Course Support Notes

Higher Politics Course Support Notes

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Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Higher Politics Course. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering the Course and its Units. They should be read in conjunction with the Course Specification, the Course Assessment Specification and the Unit Specifications for the Units in the Course.

General guidance on the Course

Aims

The purpose of this Course is to develop the learner's knowledge and understanding of how differing political theories and ideologies, systems and parties resolve the timeless pursuit of power, authority and legitimacy. Its theoretical perspective enables learners to identify, explore and analyse political issues in order to develop their own views and perspectives.

This purpose will be achieved through successful study of the Course Units, which are: *Political Theory*; *Political Systems*; and *Political Parties and Elections*. The Course will develop investigating, analysing and evaluating skills to help learners to interpret and understand political issues.

Politics makes a distinctive contribution to the curriculum by its study of important political theories, the comparison of different political systems, and the evaluation of dominant ideas and other factors within political parties and their electoral performance.

Progression into this Course

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. Many learners will benefit from having relevant learning or experience. Learners will require appropriate literacy and numeracy skills in order to overtake the requirements of this Course.

When considering whether this Course is appropriate for a particular learner, you should refer to the skills, knowledge and understanding described below, and the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Taken together these provide an overall picture of the level of demand.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Course

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that could be included in the Course.

Teachers and lecturers should refer to the Higher Politics *Course Assessment Specification* for mandatory information about the skills, knowledge and understanding to be covered in this Course, as the Course assessment will be based on this.

Within this mandatory specification, Course planners have considerable flexibility to select coherent contexts which will stimulate and challenge their learners, offering both breadth and depth.

Full skills and knowledge for the Course are provided in the Course Assessment Specification. A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course includes:

Added value

- evaluating and synthesising information collected from a wide range of political sources

Skills

- using a wide range of sources of information to draw detailed and balanced conclusions about political ideologies
- comparing and contrasting different political systems, making generalisations, where appropriate, on the political process
- interpreting and evaluating a range of complex electoral data

Knowledge and understanding

- developing and applying and factual theoretical knowledge and understanding, giving detailed explanations and analyses of political theory, political systems and political parties and elections

Progression from this Course

This Course may provide progression to Units or Courses in related social subjects or social sciences in school, university and further education contexts as well as a range of careers. This Course provides progression to Advanced Higher Modern Studies.

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

Detailed advice and exemplification of approaches to generating evidence through teaching and learning approaches can be found in the following Unit Support Notes for Higher Politics:

- Politics: Political Theory
- Politics: Political Systems
- Politics: Political Parties and Elections

The Politics Course should be seen as a coherent study of political theory, comparative political systems and political parties and electoral performance. There will be opportunities throughout the Course to reinforce and deepen learning by making links between aspects of knowledge and understanding across Units, depending on the particular topics and issues studied. For example:

- Study of socialist ideology within the *Political Theory* Unit can relate directly to the study of the dominant ideas within, for example, the Labour Party in the *Political Parties and Elections* Unit.
- Comparing the UK and the USA's political systems could provide opportunities to evaluate the nature of power, authority and legitimacy within these systems, which are key areas of focus within the *Political Theory* Unit.
- Study of a political system can lead to a greater understanding of the dominant ideas within a political party. For example, the study of the powers of the Scottish Parliament and its relationship with the UK can lead to greater understanding of the dominant ideas within, for example, the Scottish National Party.
- Learning about Scotland and Scottish culture will enrich the learner's learning experience and help them to develop the skills for learning, life and work they need to prepare them for taking their place in a diverse, inclusive and participative Scotland and beyond. Where there are opportunities to contextualise approaches to learning and teaching to Scottish contexts, teachers and lecturers should do this.

Each Unit has a specific skills focus for assessment purposes:

Politics: Political Theory	Use a wide range of sources of information to draw detailed and balanced conclusions on political ideologies.
Politics: Political Systems	Compare and contrast different political systems, making generalisations, where appropriate, on the political process.
Politics: Political Parties and Elections	Interpret and evaluate a range of complex electoral data relevant to UK political parties and elections.

It is important to stress that particular skills have been allocated to individual Units for assessment purposes only. This is to avoid over-assessment. The skills, however should be developed and practiced across all the Units and are transferable to all three Units and can be assessed throughout the question paper component of the Course assessment. The Course overall is intended to develop all the skills outlined in the Course Specification.

There is no recommended teaching order for the Units in this Course. Course planners may wish to consider the how best to introduce the assignment. For example, they may decide to wait until learners have covered a range of topics before making a decision about the topic or issue to be studied. However the development of skills should be a part of teaching and learning from the outset and learners will progressively build up the skills and retain evidence of these skills throughout the Course.

There are likely to be opportunities in the day-to-day delivery of the Units in a Course to generate evidence which satisfies completely or partially a Unit or Units. This is naturally occurring evidence and may be recorded as evidence for the Units or parts of the Units.

While at Higher, teachers and lecturers may wish to design assessments which prepare learners for the Course assessment, considerable flexibility exists in the method and form of Unit assessment. For Unit assessment purposes, a variety of methods of assessment could be used to gather evidence such as extended writing, source evaluation, learner presentations, case studies, role play, research activities and the creation of various media.

Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching in Curriculum for Excellence. The Higher Politics Course should encourage and support independent learning. Learners should have a clear understanding of the requirements of the Course. Learners should be encouraged to set their own learning objectives, assess the extent of their existing knowledge and be encouraged to review their own progress.

Learners learn best when they: understand clearly what they are trying to learn, and what is expected of them, are given feedback about the quality of their work, and what they can do to make it better, are given advice about how to make improvements and are fully involved in deciding what needs to be done next, and who can give them help if they need it. To this end:

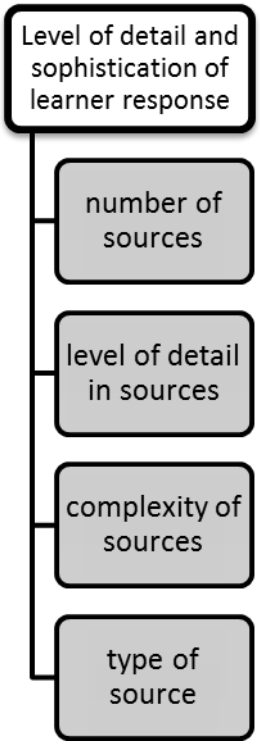
- Teachers and lecturers should share learning/assessment criteria.
- Teachers and lecturers should deliver effective feedback.
- Teachers and lecturers should encourage peer and self-assessment.
- Teachers and lecturers should question effectively using higher order questioning when appropriate.

