

National 5 Sociology Course Support Notes



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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).

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Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Sociology (National 5) 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

This Course develops learners' sense of themselves as part of society. Thinking from a sociological perspective encourages learners to ask questions about the social world in which we live.

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 Course enables learners to become familiar with research methods and the use of evidence in sociology to support sociological explanations.

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 society, cultural diversity and social issues. Learners apply the distinct features of the sociological approach such as perspectives, theories, concepts and research evidence to explain society.

Each of the Course Units and the Course Assessment is directed at meeting the following broad aims.

Course Aims	Benefits to learners
Develop an understanding of society through gaining knowledge and understanding of basic sociological perspectives, theories and concepts	Learners will have opportunities to develop a sociological imagination to help them to ask questions about, and to understand, the social world in an objective and sociological way.
Develop an understanding that sociology challenges 'common-sense' explanations about human social behaviour.	The development of theoretical knowledge and understanding will enable learners to become successful learners and confident individuals.
Raise awareness of cultural and social diversity and the significance of relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions.	Responsible citizenship involves being open to different ideas and an ability to see things from different points of view. Raising awareness of cultural and social diversity will challenge preconceived ideas.
Raise awareness of the role of sources of information, research evidence and research methods used in sociology.	Opportunities to explore and understand a range of sources, research evidence and methods will help learners to develop skills in interpreting and evaluating information. These are skills that will benefit learners in other aspects of learning and life.

Develop basic investigation skills to find appropriate resources and to organise and interpret information.	A systematic approach to finding and using information benefits the learner and is appropriate preparation for further study.
Develop thinking and communication skills used in sociology.	Learning to contribute effectively can be developed through opportunities to communicate and demonstrate informed thinking when sharing knowledge and sociological understanding.

Progression into this Course

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

- ◆ National 4 People and Society Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ National 4 Modern Studies Course or relevant component Units at SCQF level 4

A level of maturity and independent thought will be required for the National 5 Sociology course, and it is recognised that life experience can be a valid preparation. Successful completion of a broad general education would prepare learners to further develop the skills required to investigate social issues and cultural diversity. Centres wishing to establish the suitability of learners without prior qualifications and/or experiences and outcomes may benefit from carrying out a diagnostic review of prior life and work experiences. This approach may be particularly useful for adult returners to education.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in the Course

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

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

The National 5 Sociology Course develops skills, knowledge and understanding which have a wide-ranging application in learning, life and work contexts. These may be developed in each of the Course Units. However, greater emphasis will be given to developing some in particular Units.

Units specify Outcomes and Assessment Standards. There are opportunities to develop all skills, knowledge and understanding in each Unit. However, Unit

Assessment Standards will determine the skills, knowledge and understanding to be assessed in each Unit.

An overview of skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the following table.

- ✓✓✓ Plenty of opportunities within the Unit
- ✓✓ Many opportunities within the Unit
- ✓ Some opportunities within the Unit

Skills knowledge and understanding	Human Society	Culture and Identity	Social Issues
Identifying and describing basic differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human social behaviour	The ability to identify and distinguish between a range of non-sociological and sociological explanations develops the ability to question taken-for-granted assumptions		
	✓✓✓	✓	✓
Understanding society by describing sociological perspectives, theories and concepts	The <i>Human Society</i> Unit focuses mostly on perspectives, the <i>Culture and Identity</i> unit focuses mostly on concepts, and the <i>Social Issues</i> Unit focuses mostly on theory		
	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Describing the sociological significance of relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions	For example: being able to describe social relationships from different sociological perspectives and/or with knowledge and understanding of the socialisation process		
	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓
Using investigation skills to find appropriate sources of information	There are opportunities in each Unit to support learners' discussion of a range of sources of information, including primary and secondary sources and to introduce the concepts of validity and reliability		
	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Organising and interpreting information in sociology	Learners can be introduced to a variety of information in each Unit such as media articles or government statistics. Learners can work co-operatively to make sense of information and develop an ability to interpret information		
	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Describing the main research methods used in sociology	By describing different research methods learners will be able to develop an understanding of the purpose of different research methods		
	✓✓✓	✓	✓

Using sociological explanations for human social behaviour	Understanding and applying sociological concepts, theories and perspectives will help develop basic analytical skills		
	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Using knowledge and understanding of research and evidence to support explanations	Learners can be offered opportunities to develop skills in being able to select appropriate information from sources, evaluate the evidence at a basic level, and use this to support explanations.		
	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Communicating sociologically informed views	Through class activities learners can be supported to communicate using a variety of different formats. For example through role play, presentations or debates		
	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓

Progression from this Course

This Course or its components may provide progression to:

- ◆ Higher Sociology
- ◆ other SQA qualifications in social studies, social science or related areas at SCQF level 5 or Higher
- ◆ 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.

Learning and teaching in sociology can further develop learners' opportunities to consider their own and others' experiences of life and to appreciate the importance of respecting the cultural identity of others.

Hierarchies

Hierarchy is the term used to describe Courses and Units which form a structured sequence involving two or more SCQF levels.

It is important that any content in a Course and/or Unit at one particular SCQF level is not repeated if a learner progresses to the next level of the hierarchy. The skills and knowledge should be able to be applied to new content and contexts to enrich the learning experience. This is for centres to manage.

The National 5 Sociology Course is in a hierarchy with the Sociology Higher course. Units have the same titles and structures but the level of demand is progressive. This structure aims to facilitate multi-level teaching and to enable learners to be given recognition for their best achievement. For example, learners may be able to achieve, and be certificated for, a Unit or the Course at the level above or below.

In the National 5 Sociology Course learners develop a sociological understanding of the social world in which we live. They will gain knowledge of sociological perspectives, theories and concepts that will enable them to describe a range of social issues and cultural experiences. They will also begin to develop a range of skills that will enable them to investigate sources of information, learn about research methods and evidence as well as skills that will enable them to begin to learn how to communicate their thoughts and understanding in an objective manner.

The broad outline of the hierarchy is set out in Appendix 2.

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

Mode of delivery

There are three Units in the Sociology National 5 Course. The level of demand in each Unit corresponds with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework at level 5.

Sociology: Human Society (National 5)	(6 SCQF credit points)
Sociology: Culture and Identity (National 5)	(6 SCQF credit points)
Sociology: Social Issues (National 5)	(6 SCQF credit points)

Units may be delivered in any order. They may be delivered sequentially or concurrently. There may be some benefit, however, in delivering the Sociology: Human Society Unit first to provide learners with an opportunity to familiarise themselves with a basic understanding of how sociological explanations differ from common-sense views. Learners should be introduced to sociological language, concepts and theories in all Units, and should be encouraged to use sociological terminology as much as possible when explaining and communicating their ideas. Three possible approaches to delivery are illustrated below.

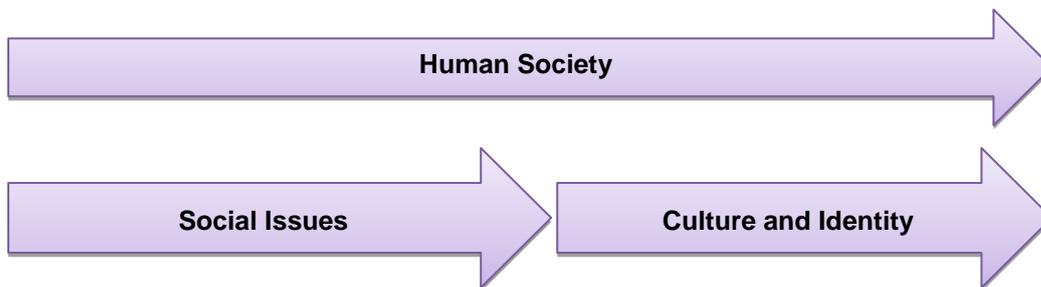
Suggestion 1



Adopting this approach, which begins with the Human Society Unit, would enable learners to distinguish between common sense and sociological explanations of social behaviour. This is very useful in setting the scene for learners to understand the importance of researching topics of social interest rather than accepting common sense explanations as ‘fact’.

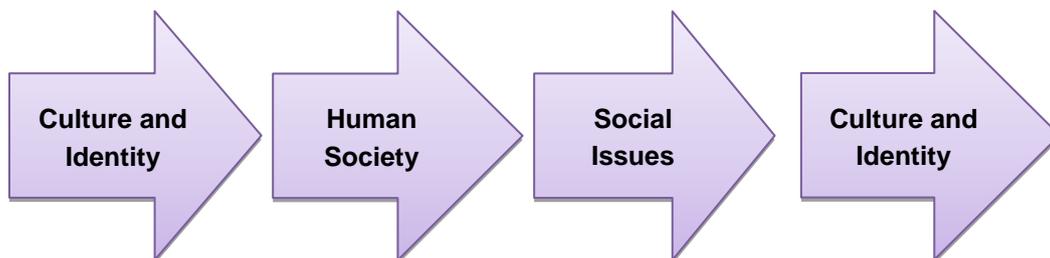
In the Human Society unit, learners will be encouraged to consider the extent to which human beings are shaped by social forces, as well as how society is shaped by human action. This will be beneficial when progressing on to the Culture and Identity Unit, when learners start to consider sociological concepts such as the socialisation process, culture and sub-cultures, and ways in which these can influence the formation of identity and in turn create a diverse society. Having studied the previous two Units, learners would then have the necessary underpinning knowledge to select a contemporary social issue of interest to them and to explain it using relevant sociological theories and research evidence.

Suggestion 2



Following this approach would support opportunities to learn concurrently about sociological perspectives and research methods while simultaneously adopting topics or themes introduced in the Social Issues and Culture and Identity Units. An advantage of this approach would be that the relevance of a range of unfamiliar sociological perspectives, theories, concepts and research methods could be introduced to learners in a flexible manner that could be responsive to their interests, level of knowledge and understanding as well as their learning pace and style. This may help create a more stimulating learning environment in which learners could be actively engaged in considering and reflecting on issues of significance to them while developing their understanding sociological perspectives, theories, concepts, research methods and studies relevant to the contemporary social world.

Suggestion 3



Suggestion 3 could be an appropriate approach for groups of learners who had no prior knowledge of sociology. Introducing the idea of culture and identity at an early stage of the learning process would provide teachers/lecturers with opportunities to encourage learners to reflect on 'who they are' and 'why they are who they are'. Learners can then be introduced to ideas around the socialisation process, such as norms, values, roles and the ways in which we learn to 'fit in' to our social world.

Using a wide variety of sources to support learners to investigate the relationship between identity and the socialisation process would be helpful to introduce some of the basic ideas embedded in the Human Society Unit around Structural and Action theories such as whether human behaviour is shaped by the society we live in or whether it is human behaviour that shapes society. This would also be helpful in using different sociological theories to explain contemporary social issues in terms of both their cause and impact.

By returning to some of the introductory themes, towards the end of the sequential/topic/theme based delivery of all three Units, learners could be encouraged to reflect back on some 'taken for granted' or common-sense assumptions that were evident when they first began studying the National 5 Sociology Course.

