



Higher
Course
Specification



Higher Sociology Course Specification (C768 76)

Valid from August 2014

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

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Course outline

Course title: Higher Sociology

SCQF: level 6 (24 SCQF credit points)

Course code: C768 76

Mandatory Units

This Course comprises three mandatory units from the following, and a Course Assessment:

H26J 76 Sociology: Human Society (Higher) 6 SCQF credit points
and

H26K 76 Sociology: Culture and Identity (Higher) 6 SCQF credit points

And either

H26L 76 Sociology: Social Issues (Higher) 6 SCQF credit points

Or

H6N1 76 Sociology: Social Issues - Scotland (Higher)* 6 SCQF credit points

and

Course assessment 6 SCQF credit points

This Course includes six SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course. Further information on the Course assessment is provided in the Assessment section.

*Scottish Studies Award contributing Unit: This Course Specification should be read in conjunction with the relevant Scottish Studies Unit Specification on the [Scottish Studies Award web page](#).

Recommended entry

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

- ◆ National 5 Sociology Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ National 5 Modern Studies Course or relevant component Units

Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ Social studies or social science subjects at SCQF level 6
- ◆ further study, employment and/or training

An understanding of sociology also provides useful progression to social work, politics, economics, health studies, law and the voluntary sector.

Other progression pathways are also possible including progression to other qualifications at the same or different levels

Further details are provided in the Rationale section.

Equality and inclusion

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

Rationale

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

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles

This Course builds on the National 5 Sociology Course and draws on principles and practice papers for the health and wellbeing and the social studies curriculum areas.¹

The study of sociology offers learners the opportunity to develop an understanding of society that goes beyond personal experience and common-sense explanations. Learners are challenged to analyse social issues, culture and identity from different points of view. This Course also encourages the use of evidence when explaining social issues.

The study of Sociology contributes to developing successful learners by providing opportunities to develop communication skills by encouraging imaginative thought and prompting learners to ask questions about the social world in which we live.

Learners will become more confident individuals by developing the ability to analyse and communicate their own and others' experiences of social life and views of the world.

Learners will become more effective contributors and will gain increased awareness of themselves and others. They will also interact with others to share and develop their understanding of human social experience in different contexts.

Sociological research and analysis skills are developed as aspects of political, economic, cultural and social life are explored. This will encourage learners to respect others and begin to develop informed views of complex social issues. These skills make an important contribution to the capacity of responsible citizens.

¹ Principles and practice

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/learningteachingandassessment/curriculumareas/healthandwellbeing/index.asp>
<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/learningteachingandassessment/curriculumareas/socialstudies/index.asp>

Purpose and aims of the Course

This Course develops learners' sense of themselves as part of society. It uses a sociological approach, which encourages learners to ask questions about the social world in which we live and to use evidence to support explanations for human social behaviour. The Course will therefore enable learners to become familiar with research methods and the use of evidence in sociology.

The Course equips learners with knowledge and understanding of the sociological perspectives, theories and concepts used to investigate and explain aspects of the social world. The sociological understanding that develops from learning in this Course is used to question commonly-held assumptions about society and to consider sociological explanations.

The Course offers opportunities for learners to actively investigate human society, cultures and social issues. Learners apply sociological perspectives, theories, concepts and research evidence to analyse society.

The aims of the Course are to:

- ◆ develop an understanding of society through gaining knowledge and understanding of sociological perspectives, theories and concepts
- ◆ develop ability to challenge 'common-sense' explanations about human social behaviour using sociological understanding and evidence
- ◆ develop an understanding of cultural and social diversity, including the significance of relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions in a changing social world
- ◆ develop an understanding of the role of sources of information, research evidence and research methods used in sociology
- ◆ develop research skills, including the ability to select, organise, analyse and evaluate information
- ◆ develop thinking and communication skills used in sociology

Information about typical learners who might do the Course

This Course is suitable for all learners who are interested in finding out more about the world we live in by investigating the relationship between society and the individuals who live in it. Learners progressing from National 5 Sociology will find that the Course provides the breadth, challenge and application they require to develop their research and thinking skills, and their knowledge of sociology.

Learners should be interested in developing a deeper understanding of the social world in which we live. The Course provides opportunities for individuals to develop confidence in researching and analysing evidence to explain human social experiences and social issues.

The Course will equip learners with skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work by developing their ability to communicate their own and others' experiences of social life and views of the world.