The use of assessment for formative purposes can provide an important role in raising attainment by:

- giving feedback
- detailing progress
- identifying learner strengths and areas for development

Understanding the assessment standards and making assessment judgements
The following exemplification aims to provide advice and guidance to centres when developing activities which may be used to generate evidence that learners have achieved the Outcomes and Assessment Standards for the Units. These activities may be ones which allow the identification of naturally occurring evidence as part of teaching and learning to determine whether the learner has achieved the Outcome or more formal occasions when centres use a specific assessment item.

The exemplification aims to provide greater detail and complement the terminology used in the Outcomes and Assessment Standards which are based upon the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Centres should note that the Unit Outcomes and Assessment Standards describe a minimum level of competence for the achievement of the Unit and that learners will demonstrate a range of levels of ability within a particular SCQF level.



Centres should note that flexibility exists in creating assessment items and that a range of factors need to be considered in determining the level of demand. For example, while in general, increasing the number of sources used in a question may increase the level of demand upon the learner; increasing the complexity of a single source will also have the effect of increasing the level of demand.

Greater complexity within a source may be achieved by increasing the amount of information, the level of detail, the method of presentation etc. It should also be noted that a relatively straightforward source may be capable of a range of responses.

A learner operating at a lower SCQF level may be able to draw broad, general, relatively simple conclusions from a given source while another learner is capable of a more sophisticated level of analysis and be able to draw more insightful and detailed conclusions from the same source thereby demonstrating achievement of a higher SCQF level.

It is important that when using this guidance that centres refer to the appropriate Unit Specifications and the Outcomes and Assessment Standards for the Unit.

On making assessment judgements between levels the following guidance aims to provide high level advice on the characteristics of typical learner responses. Further advice and guidance will be provided in the specimen question paper and marking instructions (Higher), specimen Coursework and marking instructions (Higher) and Unit assessment support.

Level	Possible learner responses	Possible question types
Higher	Extended response Explanation and analysis required Clear and structured expression of complex ideas Extensive and sophisticated use of evidence Able to consider different perspectives on an issue Able to make judgements	… Discuss To what extent … How far … Assess … Critically examine … Comment on …

The exemplification below draws on familiar contexts and sources. It is **not** a guide to any future question paper.

SCQF level 6 (Higher)
Possible question formats:

- Compare and contrast …
- 'Statement …' Discuss
- To what extent …
- Explain …

- knowledge and understanding items
- analytical response required
- extended response required

Source E: Scottish Parliament Election Results (2003–2007)

	Constituency		Regional		Total	
Party	**2003 Seats**	**2007 Seats**	**2003 Seats**	**2007 Seats**	**2003 Seats**	**2007 Seats**
Labour	46	37	4	9	50	46
SNP	9	21	18	26	27	47
Con	3	4	15	13	18	17
Lib Dem	13	11	4	5	17	16
SSP	0	0	6	0	6	0
Green	0	0	7	2	7	2
Others	2	0	2	1	4	1

Source F: Change in Share of Vote for Selected Parties

	2003–2007 Differences	
	Constituency %	**Regional %**
Labour	-2·5	-0·1
SNP	9·1	10·2
Lib Dem	0·8	-0·5
Con	0·0	-1·6
Green	n/a	-2·9
SSP/Solidarity	-6·0	-4·5

Source G: MSPs by Region (2007)

Region	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	SNP	Green	Others	Total
Central Scotland	1	8	1	7	0	0	**17**
Glasgow	1	9	1	5	1	0	**17**
Highlands and Islands	2	3	4	6	0	0	**15**
Lothians	2	5	2	5	1	1	**16**
Mid Scotland and Fife	3	5	2	6	0	0	**16**
North East Scotland	2	3	3	8	0	0	**16**
South of Scotland	4	5	2	5	0	0	**16**
West of Scotland	2	8	1	5	0	0	**16**
Scotland	**17**	**46**	**16**	**47**	**2**	**1**	**129**

Using sources E, G and G above.

To what extent…

- ♦ evaluating item
- ♦ three statistical sources
- ♦ detailed/complex sources
- ♦ analytical response required
- ♦ extended response required

Scotland's local councils were elected on 3 May 2007 using the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system. This new system, which replaced the traditional "First Past the Post" system, requires voters to rank candidates in order of preference and is intended to produce outcomes in terms of seats that are more proportional to votes than "First Past the Post".

The use of a broadly proportional system for local elections, it was claimed, would make Scotland's councils more representative of local views and of the diversity of local society—it would give electors a wider and better choice of candidates and would lead to more voters having a councillor of their choice.

Source C: Scottish Local Council Elections 1999–2007—Control of Councils by Party

	1999	2003	2007
Conservative	0	0	0
Labour	15	13	2
Lib Dem	0	1	0
SNP	1	1	0
No Overall Control	10	11	27

Source D: Scottish Local Council Elections 1999–2007—Votes and Seats

	1999			2003			2007		
	Number of seats	% of seats	% of votes	Number of seats	% of seats	% of votes	Number of seats	% of seats	% of votes
Con	108	8·8	13·7	123	10·1	15·2	143	11·7	15·6
Lab	551	45·1	36·6	509	41·7	32·9	348	28·5	28·1
Lib Dem	156	12·8	12·7	175	14·3	14·6	166	13·6	12·7
SNP	204	16·7	28·8	181	14·8	24·3	363	29·7	27·9
Others	203	16·6	8·2	234	19·1	13·0	202	16·5	15·7