Overarching Guidance

An awareness of equality and diversity issues is essential in sociology, and all materials used should be inclusive to reflect social and cultural diversity. Some topics may be sensitive for individual learners, based on stages of development or personal experiences. To this end, discretion and sensitivity should be shown in the selection and delivery of materials. In discussions which relate to health, relationships, emotions or socio-economic status, teachers/lecturers should be alert to any signs of discomfort or distress.

Teaching approaches should support Curriculum for Excellence's four capacities to enable each learner to develop as a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor.

The subject matter of sociology readily lends itself to a variety of delivery and investigation methods, including learner-centred problem-solving activities, pair and group discussion, considering sources of evidence, analysis of real-life applications of theory, games and quizzes, IT/web-based activities, as well as formal presentation. Stimulus materials, visual aids and familiar situations may also be used to good effect. Video and audio material can add variety and can be effective in highlighting contemporary issues as well as comparisons across cultures or throughout history in relation to a particular social issue or theme. Statistical information, and information relating to a variety of sociological studies, should be made available to enable learners to appreciate how sociologists both use and provide research evidence.

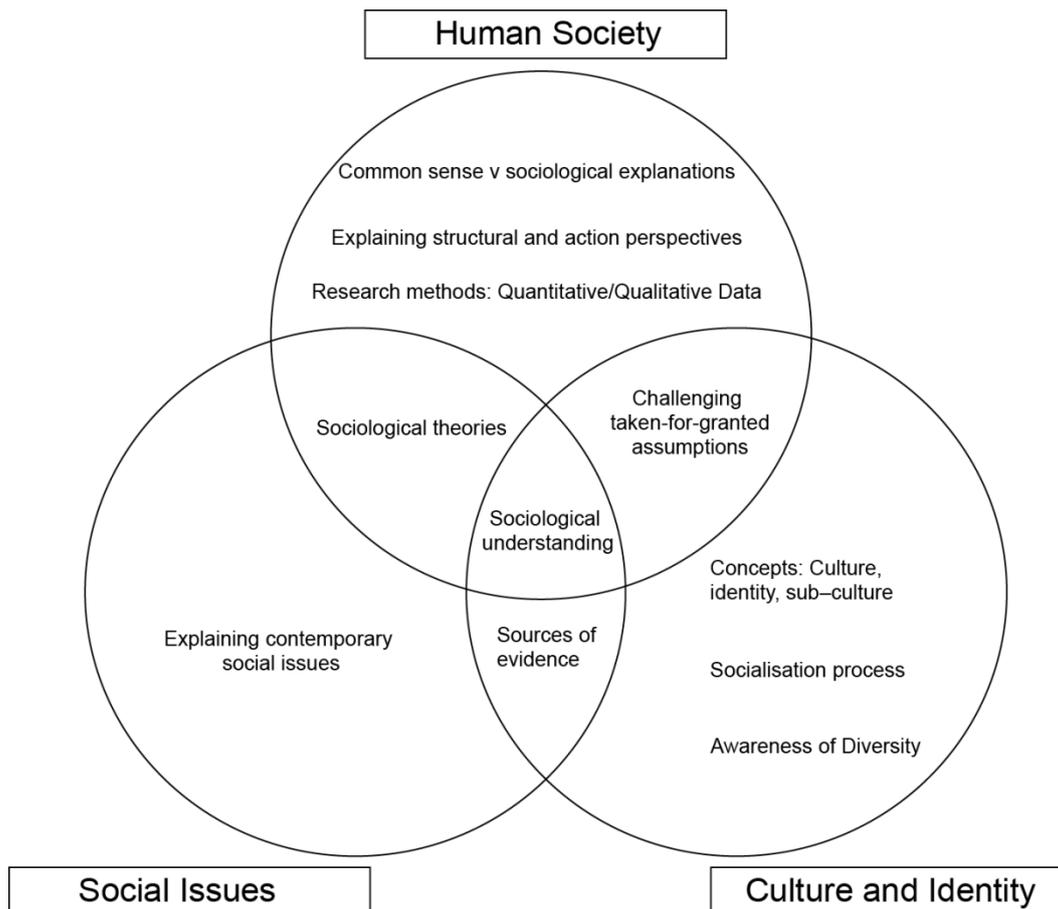
Learners should be gradually encouraged, with guidance, to investigate topics in the library, online, in newspapers, magazines and journals and to generally show initiative, wherever appropriate. The benefits of co-operative learning, peer support and peer feedback can be substantial, and should be encouraged and supported by the use of technology (ICT) where appropriate.

Possible approaches to learning and teaching

In the National 5 Sociology Course, there is the potential for thematic delivery of topics across Units. This may suit the needs of learners in terms of personalisation and choice, and may suit teachers/lecturers in centres interested in offering more integrated and imaginative delivery. There may also be potential for more integrated assessment opportunities within the course.

There is a wide variety of ways in which delivery could be thematic, looking at themes such as 'Equality of Opportunity — Access to Education'; 'The Power of the Media and Digital Technology in Shaping our Lives'; 'Experience and Perceptions of Health, Illness & Disability'; 'Patterns and Perceptions of Crime and Deviance'.

The following diagram illustrates links between the Units that offer potential for thematic delivery.



Ideas for possible themes to provide opportunities for integrated learning and assessment across Units could include:

Theme: Changing Family Patterns

[Could include family diversity; domestic labour/gender roles; attitudes to childhood.]

Each of these sub-topics could be a focus for discussions on culture and identity and could be the basis for sourcing and interpreting research evidence on related social issues such as rising divorce rates, distribution of household tasks within families, or the effects of mass media on perceptions and experiences of childhood. Such topics would provide extensive opportunities to use investigation skills to explore the diverse range of family ‘types’ that exist in contemporary society; discussion of common sense and sociological explanations for ways in which family patterns have changed; sources of quantitative and qualitative data that provide objective research evidence on the subject; using both structural and social action perspectives to describe relationships between individuals, groups and society in terms of family diversity; developing understanding of the influence of socialisation within the family on the formation of identity; raising awareness of cultural diversity in relation to family experiences.

Sources of evidence from a range of media would be readily accessible to learners in relation to a range of topics around the theme of ‘changing family patterns’. Sociological research should be relatively easily sourced by teachers/lecturers or even learners themselves. Teachers/lecturers could ensure that opportunities to develop an understanding of the advantages and

disadvantages of different research methods were provided. The holistic and integrated nature of this type of thematic learning and assessment is likely to support learners to develop and communicate sociologically informed views.

Theme: Educational Experiences

[Could include differential achievement; labelling and self-fulfilling prophecy; attitudes to school; progression from school on to FE/HE/ employment; barriers to learning; government initiatives to promote learning.]

Learners could relate and compare their own range of educational experiences to ‘set the scene’, then be supported to source and interpret evidence into some of the topics that their own discussions have generated. By ‘owning’ and personalising the learning in this way the learners are likely to be more actively engaged in the learning process. However, teachers/lecturers will be required to support learners to actively make the links between their subjective experiences and the more objective methods required in sociological analysis.

One suggestion for thematic delivery across all Units could be a topic of ‘Money’:

Theme: Money	
Unit	Suggestions for approaches to learning, teaching and assessment
Human Society	To what extent does ‘money make the world go round’? The experience of boom and bust in the economy. Common-sense versus sociological explanations — ‘Greedy Bankers’ vs global economic explanations; could include consideration of sensationalist newspaper articles (common-sense view), employment and redundancy statistics (quantitative data); interviews/ personal accounts (qualitative data). Use this topic to examine the link between individuals, institutions and groups in society using different sociological perspectives (and theories).
Culture and Identity	Investigation of how our personal and social identities are linked to our socio-economic positions within a culture of consumerism. The topic can be used to investigate concepts of values, norms and roles.
Social Issues	Examining a range of sources and research which look at the social issue of inequality. This could include statistics on social mobility; impact of the ‘credit crunch’ on our local High Streets; personal accounts of poverty and/or social exclusion (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Child Poverty Action Group); examples of civil unrest.

Possible approaches to assessment and generating evidence of progress

In the National 5 Sociology Course there is a great deal of scope for personalisation and choice in terms of learning, teaching and assessment.

Learners should always be clear about what they are trying to learn and what is expected of them. Teachers and lecturers should therefore share and discuss expectations in terms of Unit Outcomes, Assessment Standards and mandatory Course content with learners. Learners should be given regular feedback about the quality of their work and what they can do to improve on it. If learners are afforded a degree of personalisation and choice, it is anticipated that they will be more actively engaged in their learning and, consequently, will want to be fully involved in all aspects of their learning and assessment.

Learning opportunities should enable learners to generate evidence to estimate progress and readiness for Unit and Course assessment. Teaching should prepare learners to attain and perhaps surpass the standards required for Unit assessment. Thematic delivery may be relevant in this context as a means of providing naturally occurring opportunities for integration of knowledge and understanding across all three component Units.

One strategy that may be used to prepare learners for assessment is the inclusion of activities that can be peer assessed. Learners could be encouraged to identify whether or not an answer has met the agreed criteria. For example, the peer assessor could be asked to identify whether or not the answer includes an agreed number of descriptive points or relevant terminology. To encourage good practice, centres could set-up 'peer buddies' and include the requirement that some tasks can only be submitted along with a completed peer assessment form. If the peer assessor has identified areas that haven't been included then the learner should address the area identified before submitting their answer. This approach may be helpful as learners work towards the submission of their assignment work. Alternatively, it could be used to help learners produce good, detailed descriptions and explanations of, for example, a sociological theory or a social issue.

Group work approaches can be used within Units and across courses where it is helpful to stimulate real life situations, share tasks and promote team working skills. However, there must be clear evidence for each learner to show that the learner has met the required assessment standards for the Unit or Course.

For information on assessment and reassessment, teachers and lecturers should refer to [SQA's Guide to Assessment, available on the SQA website](#).

When Units are being completed as part of the Sociology Course, learning opportunities should also enable learners to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding required for the two components of the Course assessment which are a question paper and an assignment.

Combining assessment across Units

Evidence may be gathered for one or more Units or for the Course as a whole by combining assessment holistically in one single activity. Combined Unit assessment should not add complexity to the requirements of the Course assessment.

The idea of thematic delivery, outlined earlier in this document, could be used as a basis for developing a single assessment to enable learners to attain assessment standards for all or some of the Units on the Course. This may offer additional coherence to the Course.

Preparation for Course assessment

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

Individual Course Units are designed to offer personalisation and choice. However, learners preparing for the National 5 Sociology Course Assessment will be required to cover some mandatory content.

It is necessary to refer to the Course Assessment Specification for essential information on mandatory content required for Course Assessment.

The National 5 Sociology Course assessment has two components, a Question paper and an Assignment. Detailed information on this aspect of the Course can be found in the National 5 Sociology Course Assessment Specification.

The Question Paper will assess breadth and application of sociological skills, knowledge and understanding from across Course Units. Learners will need opportunities to write answers to questions, within time constraints. This can be practiced through cooperative learning activities or by offering a specimen question paper with opportunities to discuss the quality of answers.

