



National 4
Course
Specification



National 4 Modern Studies Course Specification (C749 74)

Valid from August 2013

This edition: April 2012, version 1.0
Revised: September 2014, version 1.1

This specification may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged. Additional copies of this Course Specification can be downloaded from SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

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

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2014

Course outline

Course title: National 4 Modern Studies

SCQF: level 4 (24 SCQF credit points)

Course code: C749 74

Mandatory Units

H23C 74 Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points**

And either

H23F 74 Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points

Or

H6NB 74 Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom with a Scottish Context (National 4)* 6 SCQF credit points

and

H23G 74 Modern Studies: International Issues (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points

and

Added Value Unit

H23R 74 Modern Studies Assignment (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points

This Course includes six SCQF credit points for the assessment of added value in the Added Value Unit. Further information on this Unit 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](#).

**Scottish Studies Award contributing Unit

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 3 Modern Studies Course or relevant component Units

In terms of prior learning and experience, relevant experiences and outcomes may also provide an appropriate basis for doing this Course. Further information on relevant experiences and outcomes will be given in the *Course Support Notes*.

Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ Modern Studies Course or its component Units at National 5
- ◆ further study, employment and/or training

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

The Modern Studies Course builds upon the principles and practices for social studies and will be developed primarily, although not exclusively, from the 'people in society, economy and business' organiser within the experiences and outcomes in the social studies curriculum area.

This Course will encourage learners to develop important attitudes including: an open mind and respect for the values, beliefs and cultures of others; openness to new thinking and ideas and a sense of responsibility and global citizenship.

This Course develops in learners a greater understanding of the contemporary world and their place in it. By studying this Course, learners are enabled to develop the four capacities in many respects. For example, learners' horizons are extended and they are challenged to look at the world in new ways. Their confidence can grow as they begin to understand more about their sense of identity and place in the contemporary world. Learners will build up a framework of social, political and economic knowledge and understanding which can help them develop a sense of responsible citizenship.

The investigative and critical thinking activities in this Course give learners important experience in contributing to group work and also working on their own. Learners will acquire attributes which will be important for their life and work.

Through the skills and content of this Course, learners will develop an increased understanding of the democratic political system and their place in it as well as a sense of responsible citizenship. The emphasis on the evaluation of sources and decision-making will develop thinking skills. Learners will also progressively develop skills in literacy and numeracy.

Purpose and aims of the Course

Modern Studies opens up the world of contemporary society for learners.

The purpose of Modern Studies is to develop the learner's 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 social and political issues they will meet in their lives. This purpose will be achieved through successful study of the four Units of the Course

Through the Modern Studies Course, learners will undertake a coherent study of contemporary society with concepts and themes being revisited and built upon across Units. The Course will develop the skills to help learners interpret and participate in the social and political processes they will encounter now and in the future.

Modern Studies 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.

The main aims of Modern Studies are to enable learners to develop:

- ◆ a range of research and information handling skills
- ◆ straightforward understanding of the democratic process
- ◆ straightforward understanding of social and economic issues at local, Scottish, national and international levels and ways of addressing needs and inequalities
- ◆ awareness of different views about the extent of state involvement in society
- ◆ awareness of the nature and processes of conflict resolution
- ◆ understanding of human and legal rights and responsibilities and their application in different societies

Information about typical learners who might do the Course

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

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, it may be beneficial for the learner to have the skills and knowledge developed by relevant experiences and outcomes from the broad, general education or equivalent qualifications.

Through the successful completion of this Course learners will develop a range of important and transferable skills including: researching, understanding and using a range of information/evidence on contemporary issues; evaluating information/evidence in order to give straightforward explanations while detecting bias and exaggeration; making decisions and drawing conclusions; constructing straightforward arguments in a balanced and structured way; and communicating, by a variety of means, views, opinions, decisions and conclusions based on evidence.

Modern Studies Units and Courses are offered from SCQF level 3 to SCQF level 7. Vertical progression is possible through the levels of Modern Studies qualifications and lateral progression is possible to other qualifications in the Social Studies suite of Courses.

The National 4 Modern Studies Course provides an entry qualification for further study, employment and training. This Course is a preparation for a diverse range of occupations and careers.

Course structure and conditions of award

Course structure

This Course develops a range of cognitive skills. It encourages active learning in the process of developing an understanding of contemporary society. Learners will acquire and apply relevant knowledge. Through using a limited range of sources of information they will develop investigating and evaluating skills in order to understand and explain political, social and international issues.

By undertaking this Course, learners will develop a wide range of important and transferable skills including: researching, understanding and using a range of information/evidence on contemporary issues; evaluating information/evidence in order to give straightforward explanations while detecting bias and exaggeration; making decisions and drawing conclusions; constructing straightforward arguments in a balanced and structured way; and communicating, by a variety of means, views, opinions, decisions and conclusions based on evidence.

The skills listed above will be developed and applied over a range of political, social and international contexts in the following Units. Each Unit also offers opportunities for learners to focus on particular skills.

This Course has four mandatory Units, including the Added Value Unit. Within each Unit there is a considerable degree of flexibility in themes which can be studied to allow personalisation and choice.

