological and sociological theories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ warrior gene ◆ low resting heart rate ◆ serotonin or testosterone levels ◆ psychopathy ◆ brain development studies ◆ maternal deprivation ◆ subcultures ◆ social learning

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ labelling ◆ Neo-Marxist theory ◆ right realism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ social and economic impact of criminal behaviour on victims, perpetrators, families and wider society 	<p>Impact of crime on victims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ physical impact ◆ financial, emotional and social costs ◆ psychological and/or mental health impact ◆ stigma ◆ social exclusion ◆ crime-specific effects <p>Impact of crime on perpetrators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ loss of liberty ◆ psychological and/or mental health impact ◆ financial, emotional and social costs ◆ stigma ◆ social exclusion ◆ crime-specific consequences <p>Impact of crime on families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ financial, emotional and social costs ◆ deepening disadvantage ◆ stigma ◆ psychological and/or mental health costs ◆ impact on children <p>Impact on wider society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ social cohesion ◆ population reduction and/or victimisation avoidance ◆ community empowerment ◆ costs of crime including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — victim costs — costs of criminal justice — costs of repairing criminal damage

C: responses by society to crime	
Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment	Examples of possible approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ contemporary relevance of theories of punishment, including deterrence, rehabilitation, incapacitation, retributivism and denunciation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ definitions and key features ◆ theorists including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Beccaria — Bentham — Durkheim — Hobbes — Marx — Foucault — Von Hirsch — Garland ◆ modern relevance and contemporary examples of punitive approaches ◆ criticisms of punitive theories and approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ preventative responses to crime, including policing strategies, multi-agency approaches and early interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ policing strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — benefits of police strategies — potential pitfalls — examples of strategies — community policing, hot-spot policing, stop and search, safer communities, neighbourhood watch, national crime prevention campaigns ◆ early intervention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — benefits of early intervention — potential pitfalls — examples of early intervention programmes, for example, the Graham Allen review, No Knives Better Lives, Early and Effective Intervention ◆ multi-agency approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — benefits of partnership working — potential pitfalls — multi-agency approaches, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the Violence Reduction Unit ○ Community Justice Scotland ○ Safeguarding Communities — Reducing Offending (SACRO) ○ National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ criminal justice responses to crime, including custodial and non-custodial sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ custodial responses, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — prisons — Young Offenders Institutions (YOIs) — female prisons and Community Custody Units (CCUs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ purposeful activity ○ education programmes — challenges or problems faced, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ overcrowding ○ drugs ○ violence ○ recidivism rates — policy changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ short sentences ○ women ○ children ◆ non-custodial responses, including Community Payback Orders (CPOs), fines, Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs), Restriction of Liberty Orders (RLOs), restorative justice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — success of alternatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ recidivism rates ○ person-centred approach — challenges or problems faced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ funding ○ availability ○ perception of ‘soft justice’
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D: social science research methods and issues

<p>Research methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ analysis, evaluation and comparison of research methods, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — official statistics — surveys — postal, telephone and online — interviews — structured, semi-structured and unstructured — focus groups — observation — covert and overt — case studies — longitudinal studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ critical evaluation of research methods, including consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — the suitability of the method(s) — specified scenarios — ethical issues — alternative methods and/or approaches
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Source evaluation

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ critical evaluation of sources of information, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— other researchers' data— official statistics and reports— private and personal documents— surveys— interviews— focus groups— non-participant and participant observation— media outputs— virtual (internet) outputs— case studies | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ critical evaluation of sources of information, focused on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— reliability and validity of source evidence— knowledge of conducting social science research— reference to relevant additional research or sources— alternative approaches which enhance trust |
|---|---|

Section 3: Social inequality and research methods	
A: understanding social inequality	
Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment	Examples of possible approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ definitions, measurements and perceptions of inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ defining inequality ◆ measuring social inequality ◆ social mobility ◆ different views of social inequality over time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ social stratification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ social class ◆ structure versus agency ◆ meritocracy ◆ social mobility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ contemporary relevance of theories of inequality, including individualism, functionalism, structuralism and conflict theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ definitions and key features ◆ theorists including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Durkheim — Marx — Spencer — Parsons — Merton ◆ modern relevance and contemporary examples ◆ criticisms of theories
B: the impact of social inequality	
Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment	Examples of possible approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ impact of inequality at an individual level, including education, employment, mental health and lifestyle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ school experience — exclusion, exam performance, adverse childhood experiences ◆ further or higher education and training ◆ employment and underemployment ◆ mental health ◆ lifestyle, for example smoking rates, substance use, obesity rates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ impact of inequality at a local level, including social cohesion, reputation, services and businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ postcode poverty ◆ short-term and long-term impacts on communities ◆ access to services ◆ labelling and stereotyping ◆ businesses, local consumption, local demand and local employment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ impact of inequality at a national level, including healthcare, housing, welfare and unemployment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ healthcare: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — provision — demand — access ◆ housing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — provision — demand — access ◆ welfare: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — provision — demand — access ◆ unemployment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — and gender — and age groups — and ethnic minorities — and regions
C: responses to social inequality	
Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment	Examples of possible approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ theories of responses to inequality, including individualism and collectivism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ definitions and key features ◆ positives and negatives of individualism ◆ positives and negatives of collectivism ◆ modern relevance and contemporary examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ government responses to inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ effectiveness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — welfare provision — healthcare provision — education provision — housing provision — social security — employment strategies — legislative approaches — economic policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ non-governmental organisation (NGO) responses to inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ role and function of NGOs ◆ ability of NGOs to replace the state ◆ NGOs and international development ◆ effectiveness of NGOs in tackling poverty and inequality