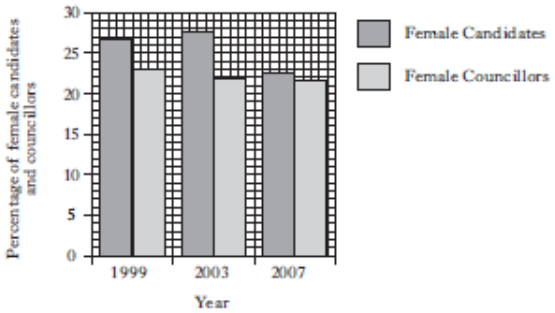
Source E: Turnout and Spoilt Ballots in Council Elections, 1999–2007

	1999	2003	2007
Turnout (%)	58·1	49·6	53·8
Number of Spoilt Ballots	13,597	14,579	38,351

Source F: Number of Candidates in Council Elections, 1999–2007

	1999	2003	2007
Number of Candidates	3,934	4,195	2,607
Number of Seats	1,222	1,222	1,222

Source G: Percentage of Female Candidates and Councillors, 1999–2007



- evaluating item
- range of sources
- five statistical sources
- detailed/complex sources
- analytical response required
- extended response required

Using the sources above, what conclusions can you draw about…

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

Through the successful completion of this Course important skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work are developed. A full list of these is contained in the Course Specification.

The skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work will not be formally assessed by SQA. However, Course planners should identify opportunities to enhance these skills throughout the Course. Learners should be aware of the skills they are building and teachers/lecturers can provide advice on opportunities to practice and improve them.

These skills will be developed across all the Units of the Course. The Unit Support Notes for each Unit will provide further advice on how Units within the Course may provide opportunities to develop particular skills.

There may also be opportunities for other, additional skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work to be developed in the Course. However, this could vary across centres depending on approaches being used to deliver the Course in a centre and this is for centres to manage.

The Politics assignment will also provide opportunities for developing the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Learners will have the opportunity to develop reading and writing as they research the assignment topic and write up the outcomes of the activity. They will develop information handling skills as they evaluate and analyse a range of statistical, numerical and graphical information relating to electoral data. They will develop citizenship through deepening their understanding of political issues facing society.

They will apply their knowledge to the topic studied, and use analytical and evaluation skills, both in the research process and in preparing their findings for the write up of the assignment.

Added value and gathering evidence

At Higher, the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment.

Information given in the *Course Specification* and the *Course Assessment Specification* about the assessment of added value is mandatory.

- The learner will draw on, extend and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding they have learned during the Course. This will be assessed by a question paper and an assignment. Over the Course assessment there will be parity between the assessment of skills and knowledge and understanding.
- The question paper will require the learner to demonstrate breadth of skills, knowledge and understanding from across the Units of the Course. The question paper will sample knowledge and understanding from across the Units of the Course and will require application of skills drawn from across the Units of the Course. Teachers and lecturers should refer to the Course

Assessment Specification and the specimen question paper for further information.

- The Politics assignment will require learners to demonstrate challenge and application related to any political issue. Their choice is not constrained by the mandatory content of Component 1: question paper. It will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow for personalisation and choice. The learner will communicate findings on a chosen issue, with appropriate support and within broad parameters set by SQA. The issue must relate to political concepts, and be one which invites debate and discussion. Learners must demonstrate research into a wide range of complex sources of information. The learner should use the information collected in order to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the issue, drawing detailed and reasoned conclusions, showing an awareness of different points of view. Teachers and lecturers should refer to the Course Assessment Specification for further information.
- The learner will 'write up' the results of their research on the topic or issue under controlled assessment conditions. Learners will communicate their findings in a form that shows evidence of the skills they have used and clearly communicates the conclusions they arrive at. They may present their findings in a variety of ways. The aim of the presentation of findings is to assess the quality of the learner's research into and analysis of the issue.
- Further advice on possible issues drawn from individual Units is given in the *Unit Support Notes*. Learners may wish to choose issues which draw upon knowledge and understanding from across more than one Unit to inform the decision making task. For example, a study of a political ideology may link with a study of a contemporary political party whose dominant ideas are based on that ideology and could consider its electoral performance. A theoretical study of power, authority and legitimacy could be exemplified through a comparative study of a branch of government in two contrasting political systems.

Preparation for Course assessment

Each Course has six SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for assessment. This time may be used throughout the Course for consolidation and support, preparation for Unit assessment, for further integration, revision and preparation for Course assessment.

Activities which it may be appropriate to include within this notional time are described below.

- Preparation for the assignment. This time could be used by learners for identifying and agreeing a question or scope for the assignment, within the overall guidelines provided by SQA; gathering information and carrying out the research which may include using books, the internet, and interviews; analysing and evaluating their findings; preparing their conclusions and revising before the write-up.
- Revising for the question paper. This may be done individually, in small groups or within the class or group as a whole, at the discretion of the teacher or lecturer.
- Revising and preparing for Unit assessment. This may be done individually, in small groups or within the class or group as a whole, at the discretion of the teacher or lecturer.

Combining assessment across Units

If an integrated or thematic approach to course delivery is used then there may be opportunities for combining assessment across Units.

This can:

- enrich the assessment process for the learner by linking assessment more closely to teaching and learning
- make more sense to the learner and avoid duplication of assessment
- allow for evidence for particular Units to be drawn from a range of activities
- allow more time for time for learning

Within this Course, combined assessment could bring together aspects of content from across two or more Units. For example, it may greatly help learner's understanding of the dominant ideas within a political party if they understand the broader, theoretical and ideological background of that party. For example, in analysing how Labour became New Labour and won three successive UK General Elections, it would be appropriate to analyse whether the change to New Labour was the decisive factor. It would also be appropriate to examine the theoretical basis of 'the third way' as a political ideology. Similarly, in studying Nationalism as a political ideology, it would be relevant to look at how the Scottish National Party has adapted nationalist ideology to the specific context of Scotland, looking at how the party has positioned itself politically to win the support of a cross-section of voters.

Care should be taken when using combined assessment that those aspects of the assessment standard not achieved by the combined assessment are covered by a further assessment. Therefore, when designing assessments which cover more than one Unit, deliverers must ensure that they track and record where evidence of individual Units appears.

Equality and inclusion

The high degree of flexibility within this Course in terms of possible approaches to Unit assessment means that Course and Unit planners can consider and remove potential barriers to learning and assessment. Alternative assessment arrangements and reasonable adjustments can be made to Course assessment requirements in order that the Course is accessible to all learners.