To prepare for the assignment, learners should have opportunities to investigate topics within the Course and to discuss their ideas with others to develop their understanding. Learners will need opportunities to develop skills in structuring extended responses.

Where resources permit, centres could use technology to support learning, teaching and gathering evidence for assessment. Learners will be able to benefit from a wide range of online resources for this subject and could be encouraged to use ICT skills and technologies to investigate and present their ideas and opinions. E learning and e assessment should not, however, be allowed to become a barrier to effective learning and successful assessment.

Detailed information can be found in the *National 5 Sociology Course Assessment Specification*.

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

Learners are expected to develop broad generic skills as an integral part of their learning experience. The *Course Specification* lists the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that learners should develop through this Course. These are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course.

Skills for Learning – Skills for Life – Skills for Work	
1 Literacy	Opportunities in learning and teaching
1.3 Listening & Talking	Learners will develop the skill of listening, which means the ability to understand and interpret ideas, opinions and information presented orally by other people. They will also develop skills and confidence in talking, which will involve their ability to orally communicate their ideas, opinions and information, such as contributing and listening to a discussion of a social issue such as poverty, or contributing to a presentation on cultural diversity.
3 Health & Well-being	Opportunities in learning & teaching
3.1 Personal Learning	Learners will develop their ability to be actively engaged in their learning. They will develop skills in planning their learning and sourcing information through investigating topics in which they may themselves have an interest. They will also begin to develop the skills of thinking constructively, reflecting on their learning, and learning from experience. This is likely to be particularly relevant in the learning contexts of the <i>Social Issues</i> and <i>Culture and Identity</i> Units.
4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship	Opportunities in learning & teaching
4.6 Citizenship	This Course provides a range of opportunities to reflect on ways in which citizenship includes having concern about our social world and those who live within it. The Course provides opportunities for learners to understand more about rights and responsibilities; to develop an awareness of democracy; to become outward-looking towards society while being able to recognise one's personal role in this context. Studying topics related to social and cultural diversity, and developing an understanding of the concept of ethnocentrism, will provide learners with an opportunity to reflect on their social world in a different and better informed way.

5 Thinking skills	Opportunities in learning & teaching
5.3 Applying	Applying may involve the ability to use existing information to plan, organise and complete a task in a different context. In the context of this course, learners will be provided with a range of opportunities to develop this skill. This could include using sociological theories and with support, interpret information from secondary sources to investigate and explain a particular social issue.
5.4 Analysing and evaluating	Analysing and evaluating involves the ability to identify and weigh-up the features of a situation or issue and to use your judgement in coming to a conclusion. It includes reviewing and considering any potential solutions. Opportunities for learners to develop and demonstrate this skill in this course include when they review and evaluate a range of research methods used in sociology the ways in which different sociological theories explain a particular social issue.

There may be opportunities to extend the range of Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work. For example:

Skills for Learning – Skills for Life – Skills for Work	
1 Literacy	Opportunities in learning and teaching
1.1 Reading	Through their reading and examination of sources of primary and secondary research, learners will begin to develop skills in understanding and interpreting ideas, opinions and information presented in textual form. They will begin to develop skills in handling information begin to make reasoned and informed decisions, such as making an informed judgement on whether an article on homelessness presented a biased viewpoint.
1.2 Writing	Learners will develop the ability to produce texts which communicate ideas, opinions and information. This could be a written account comparing structural and action perspectives, or a written summary describing agents of socialisation.
3 Health & Well-being	Opportunities in learning & teaching
3.5 Relationships	Throughout the Course learners could be encouraged to work effectively as part of a group. This will help develop various types of social and working relationships, and will provide opportunities to practice a range of interpersonal skills. Opportunities to show respect and a sense of care for self and others are plentiful throughout the course — much of the learning and teaching in sociology can provide learners with opportunities to consider their own and others'

	experiences of life and to appreciate the importance of respecting the heritage and cultural identity of others.
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Equality and inclusion

Learners undertaking this Course will communicate their sociological understanding. However, communication could be written, oral, diagrammatic or electronic.

In the sociology Course controversial or sensitive issues may be raised. Teachers / lecturers should consider the skills and experience of learners and ensure that topics are studied objectively and free from bias or prejudice.

Centres, teachers and learners should be aware of current British Sociological Association ethical guidelines and adhere to ethical standards when discussing and making decisions relating to sociological research.

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 have an understanding of SQA's provision of 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 assessment arrangements section of 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 Specifications*
- ◆ *Design Principles for National Courses*
- ◆ *Guide to Assessment (June 2008)*
- ◆ *Overview of Qualification Reports*
- ◆ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
- ◆ *SCQF Handbook: User Guide* (published 2009) and SCQF level descriptors (to be reviewed during 2012 to 2012): www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html
- ◆ *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*

Appendix 2: Hierarchy

National 5 Sociology

Human Society

Develops understanding of the sociological approach
Focus on explaining research methods and sociological perspectives

- ◆ Distinguishing between common sense and sociological explanations
- ◆ Describing methods that generate qualitative and quantitative data
- ◆ Describing advantages and disadvantages of research methods
- ◆ Explaining structural and action perspectives
- ◆ Using sociological perspectives to explain relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions

Social Issues

Develops skills in using evidence and applying knowledge to explanations of social issues
Focus on explaining theories and research evidence

- ◆ Using theories to explain a social issue
- ◆ Using evidence from different sources to describe a social issue
- ◆ Explaining the role of research evidence
- ◆ Interpreting research evidence to support sociological explanations of a contemporary social issue

Culture and Identity

Develops skills in using sources of evidence and understanding of sociological concepts
Focus on raising awareness of diversity

- ◆ Describing identity, culture, sub-culture and diversity
- ◆ Explaining the process of socialisation
- ◆ Using sources of evidence to investigate relationships between socialisation and identity
- ◆ Reflecting awareness of diversity when explaining culture and identity

Higher Sociology

Human Society

Develops understanding of the sociological approach
Focus on evaluating research methods, and using sociological perspectives and theories to analyse society

- ◆ Explaining differences between common sense and sociological explanations
- ◆ Evaluating methods that generate qualitative and quantitative data
- ◆ Evaluating structural and action perspectives
- ◆ Applying sociological perspectives and theories to analyse relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions
- ◆ Applying appropriate choice of research method to a research scenario

Social Issues

Develops skills in interpreting research evidence relating to contemporary social issues
Focus on evaluation and using sociological theories and research evidence

- ◆ Describing a social issue using different sources of information
- ◆ Applying and evaluating contrasting sociological theories used to explain a social issue
- ◆ Sourcing, evaluating and drawing conclusions from research studies of a social issue
- ◆ Evaluating research based on practical, ethical and theoretical grounds

Culture and Identity

Develops skills in analysing culture and identity in a changing social world
Focus on explaining and applying theories and concepts

- ◆ Explaining the impact of socialisation on identity formation
- ◆ Explaining culture and sub-culture using ideas of power and status
- ◆ Applying sociological theory and research findings to explain an aspect of culture and identity
- ◆ Giving a sociological analysis of culture and identity in a changing social world

Appendix 3: Ethical Guidance

Ethical Practice in Sociology

There is no expectation that learners will conduct their own independent research. Learning and teaching approaches may include supporting learners to carry out small scale research activities.

The British Sociological Association publishes a code of ethics for those undertaking sociological research. When students of sociology discuss or undertake research it is the teacher, lecturer or supervisor's responsibility to make certain that ethical standards are considered. .

These notes give a brief outline of the ethical code of practice and some tips and examples to help practitioners remain within the guidelines.

The full code of ethical practice can be found on the British Sociological Association website.

This is a brief outline of your responsibilities as practitioners and some suggested guidelines for good practice.

Notes for Teachers and Lecturers

- ◆ Teachers and lecturers are required to supervise student's work and make certain that it does not break the ethical guidelines of the British Sociological Association (BSA)
- ◆ The wellbeing of both students and research participants must be protected at all times.

Students and participants under age of 18:

- ◆ Permission should always be gained from:
 - Parents (in all cases)
 - The young person themselves (in all cases)
 - Teachers or carers (when research is outside the home)
- ◆ Student researchers should be made aware of the potential for influencing children and young people. They should not therefore involve under 18s in any research topic that is either illegal or age restricted eg drug use, alcohol, smoking, violent or sexually explicit material or sexual activity.
- ◆ It is difficult to gain informed consent from young children so research should stop if there is any sign of distress or discomfort.

Brief Outline of British Sociological Association Ethical Practice

- ◆ Sociological research is intended to contribute to the well being of society.
- ◆ Researchers must safeguard those involved in research and those affected by it.
- ◆ Report findings accurately and truthfully.
- ◆ Consider effects and consequences of the work.
- ◆ Should not carry out work they are not qualified to do, eg asking questions of a personal nature that may cause distress unless trained to offer support.
- ◆ Research must be worthwhile.
- ◆ Methods should be appropriate.

- ◆ Researchers should clearly state the limits on their detachment from the topic or those involved.
- ◆ Researchers should keep safe and not take risks.
- ◆ Participants must not have their well-being compromised physically, socially or psychologically.
- ◆ Privacy and human rights should be protected.
- ◆ There should be awareness of disparities of power.
- ◆ Trust and integrity must be maintained.
- ◆ Freely given consent should be obtained.
- ◆ Participants should be told that they have a right to stop at any time or to refuse from the outset.
- ◆ Anonymity, privacy and confidentiality must be maintained where possible.
- ◆ Participants can refuse to be recorded on film, audio or video.
- ◆ Particular care should be given to children in research – consent from both child and parent &/or caregiver must be sought.
- ◆ Covert research should be avoided where possible. If necessary, permissions must be granted after the event.
- ◆ Social and cultural diversity must be respected.

Suggested Guidelines for Good Practice

- ◆ Discuss ethics before work begins. Some good and bad examples can be helpful.
- ◆ Check research plans before students start work on a project.
- ◆ Create a checklist for the students' research plans. This has the added benefit of training learners in proper research protocol.
- ◆ Review student work regularly.
- ◆ Encourage discussion of ethical issues in the write up.

Appendix 4: Glossary

This glossary is intended to clarify the meaning of terms used in the Unit Specifications and Support Notes (Sociology).

The Glossary is organised as follows:

- ◆ Definitions of action terms used in assessment standards
- ◆ Brief definitions of sociological terms used in each Unit

Please note that the meaning of terms differs across disciplines and levels. This Glossary is designed for use with Sociology National 5.