D: social science research methods and issues

Research methodology

- ◆ analysis, evaluation and comparison of research methods, including:
 - official statistics
 - surveys — postal, telephone and online
 - interviews — structured, semi-structured and unstructured
 - focus groups
 - observation — covert and overt
 - case studies
 - longitudinal studies

Source evaluation

- ◆ critical evaluation of sources of information, including:
 - other researchers' data
 - official statistics and reports
 - private and personal documents
 - surveys
 - interviews
 - focus groups
 - non-participant and participant observation
 - media outputs
 - virtual (internet) outputs
 - case studies

- ◆ critical evaluation of research methods, including consideration of:
 - the suitability of the method(s)
 - specified scenarios
 - ethical issues
 - alternative methods and/or approaches

- ◆ critical evaluation of sources of information, focused on:
 - reliability and validity of source evidence
 - knowledge of conducting social science research
 - reference to relevant additional research or sources
 - alternative approaches which enhance trust

Further guidance for course assessment

Question paper

Candidates should provide detailed, relevant, up-to-date examples in their responses to 30-mark extended-response questions, as this helps them to achieve high marks. Where possible, candidates should also acknowledge the source or origin of the examples.

The questions direct candidates to make 'reference to the UK or Scotland and any other country or countries', and teachers and lecturers should reinforce this within the course. Strong candidate responses make comparisons with a range of other countries throughout their response. Strong evaluative and overall conclusions comment on the extent of differences or similarities between the UK or Scotland and other countries.

Candidates should ensure that their responses fit the demands of the specific question asked. The temptation for candidates to write 'pre-prepared' essays on the general topic covered in the question is strong, but this approach is unlikely to gain high marks. Teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to revise topics but be flexible and ready to adapt their knowledge to fit the specific question.

Candidates should plan their essay to achieve synthesis marks. Answers that follow a clear line of argument based on organised and logical ideas generally gain high marks. Candidates should reach a developed conclusion that fully tackles the issue framed in the question, rather than summarising their previous points.

In the research methods questions (questions 4, 9 and 14), candidates perform well when they are familiar with a range of research methods and are able to make comparisons, not only with the methodologies stated in the question. Candidates should be able to draw on their own knowledge, research experience and case studies, for example online surveys, opinion polls and government statistics. Candidates should also be able to assess how effective the stated method(s) is in relation to the specific scenario.

The source-based questions (questions 5, 10 and 15) require candidates to have detailed knowledge about aspects that affect trustworthiness, such as provenance, source evidence, methodology, recording approach or date of publication. Candidates should be able to use evidence both from the source and their own knowledge of social science research to evaluate how trustworthy the source is.

Project–dissertation

Candidates should choose an issue for study which is:

- ◆ both contemporary and relevant
- ◆ a modern studies topic, in that it develops an understanding of the issue through using the approach of one or more of the following disciplines:
 - politics
 - sociology
 - international relations
 - economics

Teachers and lecturers should assist candidates in the planning stage by ensuring they adopt an appropriate hypothesis and aims. Many teachers and lecturers use the 'approved list of dissertations' document available on the Advanced Higher Modern Studies subject page to support this process. However, it is acceptable for candidates to adapt or modify these as it relates to their issue of study. Teachers and lecturers should support candidates if they choose to select their own dissertation titles. If teachers and lecturers are unsure about the hypothesis, title, or aims candidates have developed themselves, they can submit an Advanced Higher Modern Studies 'alternative titles for dissertations' form, also available on the subject page.

Teachers and lecturers should discourage candidates from framing aims using the stem 'To find out...'.

Candidates should use questions or stems such as:

- ◆ To what extent...?
- ◆ To analyse...
- ◆ To examine...
- ◆ To examine the extent to which...

Candidates should avoid simply describing their use of research methods. Teachers and lecturers should direct candidates to provide an evaluation of a select range of methods used. Candidates should:

- ◆ comment on benefits and limitations of the selected methods
- ◆ comment on ethical issues of at least one method
- ◆ discuss how to improve on at least one method used

Candidates should use a wide and varied range of sources of information. Secondary resources may include academic texts, journals, newspapers, websites, documentaries and other audio or visual sources. Primary research is not mandatory for the dissertation, but it can enhance research and offer further insight or perspectives on issues.

Teachers and lecturers should direct candidates to discuss and critically evaluate alternative views and theories as part of their dissertation. Teachers and lecturers should also ensure that candidates identify the local, national, and/or global significance of the issue.

Candidates should avoid summary conclusions and instead offer a conclusion to their dissertation that makes and supports a balanced and considered judgement on the issue.