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

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

Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

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

Administrative information

Published: May 2015 (version 1.1)

History of changes to Course Support Notes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	'Added value and gathering evidence' section — guidance relating to the Politics assignment updated.	Qualifications Manager	May 2015

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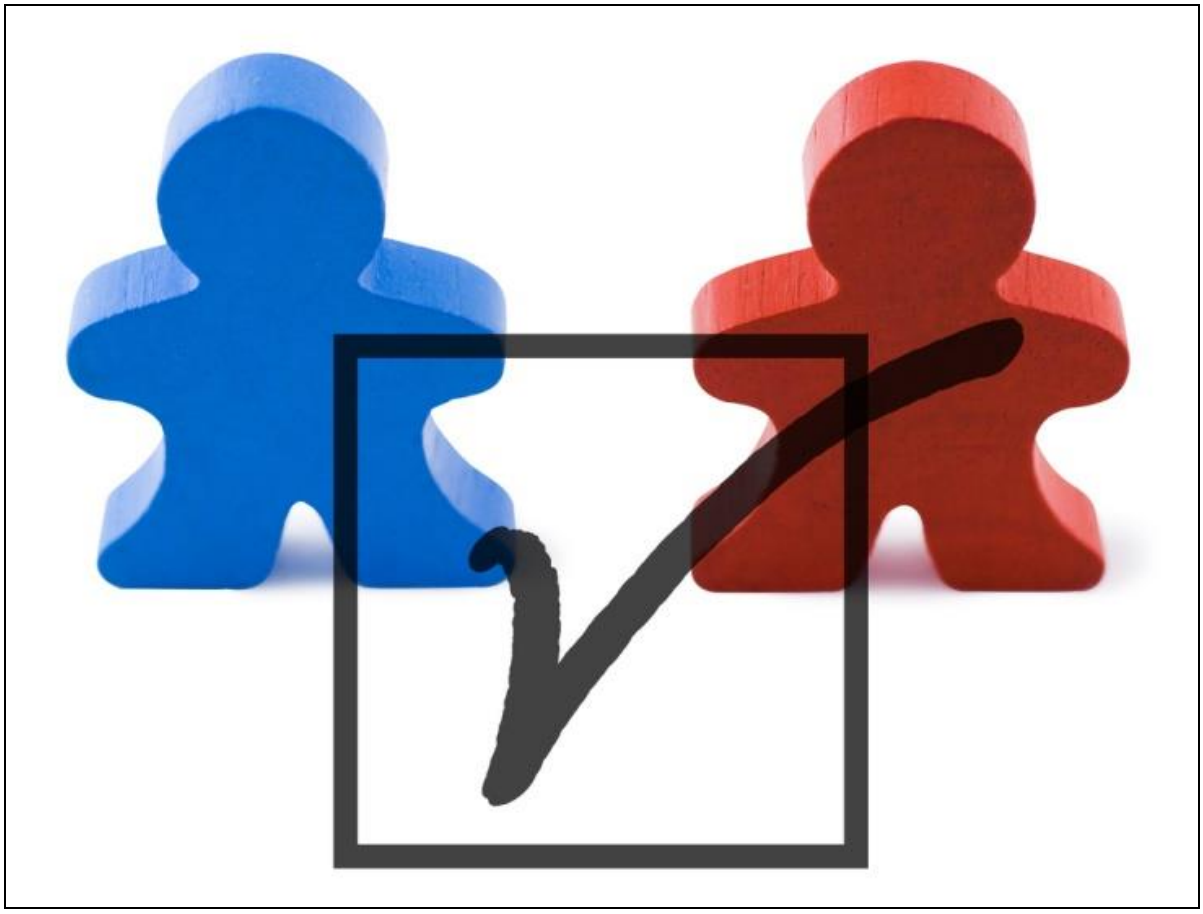
Unit Support Notes

Unit Support Notes — Politics: Political Theory (Higher)



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

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *Politics: Political Theory* (Higher) Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- the Unit Specification
- the Course Specification
- the Course Assessment Specification
- the Course Support Notes
- appropriate assessment support materials

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to develop a range of analytical and evaluating skills; however the specific skills focus for assessment purposes is the development of skills of drawing detailed and balanced conclusions about political ideologies. Learners will develop knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of power, authority and legitimacy as well as the key features of two ideologies.

Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. Many learners will draw on relevant prior learning or experience. Learners will require appropriate literacy and numeracy skills in order to overtake the requirements of this Unit.

When considering whether this Unit is appropriate for a particular learner, you should refer to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course, and the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Taken together these provide an overall picture of the level of demand.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the Higher Politics *Course Specification* and *Course Assessment Specification*.

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

Progression from this Unit

This Unit may provide progression to a range of qualifications in related social subjects and social science and to Advanced Higher Modern Studies.

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

The aim of this section is to provide advice and guidance to centres on:

- opportunities to generate naturally occurring evidence through a range of teaching and learning approaches
- approaches to added value
- approaches to developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Politics: Political Theory (Higher) Unit	
Learners will study the key political concepts of power, authority and legitimacy with particular reference to the work of Steven Lukes and Max Weber and analyse the relevance of these concepts today. Learners will study the key ideas of two political ideologies (from Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism Nationalism, Fascism) including the works of relevant theorists. Learners will be expected to draw balanced conclusions about the chosen ideologies.	
Mandatory content for Course assessment	**Further detail of coverage**
Power, Authority and Legitimacy	Power Different definitions of power, the conflict view of power and differing interpretations of how power is distributed in society. Steven Lukes' 'Three Faces of Power': decision making, non-decision making and manipulating desires. Authority Authority as rightful power which implies an obligation to obey. Max Weber's three types of authority: Traditional, Charismatic and Legal-Rational. Legitimacy The sense of rightfulness, the relevance of Max Weber's classifications, the ways in which legitimacy may be enabled and the impact on a political system of the loss of legitimacy.
Democracy	The nature of democracy and different forms of democracy Arguments for and against direct democracy Arguments for and against representative democracy
Key political ideologies	Liberalism Theorists such as: Locke, Mill. Key ideas: rationalism, individualism, toleration, consent, freedom, rights.