Action Terms used in Assessment Standards

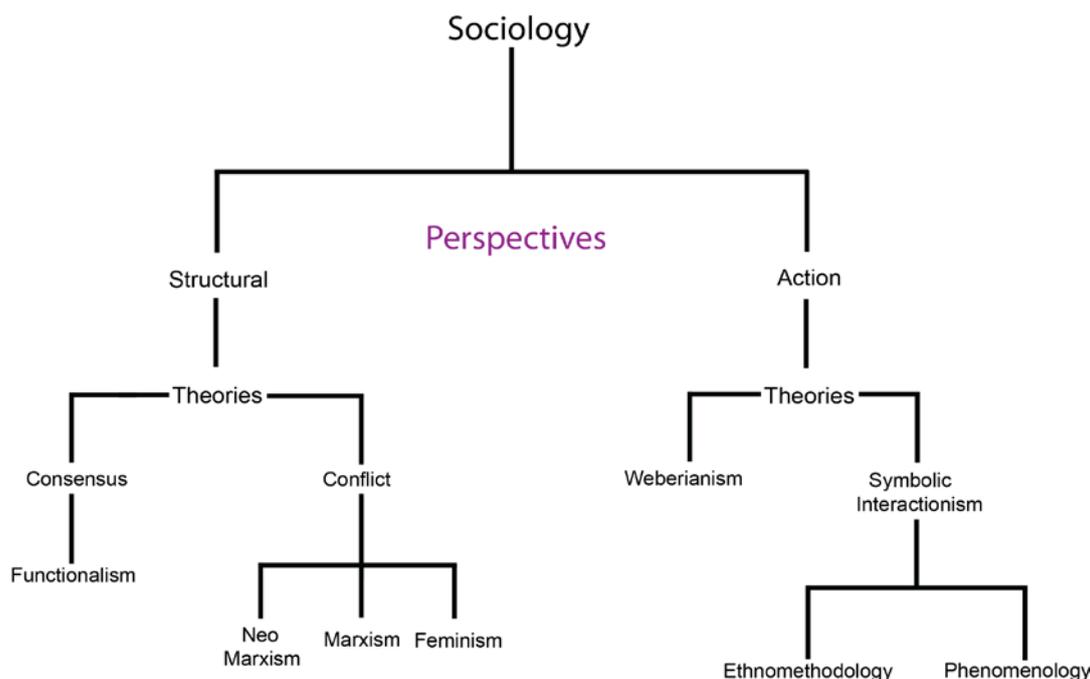
- ◆ **Identify:** Be able to choose from a given selection eg being able to identify common sense and sociological explanations from a given set of examples.
- ◆ **Describe:** A straightforward account of the concept's main features.
- ◆ **Distinguish between:** Show a basic understanding of contrasting ideas or features from a given source, list or description.
- ◆ **Explain:** Demonstrate understanding in the response using sociological terminology. Examples may be helpful to explain points.
- ◆ **Interpret and use information:** Learners should show that they can make sense of evidence presented in basic graphical and written formats. Source materials prepared in advance with written reports and numerical data in graphical formats could be used. This also gives an opportunity to consider the difference between quantitative and qualitative data. Having interpreted information learners could use the information to give a sociological explanation for a topic.
- ◆ **Know basic features:** Demonstrate knowledge of basic features, ie be able to recount and explain features without prompting.
- ◆ **Present an explanation:** Learners can present the explanation using a variety of different formats eg academic poster, display, PowerPoint presentation. Similarly the process involved in sourcing and researching information can be presented using a blog, video diary or mind map. Learners should aim to demonstrate understanding of the topic as well as the method of reaching that understanding.
- ◆ **Selecting from a range of sources:** At National 5 learners could be given a range of prepared sources from which they can select the most appropriate and helpful to complete the task.

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- ◆ **Action perspective:** Explains society in a 'bottom up' way ie by considering the meaning placed on symbols, actions, words and social events. It tends to emphasise the individual's ability to control their own actions and to be influenced by personal interpretation or meaning.
- ◆ **Difference between perspectives and theories:** Perspectives offer a view of the social world from a particular angle and theories give explanations for social behaviour and issues.
- ◆ **Micro and macro perspectives:** Generally, action perspectives take a 'micro' (small scale) view of society and structural perspectives take a 'macro' (large scale) view.
- ◆ **Sociological Perspective:** A way of looking at the world using sociological ideas and thinking. At National 5 structural and action perspectives are covered in this unit; others, such as post-modernism are optional.
- ◆ **Sociological approach:** In contrast to common sense explanations of the social world, the sociological approach uses sociological evidence and theory to explain the social world.
- ◆ **Structural perspectives:** Explains society using a 'top down' approach ie by considering the structures in society and their interaction with one another.

Please Note: Sociological theory is not introduced at National 5 until the Unit **Social Issues** but it may be discussed in this Unit to further explain the sociological approach and perspectives. See the Social Issues Unit for more information.

This diagram is helpful in showing the connection between perspectives and theories. There is no expectation that all theories in this diagram will be covered.



Common sense versus sociological approach

Common sense explanations: Explanations that come from a personal or shared understanding of social behaviour rather than from sociological evidence. Common sense explanations include naturalistic and individualistic explanations.

- ◆ **Naturalistic explanations:** Explanations of behaviour that claim that there is a natural or 'normal' way to behave eg it is only natural that men and women fall in love and marry.
- ◆ **Individualistic explanations:** Social behaviour and particularly social problems are caused by individual traits eg poverty is caused by laziness, stupidity or failure to work hard in school.

Research methods

- ◆ **Data:** Evidence gathered by undertaking research.
- ◆ **Qualitative data:** Data that is descriptive of people's experiences or feelings.
- ◆ **Quantitative data:** Data that is numerical or that can be counted and presented in numerical format.
- ◆ **Reliability:** The likelihood that the same or very similar results would be gained if the research were replicated.
- ◆ **Research methods:** Recognised methods of gathering evidence to test a research question, eg surveys, interviews, observation, experiments.
- ◆ **Validity:** The extent to which the study measures or investigates what it claims to.

Unit: Culture and Identity

- ◆ **Culture:** Beliefs, behaviours and shared characteristics of a particular group in society. Cultural aspects include music, literature, styles or modes of dress, behaviour, rules, institutions (eg family, religion, work, health care), language, values and norms.
- ◆ **Cultural diversity:** The presence of a variety of cultures in society. Respecting and valuing cultural diversity is the opposite of ethnocentrism.
- ◆ **Subculture:** A culture within a broad or mainstream culture that has different beliefs, values or practices.
- ◆ **Ethnocentrism:** The tendency to judge other cultures and norms based on one's own cultural system making the assumption that one's own culture is 'normal' or superior and others are strange, wrong or inferior.
- ◆ **Identity:** In sociology identity refers to distinctive characteristics belonging to an individual or group of individuals in a particular social category or group. It describes a person's sense of group affiliation eg 'national identity', 'religious identity' or 'cultural identity'. Identity is formed through identification with people and groups that are significant to the individual (ie significant others).
- ◆ **Norms:** Rules of behaviour and ideas that are considered 'normal' within a particular social group or culture. Norms tend to reflect the values of the group.
- ◆ **Power:** The ability to control ones environment and the behaviour of others. Power can be held in a range of ways eg gender power, roles that hold authority, personal charisma, social class, expertise, moral or religious persuasion and force.
- ◆ **Roles:** A set of expected behaviours and actions based on a particular social position or status. Individuals normally have a number of different social roles that demand different behaviours or attitudes. We become adept at moving from one role to another over the course of days and throughout a lifetime eg a woman may be a mother, sister, daughter, teacher, manager, consumer, team member, committee member and friend. In each of these roles she will behave differently and will shift from one to another without difficulty.
- ◆ **Sources:** Information relevant to the given topic. These can be selected from media articles, books, diaries, government records, official documents and sociological studies.
- ◆ **Primary sources:** Data collected by the researcher and her or his team using research methods.
- ◆ **Secondary sources:** Information not personally collected by the researcher
- ◆ **Social group:** Any group of people that interact and identify with one another and share similar characteristics or norms.
- ◆ **Socialisation:** The process by which individuals learn the norms and values of their culture and expected behaviours within these norms. There are various agencies of socialisation at work in this process.
- ◆ **Agencies of socialisation:** The family is the primary agency of socialisation where an infant learns the basics of social behaviour eg eating, toileting, dressing and cleanliness. Secondary agencies of socialisation include education, peer groups, religious organisations, the media and work places.
- ◆ **Values:** Shared ideas within a social group or culture about what is right, good, fair and just.

Unit: Social issues

- ◆ **Sources:** Information relevant to the given topic. These can be selected from media articles, books, diaries, government records, official documents and sociological studies.
- ◆ **Primary sources:** Data collected by the researcher and her or his team using research methods.
- ◆ **Secondary sources:** Information not personally collected by the researcher

Note on using Sources: In Outcome 1 learners should select and use evidence from sources such as media reports, government statistics and personal accounts to help describe a form of social inequality. It is important that the description given by the learner makes reference to the sources and gives an account of their content rather than including them as they are without further explanation.

Sociological Theories:

- ◆ **Theories:** Theories in sociology explain social behaviour and the social world. Theories are tested by using sociological research and scholarly debate.
- ◆ This Unit allows for a free choice of theories.
- ◆ **Action theories:** Symbolic interactionism, Phenomenology, Social Action theory
- ◆ **Structural theories:** Functionalist and New Right theories (consensus theories), Marxist, Neo Marxist, Feminist theories (conflict theories)
- ◆ **Postmodern social theories:** By its nature post modernism resists definition and categorization. Postmodern theories tend to challenge and question the very basis of sociological ideas and theories. At National 5: Care should be taken not to confuse learners yet at the same time some reference to post modern thought may be necessary, especially in bi-level teaching.

Administrative information

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Superclass: to be advised

History of changes to Course Support Notes

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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Unit Support Notes — Sociology: Human Society (National 5)



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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 provide advice and guidance to support the delivery of the Human Society (National 5) Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering the Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the Unit Specification
- ◆ the Course Specification
- ◆ the Course Assessment Specification
- ◆ the Course Support Notes
- ◆ the template and guidance for Unit Assessment Exemplification

If the *Unit Support Notes* have been developed for a Unit which is not part of a Course, then it is only necessary to read them in conjunction with the *Unit Specification*.

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to develop learners' understanding of the sociological approach to studying human societies. Learners will investigate the research methods used in sociology, and will describe the relationships that exist amongst individuals, groups and institutions from different sociological perspectives.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

- 1. Explain the sociological approach to understanding society**
 - 1.1. Distinguishing between common sense and sociological explanations of social behaviour
 - 1.2. Describing basic features and one advantage and one disadvantage of two different research methods which tend to generate quantitative data
 - 1.3. Describing basic features and one advantage and one disadvantage of two different research methods which tend to generate qualitative data
 - 1.4. Selecting research methods favoured by sociologists adopting structural and action perspectives
- 2. Explain the relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions**
 - 2.1. Explaining the structural perspective, using the concept of structure
 - 2.2. Explaining the action perspective, using the concept of social action
 - 2.3. Describing two differences between structural and action perspectives

Course Aims	Development of aims within this Unit
Develop an understanding of society through gaining knowledge and understanding of basic sociological perspectives and theories	Responsible citizenship involves being open to different ideas and an ability to see things from different points of view. Different sociological perspectives and theories open the learner's mind to new ways of thinking about society.
Develop an understanding that sociology challenges 'common sense' explanations about human social behaviour	This equips the learner with the ability to consider social behaviour with objectivity and is linked to responsible citizenship. It introduces the learner to Sociology as a discipline, unleashing the 'sociological imagination'.
Raise awareness of cultural and social diversity and the significance of relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions	Personalisation and choice in the Unit means that learning can draw on a familiar and some unfamiliar cultural and social contexts that are relevant to the learners' interests and needs. This enables learners to have a better understanding of the world we live in.