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

The principles above will be applied in the Units below:

Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom (National 4)

In this Unit, learners will develop skills by using sources of information in order to detect and explain examples of bias and exaggeration. Learners will develop a straightforward knowledge and understanding of democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom. They will develop knowledge and understanding of the UK political structure including the place of Scotland within this and the debates around this arrangement. Learners will then have a choice of contexts for study which will be drawn from **either** the Scottish political system **or** the UK political system. Learners will develop knowledge and understanding of the main institutions and organisations which make up political life in their chosen context. They will develop knowledge and understanding of the ways in which society is informed about the political system, able to participate in and influence the political system. They will develop an understanding of their rights and responsibilities in contemporary democratic political society.

Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom (National 4)

In this Unit, learners will develop skills by using sources of information in order to make and give straightforward justifications of decisions. Learners will develop a straightforward knowledge and understanding of social issues in the United Kingdom. They have a choice of social issues within Scotland and the UK. Contexts for study will focus on **either** social inequality **or** crime and the law. In

the social inequality context, learners will focus on a specific aspect of contemporary social inequality in the UK. They will develop knowledge and understanding of the causes and consequences of social inequality and attempts by government, other organisations and individuals to tackle it. In the crime and the law context, learners will develop knowledge and understanding of the causes of crime, the impact of crime on individuals and society and the role of individuals, the police, the legal system and the state in tackling crime.

Modern Studies: International Issues (National 4)

In this Unit, learners will develop skills by using sources of information in order to draw and give straightforward support for conclusions. Learners will develop a straightforward knowledge and understanding of international issues. They have a choice of contexts for study. Contexts for study can be **either** a socio-economic and political study of significant world power **or** a contemporary world issue. The study of a significant world power will focus on contemporary socio-economic issues and a study of its political system. The study of a world issue will focus on a significant contemporary issue, its causes and consequences, and attempts at resolution.

Added Value Unit: Modern Studies Assignment (National 4)

In this Unit, learners will choose an issue for personal study drawn from Modern Studies contexts. They will research their chosen issue and present their findings. Through this activity they will have opportunities to experience challenge and application as they further develop and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired in the other three Units of the Course.

Conditions of award

To achieve the National 4 Modern Studies Course, learners must pass all of the required Units, including the Added Value Unit. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section.

National 4 Courses are not graded.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Further information on skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course will be given in the *Course Support Notes*. A broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course is given in this section.

This covers:

- ◆ developing and applying straightforward skills, knowledge and understanding in political, social or international contexts
- ◆ with support, researching and using information collected from a limited range of sources about contemporary issues which are familiar
- ◆ using a limited range of sources of information to detect and explain bias and exaggeration in familiar political contexts
- ◆ giving straightforward justifications for decisions made in familiar social contexts using a limited range of sources of information
- ◆ giving straightforward support for valid conclusions drawn from a limited range of sources of information about familiar international issues
- ◆ demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the main democratic processes, institutions and organisations which make up political life in Scotland and/or the UK by giving factual descriptions and straightforward explanations
- ◆ demonstrating knowledge and understanding of a major social issue in Scotland and the UK focusing on either social inequality or crime and the law by giving factual descriptions and straightforward explanations
- ◆ demonstrating knowledge and understanding of an international issue relating to either a significant world power or contemporary world issue by giving factual descriptions and straightforward explanations.

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

Further information about assessment for the Course is included in the *Course Support Notes*.

Unit assessment

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

They can be assessed on an individual Unit basis or by using other approaches which combine the assessment for more than one Unit.

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

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

Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom (National 4)

The learner will be required to give evidence of:

- ◆ ability to use a limited range of sources of information to detect and explain bias and exaggeration in familiar contexts drawn from political issues in Scotland and the United Kingdom
- ◆ straightforward descriptions and brief explanations demonstrating knowledge and understanding, which is mainly factual, of political issues in Scotland and the United Kingdom

Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom (National 4)

The learner will be required to give evidence of:

- ◆ ability to use a limited range of sources of information to make and justify decisions in familiar contexts about social issues in the United Kingdom
- ◆ straightforward descriptions and brief explanations demonstrating knowledge and understanding, which is mainly factual, of social issues in Scotland and the United Kingdom drawn from either the context of social inequality in the United Kingdom or crime and the law in the United Kingdom

Modern Studies: International Issues (National 4)

The learner will be required to give evidence of:

- ◆ ability to use a limited range of sources of information to draw and support valid conclusions in familiar contexts about international issues
- ◆ straightforward descriptions and brief explanations demonstrating knowledge and understanding, which is mainly factual, of international issues drawn from either the study of socio-economic and political issues in a significant world power or a contemporary world issue

Added Value Unit

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#)¹. At National 4, added value will be assessed in an Added Value Unit. The Added Value Unit will address the key purposes and aims of the Course as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

In the National 4 Modern Studies Course, the Added Value Unit will focus on:

- ◆ challenge
- ◆ application

The learner will extend and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding they have acquired during the Course. This will be assessed by an [assignment](#)² in which learners will research and present findings on a modern studies topic or issue. The assignment will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow for personalisation and choice.

¹ Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58409.html>

² 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 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

2 Numeracy

2.3 Information handling

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

4.6 Citizenship

5 Thinking skills

5.2 Understanding

5.3 Applying

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

Published: September 2014 (version 1.1)

History of changes to National Course Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	1.1	Scottish Studies Award Unit contributing information added. No other changes made to document content.	Qualifications Manager	September 2014

This specification may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged. Additional copies of this specification can be downloaded from SQA's website at www.sqa.org.uk.

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

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2014