	Conservatism Theorists such as: Burke, Disraeli. Key ideas: human imperfection, tradition, security, authority, organic society, private property. Socialism Theorists such as: Marx, Lenin. Key ideas: co-operation, collectivism, equality, class, common ownership. Nationalism Theorists such as: Mazzini, Herder. Key ideas: the nation, self-determination, organic community, patriotism, identity. Fascism Theorists such as: Mussolini, Hitler. Key ideas: irrationalism, ultra-nationalism, racialism, authoritarian leadership, organicism.
Throughout this Unit relevant case studies should be used from either local national, international contexts as well as different historical contexts.	

Learning and teaching approaches should be learner focussed. The following examples are illustrative of approaches which may be adopted and which will allow opportunities to gather evidence that learners have achieved one or more of the Unit Outcomes.

Example 1 — Power, authority and legitimacy
Learners may study these concepts as an introduction to politics in its own right. They could consider the nature of politics as reconciling competing interests generated by different beliefs and scarcity of resources.

Case studies of different types of power can be discussed to illustrate the conflict view of power. Learners can research different forms of power (political, economic, military, diplomatic) to illustrate power as a form of coercion by utilising threats, sanctions and rewards to exact compliance. The distribution of power in society could be examined and debated using Pluralist and Marxist perspectives. Learners would then study Lukes' 'Three Faces of Power' (decision-making, non-decision making and shaping desires) evaluating their relevance today, interpreting and analysing complex sources.

Learners could then be introduced to 'Authority' and could investigate a range of case studies to identify and evaluate different sources of authority. Weber's three types of authority (traditional, charismatic and legal-rational) could then be assessed for their relevance today.

Through the study of differing political systems, the significance of legitimacy and its absence can be analysed and evaluated. Evidence can be gathered in a range of forms including a written report, which may be an assessment which allows achievement of both parts of the second Outcome.

Example 2 — Ideologies
Learners study the meaning of ideology and develop an understanding of how ideologies are compared using a different political spectrum (linear, horseshoe etc). Learners can use websites such as 'Political Compass' to investigate their own and others' positions on the ideological spectrum and develop understanding of the significance of concepts such as equality and freedom. The key features of the chosen ideologies can be studied independently and then conclusions can be drawn about differences/similarities, or they can be studied concurrently where differences and similarities are identified at each stage. For each ideology the historical background to the development of the ideology along with the contrasting positions on human nature should be studied. Learners can research the work of relevant theorists to evaluate and analyse their impact on the development of each ideology drawing relevant conclusions. Activities which could be used to generate evidence could include production of a written report, participation in a debate or a digital presentation to a group.

Example 3 — Ideologies
Learners can analyse different complex sources to identify differences and similarities between two ideologies. Learners can demonstrate knowledge and understanding of two ideologies by carrying out research into two ideologies, and examining sources of information such as news articles, media presentations, political documents, TV and radio programmes, and internet resources.

Learners will have opportunities to generate evidence which can be gathered and retained by teachers and lecturers to demonstrate achievement of the parts of the Outcome. Alternatively, learners can be asked to deliver a digital or poster presentation outlining key features and theorists associated with two ideologies and drawing relevant conclusions about the differences and similarities between the two ideologies.

Evidence can be gathered in a range of forms including a written report, which may be an assessment which allows holistic achievement of both Outcomes. For example, learners could be asked to complete a report which compares and contrasts Liberal and Socialist key ideas and their application to the concepts of power, authority and legitimacy. This would involve identifying the contrasts between the key ideas of each ideology and drawing conclusions on differences and similarities. Learners would then have to apply these key ideas to the concepts of power, authority and legitimacy. For example by using the work of Locke to identify the Liberal perspective on authority and legitimacy based on consent and constitutionalism and its links to rational-legal authority. This could be compared to a Marxist perspective which focuses on the power of the ruling class and the attempts by the ruling class to impose its dominant ideology and the parallels with Lukes' 'Three Faces of Power'.

The overall burden of assessment for the learner may be reduced by using the opportunity to assess holistically within the Unit, allowing achievement of both Outcomes at once. Evidence can be gathered in a range of forms including a written report or a presentation drawing upon supporting materials such as news reports, statistical sources and contrasting viewpoints.

If centres are using a holistic approach to assessment of the Unit it is advisable to track where evidence of the achievement of individual Outcomes and/or assessment standards appears so that learners who do not achieve the complete assessment can still have recognition for what they have achieved and do not have to be reassessed on what they have achieved.

Added value — Politics assignment
The content of this Unit may provide many issues in which learners can demonstrate added value for the Course assessment through the Politics assignment. Learners should choose an issue for study which invites discussion and debate. This Unit will provide rich opportunities for learners to choose a range of possible titles for their Politics assignment, eg:

- Did New Labour abandon socialism?
- Is the SNP a nationalist or social democratic party?
- Does the current Coalition have a coherent ideological foundation?
- Was Thatcher a traditional conservative or a classical liberal?
- After the credit crunch has Marx been proved correct?
- Is the media in the UK too powerful?

The titles illustrated above are for guidance only and would draw upon knowledge and understanding primarily from the *Politics: Political Theory* Unit. Further challenge and application could involve a comparative aspect by drawing on knowledge and understanding of political parties and electoral performance developed in the *Politics: Political Parties and Elections* Unit.

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

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work across the Course is given in the relevant Course Support Notes.

As the specific skills focus of the Unit is the evaluation of political concepts and ideologies this will develop thinking skills and skills in handling information. Learners will be required to evaluate information, and draw relevant conclusions. Learners will be expected to use a range of information, synthesize it and assess its relevance. They will extend and develop literacy skills when interpreting and discussing complex sources and ideas. They will also be expected to apply theoretical understanding in practical contexts.

This Unit will provide rich and varied opportunities for learners to consider and develop many aspects of citizenship. Studies of power, authority and legitimacy will allow learners to develop an understanding of how they as citizens can participate in, and have an influence on, society. Visiting speakers from political parties can also develop aspects of citizenship.

Equality and inclusion

The high degree of flexibility within this Unit in terms of possible approaches to assessment means that Course and Unit planners can consider and remove potential barriers to learning and assessment. This Unit should be accessible to all learners.