Raise awareness of the role of sources of information, research evidence and research methods used in sociology	Opportunities to develop confidence in using relevant sources of information and research evidence to explain human social behaviour will help to develop successful learners. These skills are transferrable to other areas of study and work.
Develop basic investigation skills to select, organise and interpret information	Learners develop the ability to investigate issues and consider the insight offered by the sociological approach and its perspectives and theories. This enables the learner to develop sociologically considered opinions.
Develop thinking and communication skills used in sociology	Developing the ability to communicate their own and others' experiences of social life and views of the world enables learners to become more effective contributors and more confident individuals. It also equips the learner with skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

Progression into this Unit

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

- ◆ National 4 People and Society Course or component Units
- ◆ National 4 Modern Studies Course or component Units

In terms of prior learning and experience, relevant experiences and outcomes may also provide an appropriate basis for doing this Unit. As the Unit deals with abstract concepts and looks at research methods that address adult societal relationships, centres may wish to consider the learner's maturity and ability to engage with sensitive issues.

Centres wishing to establish the suitability of learners without prior qualifications and/or experiences and outcomes may benefit from carrying out a diagnostic review of prior life and work experiences. This approach may be particularly useful for adult returners to education.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in the Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the National 5 Sociology Course Support Notes.

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

The table below offers an outline of opportunities for the development of skills knowledge and understanding in this Unit. Further information is given in the approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.

Skills knowledge and understanding	Opportunities for development in this Unit
Identifying and describing basic differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human social behaviour	Developing a sociological imagination is at the core of this Unit — for example the ability to distinguish between a range of non-sociological and sociological explanations. Learners could use a variety of real life examples to discuss how sociological and common-sense approaches would explain them.
Understanding society by describing sociological perspectives, theories and concepts	Two broad sociological perspectives, structural and action perspectives are introduced in this Unit. Gaining an understanding of these two major perspectives can be achieved through discussion and encouraging learners to apply both perspectives to describe social relationships.
Describing the sociological significance of relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions	
Using investigation skills to find appropriate sources of information	There are opportunities to source and discuss a range of information drawn from both primary and secondary sources. The difference between information and evidence can be discussed, introducing the concepts of validity and reliability.
Organising and interpreting information in sociology	Learners can work co-operatively to make sense of information and develop an ability to explain and structure information taken from a variety of sources, for example reputable media

	articles or government statistics.
Describing the main research methods used in sociology	Understanding the sociological approach includes learning about research methods. Learners' knowledge can be developed through real life examples of the research methods used in sociological studies. Where mock research is carried out as a teaching and learning approach, ethical issues must be considered.
Using sociological explanations for human social behaviour	Learners can become confident in using their knowledge of terminology and their sociological understanding to explain social behaviour by having opportunities to discuss this with others. This may be in class or using ICT.
Using knowledge and understanding of research and evidence to support explanations	There are opportunities in this Unit to look at examples of data and research findings. Learners could be encouraged to consider the source of evidence and the reliability of both the source and the evidence. This will help learners to develop evaluative skills and offer more effective explanations.
Communicating sociologically informed views	Learners can be supported to develop a range of communication skills using a variety of different formats. For example, oral presentation skills may be developed by means of individual or group presentation.

Progression from this Unit

The *Human Society* Unit has relevance to many other subject areas as well as life and work. The skills, knowledge and understanding developed in this Unit could therefore support both vertical and lateral progression in other curriculum areas as well as life and work contexts. This unit would provide progression to the other component units of the National 5 Sociology course – *Social Issues* and *Culture and Identity*. Other progression options could include:

- ◆ Higher Sociology or relevant component Units
- ◆ other SQA qualifications in social studies, social science or related areas at SCQF level 5 or Higher

- ◆ further study, training or employment in areas such as police, health, education, care, human resource services or voluntary sectors

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

Overarching guidance

A wide variety of learning and teaching approaches can be used to deliver this Unit. This section of the Unit Support Notes provides advice and guidance and some examples of approaches that could be used. At all times, teachers/lecturers should provide opportunities for personalisation and choice to ensure that learning is relevant and motivating. Where possible, learning should be relevant to the learners' domestic and everyday life, their overall learning programme and/or work and leisure.

Sequencing and timing

The *Human Society* Unit consists of two Outcomes which can be taught and assessed in a variety of ways. Outcome 1 offers an introduction to sociology as a discipline and so may be the best place to start. Both Outcomes can be delivered within the time allowed for the study of the Unit, with ample time for exemplification. Alternatively a holistic approach may be taken by explaining research methods favoured by different perspectives.

Possible approaches to learning and teaching

A rich and supportive learning environment should be provided to enable learners to achieve the best they can. This could include approaches which include:

- ◆ Development of critical thinking skills
- ◆ Asking learners to explain or show their thinking
- ◆ Collaborative and independent learning
- ◆ Discussion around new concepts and how they can be applied
- ◆ Using technology where appropriate
- ◆ Learners planning and/or participating in real-life activities involving sociological research methods

Examples of learning and teaching contexts and opportunities

Explain the sociological approach to understanding society

This should challenge 'common-sense' or personal opinion, both of which construct explanations of human behaviour in terms of naturalistic and/or individualistic assumptions. This could be done through exemplification, which should come from contexts familiar to the learner. Simple definitions of naturalistic and individualistic explanations should be given.

Common-sense and sociological approaches can be exemplified using crime/deviance or unemployment/poverty or other relevant issues. A common-sense approach could focus on popular media examples or anecdotal 'evidence' of personal experience. A sociological approach would consider statistical evidence, research evidence, and trends and changes over time. Using a common-sense approach, unemployment and poverty could be seen as inevitable or due to individual faults; though a sociological approach could look at

national and international economic policies and the relative power of those who take decisions which result in increased unemployment and poverty for others.

This will involve outlining what is meant by sociology as a study of society; and ways in which sociologists attempt to carry out this work.

This Outcome is intended to establish the foundations of understanding in relation to sociological information and to distinguish it from 'common-sense' or personal opinion.

The quantitative research methods which may be considered could include: postal questionnaires; structured interviews, surveys and official statistics. The advantages and disadvantages should relate to the likelihood of the research method to produce reliable and valid results considering time, cost, ease, sample size, depth, breadth or nature of enquiry.

The qualitative research methods considered could include: unstructured interviews, case studies, visual images such as documentaries, participant and non participant observation. The advantages and disadvantages should relate to the likelihood of the research method to produce reliable and valid results considering time, cost, ease, sample size, depth, breadth or nature of enquiry.

Research methods are crucial to an understanding of the sociological approach, and should be introduced as part of the examination of the nature of sociology. Learners should be aware that different sociological perspectives may favour different research methods. The quantitative methods should be regarded individually and by looking at the commonality of empirical research. Although surveys can often be viewed as synonymous with postal questionnaires and structured interviews, they can be distinct and form a separate method, particularly when the subjects do not need to respond, such as behavioural analysis in a street which covertly records movement, choices and other behaviour. Qualitative methods are varied and there are many examples. Documentaries could be viewed and the various ways of conducting unstructured or semi-structured interviews, such as focus groups. Experiential learning by conducting mock research could be utilised.

Explain relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions

Consideration of the structural perspective should introduce the ways of examining and explaining human social behaviour which emphasise the importance of structures and institutions in shaping society and influencing behaviour. This should be exemplified using both consensual contexts which show how structures can be seen as working to benefit society as a whole; and conflicting contexts which show how structures can be used to the detriment of groups in society.

Consideration of the action perspective should introduce the ways of examining and explaining human social behaviour which emphasise the importance of individual actions in shaping society and institutions. This should be exemplified by looking at the development of the Action perspective and relating it to contemporary social settings.

It would normally be expected that considerable learning and teaching will have taken place prior to the assessment evidence being collected. Learners should have successfully completed tasks and exercises of a similar demand to those in the assessment. In other words, the assessor must be confident that the learner is ready for, and can achieve, the assessment.

Assessment could be done as part of the learning and teaching programme or as a discrete activity. The assessment could be carried out as a single event, or it may be broken up into smaller, more manageable chunks. In this case care must be taken to avoid duplication of evidence and potential over-assessment.

Suggested assessment activities could include:

- ◆ Specific assessment tasks
- ◆ Practical Assignment
- ◆ Practical Activities
- ◆ Oral questioning using a recording or transcript as evidence
- ◆ Observation using an observation checklist or video recording as evidence
- ◆ Learning and teaching activities which provide naturally occurring opportunities for assessment

It is recommended that all evidence generated by the learner is kept together and in a secure place. This can be done by creating and providing the learner with a workbook or portfolio. Where possible, opportunities to collect and store evidence electronically could be used.

Opportunities for extension, revision and consolidation of skills and knowledge should be built into this Unit; how this is organised will depend on the needs of the learners and the teaching approach used.

Assessment of this Unit will focus on establishing the learner's understanding of the Outcomes. Specifically this would mean:

- ◆ Describing common-sense approaches, explaining the sociological approach and distinguishing between the two. This could be accomplished by using a short scenario paragraph from which learners need to identify the different approaches, going into more depth to explain the sociological approach.
- ◆ Describing the features of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Giving advantages and disadvantages of named (studied) research methods. This could include naming a method and asking what sort of data it tended to produce.
- ◆ Explaining Structural and Action perspectives. This could be accomplished by using a short scenario paragraph from which learners use Sociological perspective to explain the scenario.

There is scope within this Unit to vary learning and teaching approaches and to exercise personalisation and choice. Assessment methods may also take a variety of formats but the evidence must clearly show that the assessment standards have been met.

Possible approaches to assessment and generating evidence of progress

Evidence of progress can be gathered throughout the Unit. Co-operative learning groups could offer opportunities for shared evaluation of examples of research studies. Learners should always be clear about what they are trying to learn and what is expected of them. Regular feedback about the quality of work is an important factor in making progress towards Unit Assessment. Structured tasks could be used to enable self -assessment and peer -assessment.

For information on assessment and reassessment, teachers and lecturers should refer to [SQA's Guide to Assessment, available on the SQA website](#).

Combining assessment within Units

Centres may deliver the learning and teaching of the unit in a holistic, integrated fashion. The two Outcomes in this Unit encompass a set of coherent Assessment Standards designed to make it possible to assess learning as a whole. A holistic approach to assessment will enrich the assessment process for the learner, avoid duplication of assessment, provide more time for learning and teaching and allow centres to manage the assessment process more efficiently. Evidence may be therefore be gathered for the Unit as a whole through one assessment and a single context or by using different assessments and more than one context for each Outcome. Whichever approach is used, it must be clear how the evidence covers each Outcome.

Learners' readiness for assessment can be established through learning logs as described earlier. Learners can keep brief records of what they feel secure about and what they need to work on. This approach can be useful in developing autonomous learning. Informal peer assessment can also be used in this context.