Centres should adopt a 'house style' of referencing that helps candidates to take a consistent approach. Teachers and lecturers can direct candidates to dissertation exemplification in the Modern Studies section on SQA's Understanding Standards website to see a range of approaches to referencing.

Appendices are crucial evidence of a candidate's research process. For example, interview transcripts, letters and/or emails sent and received, and survey results can be included. Candidates who only conduct secondary research should include appendices, for example statistical or graphical information that they analyse, evaluate and integrate into the main body of their dissertation. Teachers and lecturers should advise candidates that the marks available for appendices are only awarded if candidates reference and use evidence from them in the main body of their dissertation.

The word count for the project–dissertation is 5,000 words. If the word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%, a penalty is applied.

Teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to produce their final dissertations using the following conventions:

- ◆ size 12 font
- ◆ 1.5 line spacing

- ◆ single-sided printing
- ◆ include word count per page and chapter
- ◆ include an overall word count

Candidates should proofread their project–dissertation before final submission.

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

Teachers and lecturers should identify opportunities throughout the course for candidates to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

Candidates should be aware of the skills they are developing, and teachers and lecturers can provide advice on opportunities to practise and improve them.

SQA does not formally assess skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

There may also be opportunities to develop additional skills depending on the approach centres use to deliver the course. This is for individual teachers and lecturers to manage.

1 Literacy

The Advanced Higher Modern Studies course provides candidates with opportunities to develop literacy skills, particularly in reading and writing. Teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to read as widely as possible, and produce extended writing where appropriate in order to facilitate progression to other qualifications in modern studies or related areas, and the world of work.

Candidates are likely to experience listening and talking skills during class discussions and debates. For example, the use of debating, discussion groups or visits from representatives from political parties, interest groups or the media could develop these skills.

Candidates may read a variety of texts about the topic or issue they are studying, including a range of newspapers in print or electronic form. They may study these alongside academic research or government reports at an appropriate level. This means that they are able to consider many different types of text and consider their benefits and limitations in terms of providing information to assist them in both essay writing and the project–dissertation.

1.1 Reading

Candidates develop their literacy skills in significant ways by reading:

- ◆ newspapers (this can also develop skills of supporting and opposing views using facts)
- ◆ academic texts
- ◆ blogs and diaries
- ◆ websites

1.2 Writing

Teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to undertake extended writing wherever appropriate. 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 candidates to develop the skill of extended writing.

Candidates develop their writing skills by:

- ◆ creating questionnaires and surveys
- ◆ creating interview questions
- ◆ writing letters to relevant individuals
- ◆ developing note-taking skills
- ◆ drafting and re-drafting summaries from notes
- ◆ preparing notes for participation in discussion and debate
- ◆ organising thoughts by completing a concept map with detailed information
- ◆ drafting and re-drafting materials for an essay or the project–dissertation
- ◆ refining thoughts by writing a review of their own work and noting plans for improvement

2 Numeracy

Candidates develop numeracy skills by evaluating a range of numerical, statistical and graphical sources of information during source-based tasks, and through research opportunities.

Source-handling experiences provide opportunities for candidates to tackle a range of graphs, tables and charts, such as:

- ◆ analysis of election data
- ◆ official statistical data
- ◆ opinion polls

Candidates can also design and carry out surveys or questionnaires and present the data collected in graphs, tables or charts.

Teachers and lecturers should use statistical sources to create appropriate tasks across the course.

2.3 Information handling

Throughout the course, candidates develop skills in information handling, including using and collecting numerical data, written academic reports, and press and media texts. Candidates develop the skills of assessing information for its validity to their research. They also learn to read sources critically, identifying and dealing with bias, and identifying varying viewpoints on issues.

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

4.6 Citizenship

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

Candidates can develop their political literacy and citizenship skills in a variety of ways as part of their project–dissertation research, or to support their classroom activity by, for example:

- ◆ writing letters or emails
- ◆ inviting visitors to the school
- ◆ going out on research visits

5 Thinking skills

5.3 Applying

5.4 Analysing and evaluating

At Advanced Higher level, candidates are required to apply their knowledge and understanding of factual elements of political and social issues. They are also required to link these with underlying theoretical or abstract ideas that require a greater depth and detail of understanding. This enables candidates to explore challenging abstract ideas by engaging with a wide range of source material, and both evaluating and synthesising information. This depth of study allows them to engage fully with the subject matter.

The course allows candidates to use different sources of information including academic literature, sources from political parties or interest groups, newspaper or online articles and blogs. Teachers and lecturers should direct more able candidates to more complex, and potentially richer, sources of information.

Project–dissertation

Completing the project–dissertation provides opportunities for developing and deepening skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Candidates 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 develop personal learning as they work independently to identify and refine a topic or issue, and carry out research. They develop citizenship through deepening their understanding of complex issues in contemporary society. Candidates assess the usefulness of different sources, and express reasoned viewpoints supported by evidence. The project–dissertation provides opportunities to develop the skill of synthesising information to support conclusions and arguments.

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Course support notes added as appendix.	September 2019

Note: please check SQA's website to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.

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