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

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment to take account of the specific needs of learners can be used. However, the centre must be satisfied that the integrity of the assessment is maintained and that the alternative approach to assessment will, in fact, generate the necessary evidence of achievement.

Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications are available on SQA's website at: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html.
- *Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work*
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- *Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*

Administrative information

Published: May 2015 (version 1.1)

History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	'Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment' section — additional detail added.	Qualifications Manager	May 2015

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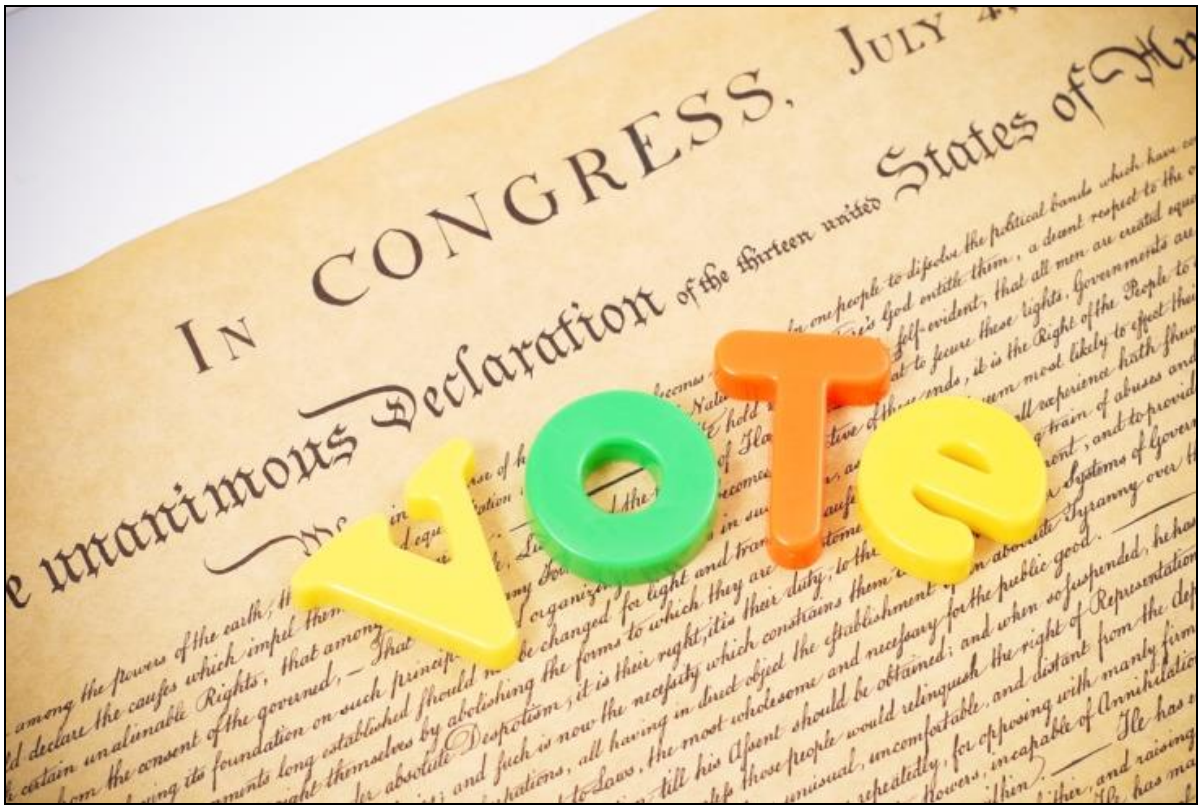
Unit Support Notes

Unit Support Notes — Politics: Political Systems (Higher)



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

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *Politics: Political Systems* (Higher) Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- the Unit Specification
- the Course Specification
- the Course Assessment Specification
- the Course Support Notes
- appropriate assessment support materials

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to develop a range of analytical and evaluating skills; however the specific skills focus for assessment purposes is the development of skills in comparing and contrasting different political systems. Learners will develop a knowledge and understanding of the constitutional arrangements and workings of the different branches of government within two political systems.

Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. Many learners will draw on relevant prior learning or experience. Learners will require appropriate literacy and numeracy skills in order to overtake the requirements of this Unit.

When considering whether this Unit is appropriate for a particular learner, you should refer to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course, and the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Taken together these provide an overall picture of the level of demand.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the Higher Politics *Course Specification* and *Course Assessment Specification*.

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

Progression from this Unit

This Unit may provide progression to a range of qualifications in related social subjects and social science and to Advanced Higher Modern Studies

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

The aim of this section is to provide advice and guidance to centres on:

- opportunities to generate naturally occurring evidence through a range of teaching and learning approaches
- approaches to added value
- approaches to developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Politics: Political Systems Unit	
Learners will study the constitutional approaches in different political systems. Learners should be able to describe the nature and status of the different constitutional approaches within two chosen systems. The detailed study of the constitutional arrangements in the political systems should focus on the roles of the executive, legislative and judicial branches within each system. Learners should be able to compare and contrast the respective powers of the individual branches of government within the two political systems. Any two of the following four political systems can be studied: the UK political system; The Scottish political system; the political system of the United States of America; or the European Union political system.	
Mandatory content for Course assessment	**Further detail of coverage**
Constitutional arrangements	The origins and development of the different political systems, the key principles underlying each system, the type and nature of the constitutional approach (including codified and uncodified), the role of the constitution in safeguarding individual rights and the extent to which these are enshrined, the position of the judiciary as protector of individual rights within each system.
The legislative branch	The key functions of the legislative branch, comparing two of the following: ♦ The UK Parliament ♦ The Scottish Parliament ♦ The US Congress ♦ The European Parliament
The executive branch	The key functions of political executives, comparing two of the following: ♦ The Prime Minister and Cabinet ♦ The First Minister and Cabinet ♦ The US Presidency ♦ The European Commission/Council of Ministers

The judiciary	The functions of the judicial branch, comparing two of the following: ♦ The UK Supreme Court ♦ The Scottish Legal System ♦ The US Supreme Court ♦ The European Court of Justice
Throughout this Unit a comparative approach should be taken which reaches conclusions about the sources of power within two political systems.	