For verification purposes it is necessary to retain evidence for the Unit only. However, additional evidence may be useful for confirming assessment judgements. It is therefore recommended that all evidence generated by the learner over a period of time is kept together in a secure place. Where resources permit, there could be opportunities to collect and store evidence electronically thereby opening up more opportunities to develop ICT skills.

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

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work in this Unit, is given in the *Sociology Course Support Notes*.

Equality and inclusion

Learners undertaking this Unit communicate their sociological understanding; however, communication could be written, oral, diagrammatic or electronic.

In this Unit there may be issues raised which may be controversial or sensitive. Teachers should consider the skills and experience of the learners and ensure that topics are studied objectively and free from bias or prejudice.

Centres, teachers and learners should be aware of current British Sociological Association ethical guidelines and adhere to ethical standards when discussing and making decisions relating to sociological research.

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

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment which take account of the specific needs of learners can be used, provided the centre is 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 on SQA’s website: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html>
- ◆ *Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work*
- ◆ *Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment*
- ◆ *Course Specifications*
- ◆ *Design Principles for National Courses*
- ◆ *Guide to Assessment (June 2008)*
- ◆ *Overview of Qualification Reports*
- ◆ *Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas*
- ◆ *Research Report 4 — Less is More: Good Practice in Reducing Assessment Time*
- ◆ *Coursework Authenticity — a Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*
- ◆ *SCQF Handbook: User Guide (published 2009) and SCQF level descriptors (to be reviewed during 2012 to 2012):* www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html
- ◆ *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*
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education
- ◆ SQA e-assessment web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html

Administrative information

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Superclass: to be advised

History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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Unit Support Notes — Sociology: Culture and Identity (National 5)



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Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *Culture and Identity* 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* (Courses at National 5 and above) or *Added Value Unit Specification* (Courses at National 4)
- ◆ the *Course Support Notes*
- ◆ appropriate assessment support materials

If the *Unit Support Notes* have been developed for a Unit which is not part of a Course, then it is only necessary to read them in conjunction with the *Unit Specification*.

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to equip learners with a basic knowledge and understanding of how to use sociological concepts to explain culture and identity. Learners will investigate and explain the relationship between culture and identity and develop skills in collecting, using and communicating information from a range of sources. Learning in this Unit will raise awareness of diversity.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

Explain culture and identity by:

- 1.1 Describing the concepts of culture, sub-culture identity and diversity
- 1.2 Explaining the process of socialisation
- 1.3 Using evidence from a range of sources to investigate the relationship between socialisation and identity.
- 1.4 Giving an explanation of culture and identity that reflects awareness of diversity

Course Aims	Development of aims within this Unit
Develop an understanding of society through gaining knowledge and understanding of basic sociological perspectives, theories and concepts	<p>Learning about different sociological concepts and theoretical understanding helps develop objectivity. This will equip learners to develop an understanding of the complex nature of society. This is essential for the development of responsible citizenship.</p> <p>Learners will become competent in using sociological concepts to explain aspects of culture and identity, which are of interest to them.</p>
Develop an understanding that sociology challenges 'common sense' explanations about human social behaviour	<p>There will be many opportunities to examine common sense explanations about social behaviour when describing the concepts of culture, sub-culture identity and diversity as well as the process of socialisation.</p> <p>Learning how sociology questions taken-for-granted assumptions helps to develop confident individuals and successful learners.</p>

<p>Raise awareness of cultural and social diversity and the significance of relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions</p>	<p>Developing an awareness of cultural and social diversity is central to this unit and learners will be expected to consider their own and others' cultural experiences in a sociologically informed way.</p> <p>Focussing on the process of socialisation to investigate how identities are formed will further enhance awareness of diversity while also promoting the development of a range of investigation skills that will promote successful learning.</p>
<p>Raise awareness of the role of sources of information, research evidence and research methods used in sociology</p>	<p>Learning how to find and effectively use information from a range of sources will enable learners to compare sources of information in terms of bias which can enhance learners' understanding of objectivity.</p> <p>If learning is based on topics and issues around culture and identity in which the learners themselves have an interest then this helps to promote an active learning environment in which effective contribution is encouraged.</p>
<p>Develop basic investigation skills to select, organise and interpret information</p>	<p>Learning how to find and appropriately interpret information will support learners when they are preparing to present an explanation of culture and identity.</p> <p>Interpreting information from a range of sources to investigate the relationship between socialisation and identity will help to develop basic evaluative and analytical skills which will be of benefit to learners if they progress onto further academic study.</p>
<p>Develop thinking and communication skills used in sociology</p>	<p>Throughout the unit learners are likely to have communicated their own and listened to others' experiences of socialisation and cultural processes.</p> <p>This learning will have presented many</p>

	opportunities to raise awareness and communicate views of social and cultural diversity.
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Progression into this Unit

To undertake this unit learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills and knowledge required by one or more of the following or by equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ People and Society (National 4) Course or component Units
- ◆ Modern Studies (National 4) course or Component Units
- ◆ Equivalent Courses or relevant Units at SCQF level 4

A level of maturity and independent thought will be required to undertake the *Culture and Identity* (National 5) Unit and it is recognised that life experience can be a valid preparation. Successful completion of a broad general education would also prepare learners to further develop the skills required to investigate and understand the implications of cultural diversity. The ability to consider ideas from a range of different perspectives, to engage in some level of abstract thought, and to reflect on one's own experiences and beliefs in the light of alternative opinions and lifestyles, will be encouraged throughout the Unit. Consequently, learners undertaking this Unit should be able to demonstrate the ability to do this or the aptitude to develop these skills.

Centres wishing to establish the suitability of learners without prior qualifications and/or experiences and outcomes may benefit from carrying out a diagnostic review of prior life and work experiences. This approach may be particularly useful for adult returners to education.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in the Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the National 5 Sociology Course Support Notes.

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.

The table below offers an outline of opportunities for the development of skills knowledge and understanding in this Unit. Further information is given in the approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.

Skills, knowledge and understanding	Opportunities for development in this Unit
Identifying and describing basic differences between sociological and common-sense explanations of human social behaviour	When discussing aspects of culture and identity, there are opportunities to consider common-sense viewpoints and sociological perspectives.
Understanding society by describing sociological perspectives, theories and concepts	Through describing and investigating a range of issues and concepts around culture and identity, learners will be able to develop their understanding of a range of sociological concepts that will help them to develop an understanding of the complex nature of society.
Describing the sociological significance of relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions	Learners are introduced to sociological concepts in this Unit. As links between culture and identity are explored, there are opportunities to look at diversity in relationships at different levels in society, between and within cultures.
Using investigation skills to find appropriate sources of information	Within the Culture and Identity unit learners will use a range of sources to investigate the relationship between socialisation and identity. When using these investigative skills learners should be encouraged to show awareness of diversity.
Organising and interpreting information in sociology	Learners can be encouraged to collect, discuss and interpret examples of culture and identity from media or life events. Learners could be supported to develop basic evaluative skills in reviewing the information they have collected.
Describing the main research methods used in sociology	Sources of information are used to investigate the relationship between socialisation and identity. Sources can

	include primary and secondary sources, and may be drawn from media examples or published research. There are opportunities to discuss the quality of evidence in terms of what would be considered valid and reliable evidence when explaining aspects of culture and identity.
Using sociological explanations for human social behaviour	When describing and explaining the concepts of culture, sub-culture, identity, socialisation and diversity, learners can be encouraged to use a range of sociological understanding.
Using knowledge and understanding of research and evidence to support explanations	Through collecting, interpreting and evaluating (at a basic level) sources of research and evidence, learners can be supported to use their knowledge to support explanations of culture and identity and to communicate their views in a sociologically informed way that demonstrates an awareness of diversity.
Communicating sociologically informed views	

In this Unit learners develop an understanding of basic sociological concepts, including primary and secondary socialisation, values, norms, roles, culture, sub-culture, identity and diversity. Learners will develop an understanding of how an individual's identity can be related to their experiences of socialisation. This knowledge should enable learners to develop a deeper understanding of their own social world. Learners will also develop skills in collecting and interpreting information from a range of sources to investigate culture and identity. They will develop presentation skills when providing an explanation of culture and identity that reflects an awareness of diversity.

Suitable contexts in which the content could be developed are detailed in the section titled: 'Approaches to Teaching, Learning and Assessment'.

Progression from this Unit

The *Culture and Identity* Unit has relevance to many other subject areas as well as life and work. The skills, knowledge and understanding developed in this Unit could therefore support both vertical and lateral progression in other curriculum areas as well as life and work contexts. This unit would provide progression to the other component units of the National 5 Sociology course – *Exploring Human Societies* and *Social Issues*. Other progression options could include:

- ◆ Sociology (Higher) or relevant component Units
- ◆ other SQA qualifications in social studies, social science or related areas at SCQF level 5 or Higher
- ◆ further study, training
- ◆ employment in areas such as police, health, education, care, human resource services or voluntary sectors

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

Overarching guidance

A wide variety of learning and teaching approaches can be used to deliver the *Culture and Identity* Unit. This section of the Unit Support Notes provides advice and guidance and some examples of approaches that could be used.

At all times, teachers/lecturers should provide opportunities for personalisation and choice to ensure that learning is relevant and motivating. Learning should build on, and be sensitive towards, learners' life experiences. Approaches to learning and teaching should provide varied opportunities for learners to reflect on and at times question some of their commonly-held beliefs. This could be challenging and rewarding for learners as well as teachers/lecturers.

The Outcome and Assessment Standards state minimum requirements. However, it is expected that teaching will normally cover a wider range than the minimum required to pass the Unit assessment.

A single outcome should allow for a degree of personalisation and opportunities for integration with the other mandatory Units in the National 5 Sociology Course. It may also facilitate dual level teaching within the hierarchy. Integration of learning across Units will provide useful opportunities for learners who are undertaking the complete National 5 Sociology Course to develop and practice knowledge and skills required for Course assessment.

Further information on integration of learning and teaching across the mandatory Units is contained the National 5 Sociology *Course Support Notes*.

Sequencing and timing

The *Culture and Identity* Unit consists of one Outcome, which can be delivered and assessed in a variety of ways to promote personalisation and choice. The sequencing and timing of the mandatory content is less significant than the actual knowledge and understanding of the sociological concepts and the investigative and presentation skills that the learner will develop.

A holistic approach to learning and teaching would be appropriate. Opportunities to motivate learners to understand complex or sensitive social issues linked to culture and identity may be more easily understood by learners if topics or themes of contemporary relevance are identified and investigated by them.

Possible approaches to learning and teaching

A rich and supportive learning environment should be provided to enable a learner to achieve the best they can. This could include approaches covering:

- ◆ Development of investigating skills which with involve collecting information from a range of sources
- ◆ Development of strategies relating to planning and presenting information

- ◆ Encouraging learners to reflect on and explain their experiences or ideas
- ◆ Discussion around new concepts and how they can be understood and applied
- ◆ Collaborative and independent learning
- ◆ Using technology where appropriate

Examples of learning and teaching contexts and opportunities

Explain culture and identity

Possible discussion and activities:

Reflection and discussion of learner's own socialisation experiences (norms, values, customs); sense of own identity; social identities linked to gender, age, disability, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality and social class; links to wider aspects of culture – popular culture, youth culture, high culture; widening cultural awareness and discussion through a range of stimulus material eg TV documentaries or sociological studies that provide examples of cultures and subcultures or discussions of ideas to introduce ideas around concepts; for example diversity, ethnicity or ethnocentrism.