Course structure and conditions of award

Course structure

This Course sits within a hierarchical structure, progressing from the National 5 Sociology Course to Higher Sociology.

The central theme of the Course is to develop learners' ability to understand and explain the social world through a sociological approach. Learners will also develop knowledge of the society in which we live and will use research evidence to understand contemporary social issues.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a number of ways.

The Course consists of three mandatory Units:

Sociology: Human Society (Higher)

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

Sociology: Culture and Identity (Higher)

The general aim of this Unit is to enable learners to develop their ability to use sociological concepts, theories and research to investigate features of culture and identity in a changing social world. Learners will consider their own and others' cultural experiences to develop an understanding of cultural identity and diversity.

Sociology: Social Issues (Higher)

The general aim of this Unit is to develop learners' sociological understanding of contemporary social issues by enabling them to acquire skills in evaluating and applying sociological theories and research evidence. Learners will develop skills in using a range of sources, including research evidence, to justify points of view.

Options within the Units offer personalisation and choice from areas of sociological study.

Conditions of award

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all of the Units as well as the Course assessment. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Further information on the assessment of the skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course is given in the *Course Assessment Specification*. A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course is given in this section. This covers:

- ◆ understanding society by explaining sociological perspectives, theories and concepts
- ◆ explaining the sociological significance of relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions in a changing social world
- ◆ explaining and evaluating research methods used in sociology
- ◆ using sociological theories to analyse and explain human social behaviour
- ◆ using knowledge and understanding to evaluate research and evidence to support explanations
- ◆ explaining differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human social behaviour
- ◆ using research skills to investigate topics
- ◆ analysing and evaluating information including published research
- ◆ communicating sociologically-informed views

Skills, knowledge and understanding to be included in the Course will be appropriate to the SCQF level of the Course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level (www.sqa.org.uk/scqf).

Assessment

Information about assessment for the Course is included in the *Course Assessment Specification*, which provides full details including advice on how a learner's overall attainment for the Course will be determined.

Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the *Unit Specification*.

They can be assessed on a Unit-by-Unit basis or by combined assessment.

They will be assessed on a pass/fail basis within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgments are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows:

Sociology: Human Society (Higher)

The learner will be required to analyse the sociological approach to understanding society and the relationships that exist amongst individuals, groups and institutions. This will involve explaining common-sense and sociological approaches, evaluating research methods and explaining and applying structural and action perspectives.

Sociology: Culture and Identity (Higher)

The learner will be required to investigate culture and identity in a changing social world. This will involve explaining the impact of socialisation on the formation of identity; explaining relevant concepts; applying theory and using research evidence in the explanation.

Sociology: Social Issues (Higher)

The learner will be required to evaluate sociological theories and research evidence when explaining social issues. This will involve explaining a social issue; using contrasting theories; evaluating explanations offered by theories; and sourcing and evaluating studies of the social issue.

Course assessment

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#)². At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment. The added value for the Course must address the key purposes and aims of the Course as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

² Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/jargonbuster>

In this Course, added value will focus on:

- ◆ breadth
- ◆ application

The learner will be assessed through a [question paper](#)³ and an [assignment](#)⁴.

The question paper will sample learners' sociological knowledge and understanding from Course Units, and their ability to apply knowledge and understanding to explain social behaviour.

The assignment will require learners to use sociological skills, knowledge and understanding to carry out and report on their own secondary research into a topic of choice.

³ Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/jargonbuster>

⁴ See link above for definition.

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

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

1 Literacy

- 1.1 Reading
- 1.2 Writing
- 1.3 Listening and talking

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

- 4.6 Citizenship

5 Thinking skills

- 5.3 Applying
- 5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Amplification of these skills is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the Course is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

Administrative information

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History of changes to National Course Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	2.0	<p>Page 4 — Purpose and aims of the Course section: 'investigation skills' changed to 'research skills'.</p> <p>Page 6 — List of skills, knowledge and understanding reordered; 'using investigation skills to find and evaluate sources of information and research studies' changed to 'using research skills to investigate topics'; 'organising and evaluating information in sociology' changed to 'analysing and evaluating information including published research'.</p> <p>Page 8 — Course assessment section: description of assignment revised for clarity.</p>	Qualifications Development Manager	April 2014
	2.1	<p>Scottish Studies Award Unit contributing information added.</p> <p>No other changes made to document content.</p>	Qualifications Manager	September 2014

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