Learning and teaching approaches should be learner focussed. The following examples are illustrative of approaches which may be adopted and which will allow opportunities to gather evidence that learners have achieved one or more of the Unit Outcomes.

Example 1 — Constitutional approaches
Learners should consider the constitutional approaches taken in two different political systems by examining complex sources including primary sources such as constitutional texts and drawing balanced conclusions on the nature and status of the constitutional arrangements in each system. Learners should be able to identify how rights are protected by these constitutional arrangements and the significance of the judicial branch in safeguarding these rights. Learners may take a case study approach focusing on a particular right or collection of rights to examine the extent that these are protected within the constitutional frameworks of two different systems.

Learners will have opportunities to generate evidence which can be gathered and retained by teachers and lecturers to demonstrate achievement of both components for this Outcome. Evidence can be gathered in a range of forms including a written report or a presentation drawing upon supporting materials such as news reports and contrasting viewpoints.

Example 2 — The legislative branch in the UK and USA
Learners will study the functions of political assemblies and be able to identify the key functions of assemblies. Learners should interpret and evaluate a range of sources of information in order to identify and explain the ability of each of the chosen political assemblies to control these functions (for example control of legislation, ability to effectively scrutinise the executive).

Learners can study the impact the assemblies have on the origin and passage of legislation and the methods open to the chambers to scrutinise the work of the government. Learners could investigate a range of sources such as visits to institutions; communication with elected representatives; parliamentary and congressional websites; and media resources to reach balanced conclusions on the powers of the two assemblies.

Learners could be asked to carry out research and produce a written report on the issue of detention of terrorist suspects in the UK and USA. This could involve identifying the individual rights related to this issue and a description and evaluation of the degree to which they are safeguarded by the different constitutional approaches in the two systems. This issue could be then extended to look at the passage of legislation related to the detention of suspects in the UK and USA. Learners should then reach detailed conclusions on the role and power

of the political assemblies in both countries. This issue could focus on the detention without trial debate in the UK and the role played by the House of Commons and House of Lords in the defeat of this proposal. A contrast could be made with the response of Congress to the Patriot Act and the challenges raised to this in Federal Courts. Learners should be able to apply knowledge and understanding of roles and powers of political assemblies in both countries to reach valid conclusions. Activities which could be used to generate evidence could include production of a digital presentation or a written report.

Example 3 — The executive branch in the UK and Scotland.
Learners would study the role and functions of political executives and be able to identify these functions from a range of relevant sources related to Scotland and the UK. Learners should be able to reach conclusions on the most important functions of the executive branch in both contexts. Learners would then use a range of complex sources to compare and contrast the position of the executive branch in Scotland and the UK to reach valid conclusions on the importance and power of the executive branch in both countries. This could be done by a case study approach, the interrogation of media reports or the use of primary sources.

Learners should be able to describe the respective powers of the Prime Minister and First Minister and would also be expected to identify the constitutional constraints facing each of the political executives including relations with the legislative branch.

The overall burden of assessment for the learner may be reduced by using the opportunity to assess holistically within the Unit, allowing achievement of both Outcomes at once. Evidence can be gathered in a range of forms including a written report or a presentation drawing upon supporting materials such as news reports, statistical sources and contrasting viewpoints.

If centres are using a holistic approach to assessment of the Unit it is advisable to track where evidence of the achievement of individual Outcomes and/or assessment standards appears so that learners who do not achieve the complete assessment can still have recognition for what they have achieved and do not have to be reassessed on what they have achieved.

Added value — Politics assignment
The content of this Unit may provide many issues in which learners can demonstrate added value for the Course assessment through the Politics assignment. Learners should choose an issue for study which invites discussion and debate. This Unit will provide rich opportunities for learners to choose a range of possible titles for their Politics assignment, eg:

- Should the UK adopt a written constitution?
- Should the powers of the Scottish Parliament be increased?
- Do we need a Bill of Rights in the UK?
- Should Select Committee powers in the UK be increased?
- Is the UK an ‘elective dictatorship’?
- Does the system of check and balances in the US now guarantee political gridlock?
- Would the introduction of a US-style Supreme Court in the UK offer better protection for individual rights than the European Court of Human Rights?

The titles illustrated above are for guidance only and would draw upon knowledge and understanding primarily from the *Politics: Political Systems* Unit. Further challenge and application could involve drawing on knowledge and understanding of theories and ideologies developed in the *Politics: Political Theory* Unit.

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

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work across the Course, is given in the relevant *Course Support Notes*.

As the specific skills focus of the Unit is the comparison of different political systems, learners will be expected to use a range of complex sources in order to compare and contrast. Learners will develop numeracy skills by having to handle, interpret and analyse statistical information.

This Unit will provide rich and varied opportunities for learners to consider and develop many aspects of citizenship. Studies of political systems will allow learners to develop an understanding of how citizens' rights are protected in different societies and the role of different institutions in a parliamentary democracy. Visiting speakers from political parties or elected representatives as well as possible visits to institutions will also develop aspects of citizenship.

Equality and inclusion

The high degree of flexibility within this Unit in terms of possible approaches to assessment means that Course and Unit planners can consider and remove potential barriers to learning and assessment. This Unit should be accessible to all learners.

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

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment to take account of the specific needs of learners can be used. However, the centre must be satisfied that the integrity of the assessment is maintained and that the alternative approach to assessment will, in fact, generate the necessary evidence of achievement.

Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications are available on SQA's website at: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html.
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- *Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*

Administrative information

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History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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Unit Support Notes

Unit Support Notes — Politics: Political Parties and Elections (Higher)

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

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *Politics: Political Parties and Elections* (Higher) Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- the Unit Specification
- the Course Specification
- the Course Assessment Specification
- the Course Support Notes
- appropriate assessment support materials

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to develop a range of analytical and evaluating skills; however the specific skills focus for assessment purposes is the development of skills in evaluating electoral data. Learners will develop knowledge and understanding of the dominant ideas and issues within a political party and the range of complex factors which contribute to a political party's electoral performance.

Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. Many learners will draw on relevant prior learning or experience. Learners will require appropriate literacy and numeracy skills in order to overtake the requirements of this Unit.