Learners could work collaboratively or independently to investigate, with support, a range of sources when developing their understanding of the relationship between socialisation and identity. Learners could be supported to develop an awareness and appreciation of diversity by taking advantage of any opportunity to highlight the dangers of ethnocentric views throughout the learning and teaching in this unit. This would help learners to develop an awareness and appreciation of diversity when preparing to explain culture and identity.

Learners could work individually or in groups to explain the relationship of identity to gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexuality or social class. They could examine any or all of these relationships using a diverse range of sources which could include news items, media articles, TV programmes, case studies or even role play. In collating and investigating evidence it is important that learners are able to make links between the socialisation process and ways in which people develop their identities through their cultural experiences. Learners could explain culture and identity in any way they choose and present their information in a format which best suits their own skills or the topic being studied. It is important that in developing their explanations of culture and identity learners are encouraged to begin to develop their 'sociological imagination'.

Learners could work in groups to investigate the influence of different agents of socialisation on identity formation. They could present evidence from a range of sources including music or fashion to investigate and illustrate the relationship between socialisation and identity. The concepts of culture, sub-culture and diversity could flow well from this, but as mentioned in the Course Support Notes, when learners are afforded a high level of personalisation in their learning, it is important that teachers/lecturers are actively involved in supporting learners to

make links which can help them to develop sociologically informed views that reflect an awareness of diversity.

Possible approaches to assessment and generating evidence of progress

If a centre has delivered the learning and teaching of the Unit in a holistic, integrated fashion, the assessment approach could also be holistic. A holistic approach to assessment will enrich the assessment process for the learner, avoid duplication of assessment, and provide more time for learning and teaching, thereby allowing centres to manage the assessment process more efficiently

Learning, teaching and preparation for assessment of this Unit could focus on the learner demonstrating accurate knowledge and understanding of the basic sociological concepts used to explain culture and identity. Activities could focus on skills which provide evidence of:

- ◆ Describing a range of sociological concepts, including culture, sub-culture, identity and diversity
- ◆ Explaining the processes of primary/secondary socialisation and agents of socialisation
- ◆ Understanding relationships between identity formation and experiences of the socialisation process. Activities focusing on this aspect of the Unit should support awareness of diversity and challenge stereotypes.

If the Culture and Identity Unit is being completed as part of the National 5 Sociology Course, naturally occurring evidence gathered from learning and teaching throughout the Unit could enable learners to show and further develop the skills, knowledge and understanding required for the two components of the Course assessment (Question Paper and an Assignment).

It would normally be expected that considerable learning and teaching will have taken place prior to the assessment evidence being collected. Learners should have successfully completed tasks and exercises of a similar demand to those in the assessment. In other words the assessor must be confident that the learner is ready for and can achieve the assessment.

If the unit assessment is designed as an evidence portfolio or a project, it is recommended that all evidence generated by the learner over a period of time is kept together in a secure place. With this approach there could be opportunities to collect and store evidence electronically thereby opening up more opportunities to develop ICT skills

For information on assessment and reassessment, please refer [to SQA's Guide to Assessment, available on the SQA website.](#)

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

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work in this Unit, is given in the National 5 Sociology *Course Support Notes*.

Combining assessment within Units

There is one outcome in this Unit. This is designed to promote a holistic, integrated learning experience. Ideally the assessment approach should also be holistic. A holistic approach to assessment will enrich the assessment process for the learner, avoid duplication of assessment and provide more time for learning and teaching, thereby allowing centres to manage the assessment process more efficiently. This approach may also allow time for learners to be supported more effectively in terms of personalisation and choice.

Equality and inclusion

Learners undertaking this Unit will be required to communicate their sociological understanding. However, communication could be written, oral, diagrammatic or electronic.

In this Unit there may be issues raised which may be controversial or sensitive. Teachers should consider the skills and experience of the learners and ensure that topics are studied objectively and free from bias or prejudice.

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

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment which take account of the specific needs of learners can be used, provided the centre is 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 on SQA’s website: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html>
- ◆ *Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work*
- ◆ *Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment*
- ◆ *Course Specifications*
- ◆ *Design Principles for National Courses*
- ◆ *Guide to Assessment (June 2008)*
- ◆ *Overview of Qualification Reports*
- ◆ *Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas*
- ◆ *Research Report 4 — Less is More: Good Practice in Reducing Assessment Time*
- ◆ *Coursework Authenticity — a Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*
- ◆ *SCQF Handbook: User Guide (published 2009)* and SCQF level descriptors (to be reviewed during 2012 to 2012): www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html
- ◆ *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*
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education
- ◆ SQA e-assessment web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html

Administrative information

Published: April 2012 (version 1.0)

Superclass: to be advised

History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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Unit Support Notes — Sociology: Social Issues (National 5)



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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 Social Issues 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* (Courses at National 5 and above) or *Added Value Unit Specification* (Courses at National 4)
- ◆ the *Course Support Notes*
- ◆ appropriate assessment support materials

If the *Unit Support Notes* have been developed for a Unit which is not part of a Course, then it is only necessary to read them in conjunction with the *Unit Specification*.

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to develop learners' sociological understanding of contemporary social issues. Learners will develop knowledge of sociological theories and terminology used to explain social issues. Learners will develop skills in using a range of sources, including research evidence, to justify points of view.

On completion of this Unit learners will be able to:

- 1. Explain social issues by:**
 - 1.1 Describing a contemporary social issue with reference to evidence from different sources
 - 1.2 Explaining the social issue using two sociological theories, one of which takes a structural perspective
 - 1.3 Describing one similarity and two differences in how the theories explain the chosen social issue

- 2. Apply research evidence to gain a sociological understanding of social issues by:**
 - 2.1 Explaining the role of research evidence in sociology
 - 2.2 Interpreting research evidence and using this to support sociological explanations of a contemporary social issue

Course Aims	Development of aims within this Unit
Develop an understanding of society through gaining knowledge and understanding of basic sociological perspectives, theories and concepts.	In this Unit learners will explore the way that different sociological theories can be used to explain a social issue. By doing this learners will develop skills in using objective evidence, rather than personal opinion, to support an explanation. This skill will be helpful in a range of learning and work settings.
Develop an understanding that sociology challenges 'common-sense' explanations about social behaviour.	
Raise awareness of cultural and social diversity and the significance of relationships amongst individuals,	The development of knowledge and understanding will increase learners' confidence and enable them to communicate more effectively.

groups and institutions.	
Raise awareness of the role of sources of information, research evidence and research methods used in sociology.	Responsible citizenship can be nurtured by developing the learners' ability to understand social relationships at a deeper level. Examining social issues from different social and cultural viewpoints will develop respect and discourage ethnocentrism.
Develop basic investigation skills to select, organise and interpret information.	The ability to use information and research evidence are life skills that will benefit learners in other aspects of learning and life. Examining a range of different sources will encourage comparison and basic evaluation skills.
Develop thinking and communication skills used in sociology.	Effective communication can be developed through opportunities to share knowledge and sociological understanding. Presenting explanations of social issues and understanding gained from examining and interpreting research evidence will develop communication skills and encourage co-operative learning where different topics and/or sources have been chosen.

Progression into this Unit

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

- ◆ National 4 People and Society Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ National 4 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 Unit.

Whilst the skills and knowledge gained from Social Science (National 4) courses would be a useful preparation for this Unit, it is recognised that students with life experience and a desire to understand how society works may have the necessary skills to benefit from this Unit. Maturity and independence of thought

and openness to new ideas are required along with the ability to express sociological explanations in straightforward terms.

Centres wishing to establish the suitability of learners without prior qualifications and/or experiences and outcomes may benefit from carrying out a diagnostic review of prior life and work experiences. This approach may be particularly useful for adult returners to education.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in the Unit

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

Note: teachers and lecturers should refer to the *Course Assessment Specification* and the *Unit Specification* for further mandatory information about the skills, knowledge and understanding relating to this Unit.

The skills, knowledge and understanding developed in this Unit will prepare learners for further study in Social Sciences. Analytical thinking can be encouraged by contrasting ideas and discussing the relative merits of different ideas and arguments. Learners can also be encouraged to move beyond individualistic evaluation of ideas towards more objective thinking. Thinking and communication skills developed in this Unit also have a wider application to life and work.

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

Where the Unit is being taught as part of National 5 Sociology Course, the mandatory topic for this Unit is Social Inequality.

The table below offers an outline of opportunities for the development of skills knowledge and understanding in this Unit. Further information is given in the approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.

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

Skills, knowledge and understanding	Opportunities for development in this Unit
identifying and describing basic differences between sociological and common sense explanations of human social behaviour	By discussing the relative merits of sources of information and discussing the extent to which it offers an objective view learners can further explore the difference between common-sense and sociological explanations.
understanding society by describing sociological perspectives, theories and concepts	Learners taking the full Sociology 5 Course will have had the two broad perspectives (structural and action perspectives) introduced in the <i>Human Society</i> Unit. The focus of this unit is theories and the role of research evidence but learners should have opportunities to develop an understanding of the relationship of theories to perspectives. Learners can apply this learning when using different theories to explain the chosen social issue. Reference to the different perspectives and the theories that spring from them will clarify and extend learning.
describing the sociological significance of relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions	When exploring the meaning of inequality learners can further develop their understanding of social and cultural identity, especially when discussing economic inequality. Differences in lifestyle, social habits and life chances within different groups in society can be examined and discussion about the significance of these differences in taking a sociological approach can further develop this understanding.
Using investigation skills to find appropriate sources of information	Sources of information at National 5 (Social Issues) can include media reports, research evidence, national statistics and theoretical explanations. Gathering relevant evidence for a chosen Social Issue develops investigative skills. Where sources are prepared in advance these should include a wide range of different sources relevant to different social issues and topics so that investigative skills are appropriately developed. Learners can be asked to justify their choice in a group or class discussion.
Organising and interpreting information in sociology.	Learners can work co-operatively to make sense of information and develop an ability to evaluate information by discussing its relative merits and the extent to which it gives an objective view of the chosen topic.

Describing the main research methods used in sociology.	Learners' knowledge can be developed through real life examples of the research methods used in Sociology.
Using sociological explanations for human social behaviour	Examining social Issues will often include consideration of human social behaviour. Learners can further develop an understanding of how theories are useful in explaining social behaviour by considering different theoretical ideas and the extent to which it is helpful in explaining and understanding social behaviour.
Using knowledge and understanding of research and evidence to support explanations	Learners can practice interpretation of research evidence by working with charts and other graphical representation of evidence. Reading an outline of an existing research study and explaining the main findings in the learner's own words will also help develop skills in using sociological understanding.
communicating sociologically informed views	In class activities and naturally occurring evidence, learners can be supported to communicate using a variety of different formats.

Progression from this Unit

The *Social Issues* Unit has relevance to many other subject areas as well as life and work. The skills, knowledge and understanding developed in this Unit could therefore support both vertical and lateral progression in other curriculum areas as well as life and work contexts. This unit would provide progression to the other component units of the National 5 Sociology course – *Exploring Human Societies* and *Culture and Identity*. Other progression options could include:

- ◆ Higher Sociology or relevant component Units
- ◆ other SQA qualifications in social studies, social science or related areas at SCQF level 5 or Higher
- ◆ further study, training
- ◆ employment in areas such as police, health, education, care, human resource services or voluntary sectors

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

The purpose of this section is to provide general advice and guidance on approaches to learning and teaching.

Overarching guidance

A wide variety of learning and teaching approaches can be used to deliver this Unit. This section of the Unit Support Notes provides advice and guidance and some examples of approaches that could be used. At all times, teachers/lecturers should provide opportunities for personalisation and choice to ensure that learning is relevant and motivating. Learning should where possible be relevant to the learners' everyday life, their overall learning programme and/or work and leisure.

Sequencing and timing

The *Social Issues* Unit consists of two Outcomes, which can be delivered and assessed in a variety of ways to promote personalisation and choice.

Learners preparing for Course Assessment will need to be introduced to the topic of inequality at the start of the Unit and to understand why it is considered a social issue. Once this basic learning is in place, the order and timing of the Outcomes can be delivered to suit the interests and needs of the learners.

Possible approaches to learning and teaching

A rich and supportive learning environment should be provided to enable learners to achieve the best they can. This could include approaches which include:

- ◆ Development of investigative skills
- ◆ Development of simple evaluative skills by discussing the relative merits of different ideas
- ◆ Asking learners to explain or show their thinking
- ◆ Collaborative and independent learning
- ◆ Discussion around new concepts and how they can be applied
- ◆ Using technology where appropriate

Examples of learning and teaching contexts and opportunities

Explain social issues

Learners should be encouraged to recognise the nature of sociological thought, particularly that contrasting theories may offer different yet arguably valid explanations for a social issue, such as social inequality. A simple 'one is right and one is wrong' approach does not work in sociology, and for some learners this may present a challenge.

Describing a social issue with reference to evidence from different sources provides opportunities for personalisation and choice. Social issues can be selected from any aspect of human social life — for example, poverty, education, crime or employment. Where this Unit is taught as part of National 5 Sociology

Course, social inequality is studied as a social issue. Learners should develop a glossary of sociological terminology and develop confidence in using this language when describing social issues. Learners can contribute by finding their own examples of social issues. There will be opportunities to help learners to evaluate the quality of evidence. Examples of sources of evidence to be used for assessment could include official statistics or media reports.

Explaining the social issue using two sociological theories, at least one of which takes a structural perspective, allows the learner to understand that theories arise from different theoretical perspectives. A broad overview of perspectives will set the context, and then two theories, one of which should be structural, should be used to explain the issue. Theories that present contrasting ideas will give the best possible basis for comparing the two theories.

Describing one similarity and two differences in relation to the chosen issue enables learners to develop simple analytical skills. Learners are required to recognise the similarities and differences between contrasting theories. Ideally, learners should discover these through discussion, and in the context of the chosen social issue, rather than approach this as rote learning and being given information.

Discussion and activities: Games that include an element of inequality (eg a task in which one team has more resources than the others) can open the subject up in a realistic way. Learners can be encouraged to discuss their feelings as either the privileged team or the disadvantaged team. Prepared source material from the media and official statistics can be used to make the nature of inequality more real. Discussion about different groups and their experience of inequality will help learners to recognise complex relationships eg race, gender, and disability. Theories can be presented as explanations for inequality, and learners can discuss how convinced they are by the explanations. For Course assessment, at least one of the chosen theories to explain inequality should be a structural theory.

One approach may be to offer an explanation of several theories and allow learners to argue between them which two offer the most useful explanation. This encourages analytical thought at a level that most learners can engage with.

Finding similarities and differences is a more challenging task. Learners will benefit from, with support attempting to work these out themselves rather than be presented with them as facts to be learned. Once again, this approach fosters analytical skills and prepares students for assessment and more advanced study. Formative assessment opportunities will enable learners to become confident in their knowledge and understanding prior to Unit assessment.

For example, learners could investigate the topic of income inequality using current events. For this topic it may be useful to compare two structural theories (conflict and consensus). Teaching could begin with learning and teaching activities on Marxism and Functionalism to lay down the necessary understanding. The very real conflict between workers and the financially powerful owners or controllers of workplaces can be illustrated with media reports

of strikes and demonstrations. The functionalist or New Right view is also clearly in evidence with statements made by government concerning cuts to benefits and the need for the general population to 'tighten belts'. The sources available to illustrate these ideas are numerous.

Official statistics will also demonstrate the impact of the downturn on the general population.

Debate and discussion can usefully be employed to encourage learners to take a more analytical approach.

Learning can be extended by introducing interactionist ideas, eg do social media have an impact on people's perceptions of what is happening? Do cartoons posted on the internet regarding the inequalities in society have an impact on people's ideas? Some of these cartoons may be shown in the classroom to demonstrate their impact.

Tasks to encourage naturally occurring evidence for Unit Assessment may include presentation of contrasting perspectives in the form of a debate, a dramatic presentation, a large wall diagram using mind mapping or graphic representation. Learners could explain the different points of view, demonstrating that there is an element of truth in both sides of the argument.

Apply research evidence to gain a sociological understanding of social issues

Learners should be encouraged to recognise that modern sociology considers a range of ideas and research methods and the majority of sociologists will take an eclectic approach to research.

To apply research evidence to gain a sociological understanding of social issues learners should develop an awareness of the nature and purpose of research in sociology. Learners should explain the way in which evidence from research offers a sociological rather than individualistic explanation for the social issue. Teaching should focus on research evidence on the chosen type of inequality and the role of research evidence should be explained with specific reference to the issue.

Interpreting information, for example from two secondary sources, and using this to support sociological explanations of the chosen social issue, will enable learners to demonstrate an ability to interpret information from secondary sources which could be presented in two different ways (eg graph/pie chart and report). Interpretation of the sources could include reference to sociological theories.

Teachers should provide learners with a range of secondary sources to choose from. As the learner progresses through the Course they could be encouraged to contribute sources for learning purposes.

Discussion and activities: Learners may benefit from attempting to present some given data into graphs or pie charts in order to understand the process in

reverse. Interpreting data requires an understanding of the use of the graphical tools used to represent it.

Evidence could be sourced from reputable contemporary media reports on inequality and presented to learners in a range of formats to encourage interpretation of different types of source materials.

The requirement to use **evidence to support sociological explanations** requires the application of sociological thinking. Learners should be encouraged to use the understanding gained throughout the Unit to inform this task, using the sociological explanations from the theories covered. This can be expressed in a straightforward way, and learners should consider how each of the two contrasting theories might interpret the evidence.

For example, the role of research of evidence on income inequality can be discussed in terms of the difference between individualistic and sociological explanations for both the cause and the impact of income inequality.

Research example: The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has a number of useful resources that may be used. For example 'The riots: what are the lessons from JRF's work in communities' uses a wide range of data to demonstrate the impact of poverty and other social problems. There is discussion of misconceptions and stereotypes that can be used to remind learners of the role of interpretive sociology.

- ◆ **Evidence** from National Statistics can be helpful in encouraging learners to interpret different forms of charts and other graphical methods.

Naturally occurring evidence could be gained from using the JRF study to find different ways in which data has been gathered eg interviews, observation, comparison of different areas, case studies, statistical evidence. Learners could be given a short source passage from the study and examples of National Statistics, and be tasked with interpreting the material using sociological thinking on income inequality. A recognition of the need for different forms of evidence for different uses would demonstrate a high level of understanding.

Assessment could incorporate learning from both Outcomes by presenting a project on the chosen topic. Learners may benefit from being given a 'route map' through the stages of sociological understanding achieved in the outcome, ie:

- ◆ The connection between theory and perspectives.
- ◆ How different theories can give different but equally valid explanations of a social issue.
- ◆ How research evidence can be used both to give an explanation of a social issue and as a means for change.
- ◆ Demonstrating the ability to interpret evidence by explaining what has been shown and how it can make a difference either to attitudes or to social policy.

The project could be a paired or group project but learners must show evidence of personal learning. This could be achieved by:

- ◆ Discussing or presenting the project.
- ◆ Responses to short questions in a controlled setting.

For information on assessment and reassessment, teachers and lecturers should refer to [SQA's Guide to Assessment, available on the SQA website](#).

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

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work in this Unit is given in the National 5 Sociology Course Support Notes.

Combining assessment within Units

Centres may deliver the learning and teaching of the unit in a holistic, integrated fashion. Ideally, the assessment approach should also be holistic.

The two Outcomes in this Unit encompass a set of coherent Assessment Standards designed to make it possible to assess learning as a whole. A holistic approach to assessment will enrich the assessment process for the learner, avoid duplication of assessment, provide more time for learning and teaching and allow centres to manage the assessment process more efficiently. Evidence may be gathered for the Unit as a whole through one assessment and a single context or by using different assessments and more than one context for each Outcome. Whichever approach is used, it must be clear how the evidence covers each Outcome.

Learners' readiness for assessment can be established through learning logs as described earlier. Learners can keep brief records of what they feel secure about and what they need to work on. This approach can be useful in developing autonomous learning. Informal peer assessment can also be used in this context.

For verification purposes it is necessary to retain evidence for the Unit only. However, additional evidence may be useful for confirming assessment judgements. It is therefore recommended that all evidence generated by the learner over a period of time is kept together in a secure place. Where resources permit, there could be opportunities to collect and store evidence electronically thereby opening up more opportunities to develop ICT skills.

Equality and inclusion

Learners undertaking this Unit will be required to communicate their sociological understanding. However, communication could be written, oral, diagrammatic or electronic.

In this Unit there may be issues raised which may be controversial or sensitive. Teachers should consider the skills and experience of learners and ensure that topics are studied objectively and free from bias or prejudice.

Centres, teachers and learners should be aware of current British Sociological Association ethical guidelines and adhere to ethical standards when discussing and making decisions relating to sociological research.

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

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 on SQA’s website: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html>
- ◆ *Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work*
- ◆ *Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment*
- ◆ *Course Specifications*
- ◆ *Design Principles for National Courses*
- ◆ *Guide to Assessment (June 2008)*
- ◆ *Overview of Qualification Reports*
- ◆ *Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas*
- ◆ *Research Report 4 — Less is More: Good Practice in Reducing Assessment Time*
- ◆ *Coursework Authenticity — a Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*
- ◆ *SCQF Handbook: User Guide (published 2009) and SCQF level descriptors (to be reviewed during 2012 to 2012):* www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html
- ◆ *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*
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education
- ◆ SQA e-assessment web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html

Administrative information

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Superclass: to be advised

History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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