When considering whether this Unit is appropriate for a particular learner, you should refer to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course, and the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Taken together these provide an overall picture of the level of demand.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the Higher Politics *Course Specification* and *Course Assessment Specification*.

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

Progression from this Unit

This Unit may provide progression to a range of qualifications in related social subjects and social science and to Advanced Higher Modern Studies.

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

The aim of this section is to provide advice and guidance to centres on:

- opportunities to generate naturally occurring evidence through a range of teaching and learning approaches
- approaches to added value
- approaches to developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Politics: Political Parties and Elections (Higher) Unit</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Learners will study the dominant ideas within a UK political party such as: the Conservative Party, Labour Party, Liberal Democrats or Scottish National Party. The dominant ideas within the political party during an election or over a number of elections should be studied alongside the impact of political campaign management strategies and theoretical analyses of voting behaviour.</td></tr>
<tr><th>Mandatory content for Course assessment</th><th>Further detail of coverage</th></tr>
<tr><td>The dominant ideas within a political party</td><td>Conservative:
Such as:
♦ One Nation Conservatism
♦ Thatcherism

Labour:
Such as:
♦ Collectivist
♦ Social Democratic
♦ New Labour

Liberal Democrat:
Such as:
♦ Liberalism
♦ The Radical Centre

Scottish National Party
Such as:
♦ Nationalists
♦ Left of Centre Social Democratic</td></tr>
<tr><td>The impact of political campaign management strategies</td><td>Traditional campaign strategies, for example canvassing, leafleting and the ‘ground game’
Political campaign management strategies
Media strategies, including television, newspapers, radio and new media
The use of technology</td></tr>
<tr><td>Theories of voting behaviour</td><td>♦ Rational choice
♦ Dominant ideology
♦ Sociological theory
♦ Party identification</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Throughout this Unit relevant case studies should be used from Scotland and/or the United Kingdom.</td></tr>
</table>

Learning and teaching approaches should be learner-focused. The following examples are illustrative of approaches which may be adopted and which will allow opportunities to gather evidence that learners have achieved one or more of the Unit Outcomes.

Example 1 — Why did party 'X' win debate?
Learners may study the issues surrounding the outcome of a particular election. This could be from a local, Scottish or UK wide election. They should consider the dominant ideas within a party, including where it positions itself in the political spectrum.

Learners could evaluate the party's campaign management strategies, such as its use of the media (in all its contexts) and its techniques to target and win over voters. These 'supply side' factors could be evaluated alongside theoretical models of voting behaviour and independent/academic research.

Learners could use a range of sources of information at an appropriate level such as: party election publications, opinion poll evidence and electoral data. Learners should evaluate a range of sources of information in order to identify trends and significant factors. Through the study of the issues arising from the debate around 'Why did party X win?, learners will develop a knowledge and understanding of party politics and be able to demonstrate analytical skills which will meet the Outcomes and Assessment Standards of the Unit. Activities which could be used to generate evidence could include production of a news report, participation in a debate, write-up of findings, digital presentation to a group, or writing a blog.

Example 2 — Case study of a political party
Learners can adopt a case study approach by focussing on a specific political party group in order to develop their knowledge and understanding of the ways in which that political party attempts to maximise its electoral performance. Learners can study the methods used by the political party to position itself in the most electorally advantageous place and evaluate the degree of success it has achieved. Since political parties attempt to engage voters by portraying their performance in the most positive light (the use of 'spin'), learners should be able to evaluate a range of evidence in regard to how a party has performed in elections with relation to the official statements issued by the political party/spokespersons.

The overall burden of assessment for the learner may be reduced by using the opportunity to assess holistically within the Unit, allowing achievement of both Outcomes at once. Evidence can be gathered in a range of forms including a written report or a presentation drawing upon supporting materials such as news reports, statistical sources and contrasting viewpoints.

If centres are using a holistic approach to assessment of the Unit it is advisable to track where evidence of the achievement of individual Outcomes and/or assessment standards appears so that learners who do not achieve the complete assessment can still have recognition for what they have achieved and do not have to be reassessed on what they have achieved.

Added value — Politics assignment
The content of this Unit may provide many issues in which learners can demonstrate added value for the Course assessment through the Politics assignment. Learners should choose an issue for study which invites discussion and debate. This Unit will provide rich opportunities for learners to choose a range of possible titles for their Politics assignment, eg:

- Can a Left/Right-wing party win elections in the UK?
- Why did Labour abandon 'old Labour'?
- Do the Liberal Democrats have a clear identity?
- Why do the Scottish Conservatives not perform as well as the UK party?
- Can Scottish Labour win again?
- Does the media decide modern elections?
- Is social class still an issue in UK elections?
- Can a political party successfully change its image?
- Does the leadership of a political party decide its electoral success?

The titles illustrated above are for guidance only and would draw on knowledge and understanding primarily from the *Political Parties and Elections* Unit. Further challenge and application could involve a comparative aspect by drawing upon knowledge and understanding of theories and ideologies developed in the *Political Theory* Unit.

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

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work across the Course is given in the relevant *Course Support Notes*.

As the specific skills focus of the Unit is the evaluation of electoral data, learners will develop information handling skills. They will be expected to use a range of statistical, numerical and graphical information in order to identify trends and significant factors. This will involve them handling and evaluating electoral data in order to extract significant information and come to judgements on the reliability of the information.

This Unit will provide rich and varied opportunities for learners to consider and develop many aspects of citizenship. Studies of political parties and their campaigning strategies, including management of both traditional and new media will allow learners to develop an understanding of how they as citizens can participate in, and have an influence on, society. Visiting speakers from political parties will also develop aspects of citizenship.

Equality and inclusion

The high degree of flexibility within this Unit in terms of possible approaches to assessment means that Course and Unit planners can consider and remove potential barriers to learning and assessment. This Unit should be accessible to all learners.

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

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment to take account of the specific needs of learners can be used. However, the centre must be satisfied that the integrity of the assessment is maintained and that the alternative approach to assessment will, in fact, generate the necessary evidence of achievement.

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Administrative information

Published: May 2015 (version 1.1)

History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	'Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment' section — additional detail added.	Qualifications Manager	May 2015

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