

Sociology



This update contains information on any recent updates to documents for your subject along with further information and guidance.

I hope you find this information helpful, and please contact me if you have any questions.

Elaine McFadyen
Qualifications Manager

The Qualifications Team

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Qualifications Manager

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Subject Review Report

The development and implementation of the whole suite of National Qualifications has been a huge programme of work dating from 2010 and included many stakeholders. As part of the review and evaluation of this programme, SQA has been engaging with teachers and lecturers on an ongoing basis, as well as gathering intelligence from the awarding and verification process. As a result of this work, SQA has created subject reports to give teachers and lecturers an insight into our planned incremental changes and further areas of investigation for each subject. Each report identifies the key issues for that subject and an associated action plan. Find out more information and what this means for your subject [here](#).

Planned changes to documents in session 2016/17

We have put in place an agreed schedule of planned changes to documents for session 2016/17.

Publication date	Documents
End of April 2016	Course Specifications, Course Assessment Specifications and Unit Specifications
End of May 2016	Course and Unit Support Notes
End of August 2016	Unit assessment support packs
End of September 2016	Coursework assessment tasks, specimen question papers and exemplar question papers

This schedule takes into account any necessary changes that are identified as a result of verification activities, the exam diet and feedback received from centres throughout the current session. It is anticipated that additional, critical changes may be identified for some subjects following the grade boundary meetings which take place during the summer months. Where such changes are identified, we will make further updates and publish these documents by the following dates:

Publication date	Documents
End of August 2016	Course Specifications, Course Assessment Specifications and Unit Specifications (<i>further critical changes only</i>)
End of September 2016	Course and Unit Support Notes (<i>further critical changes only</i>)

Changes to documents in April and May 2016

Please ensure that you read the following updated documents in preparation for session 2016/17. To help you quickly and easily identify what has been updated, for every updated mandatory document we have also published a comparison document that clearly illustrates the changes.

These are published alongside the updated documents on our subject pages at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects

The Notification of Changes spreadsheets have also been updated to reflect the latest changes to documents. You can view these spreadsheets at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjectchanges

Higher documents

Unit Specifications

Culture and Identity

Assessment Standard 1.5 has been re-worded for clarification purposes. It has been changed from '*Giving a summarised sociological analysis of an investigation of culture and identity in a changing social world*' to '*Drawing conclusions about culture and identity in a changing social world*'.

Human Society

Assessment Standard 2.1 has been amended to remove sociological perspectives and is now stated as follows: *Explaining features, strengths and weaknesses of structural and action theories*.

Similar to 2:1 above, Assessment Standard 2.2 was also amended for the same reasoning. '*Applying structural and action perspectives and theories to explain relationships among individuals, groups and institutions*' has now been amended to '*Analyse similarities and differences between sociological theories*'.

Course Assessment Specification

Analysing similarities and differences between theories has been added to the Human Society section to reflect the updated Assessment Standards.

The term socio economic inequality has been changed to social mobility following feedback from centres.

Clarification has been provided regarding which sociological theories relate to each specific Unit as previously this had not been provided and all theories had been listed above the information provided for each individual Unit.

Further information and guidance

Approval criteria

Centres are reminded that teachers and lecturers delivering and assessing sociology within centres are required to have the following qualifications:

- at least two years' successful study of sociology at University or Higher National Diploma (HND) level

Individuals undertaking the Internal Verifier role for sociology within centres must have sufficient subject knowledge to understand the content of assessments and national standards for the Course. They also need to be able to confirm that reliable assessment judgements have been made.

Internal Verifiers do not require at least two years' successful study of sociology at University or Higher National Diploma (HND) level.

Higher — Mandatory studies

As specified within the Course Assessment Specification for Higher Sociology, one of the mandatory studies for the *Social Issues Unit* is: *Blanden J Machin M (2008) Up and down the Income Ladder in Britain: Past Changes and Future Prospects*. This study is an updated version of the 2005 Blandon Machin study and reference to either study is acceptable.

Higher — Question paper: Human Society section

Following enquiries from centres we would like to confirm that an essay style 20 mark question would not be appropriate for the Human Society section of the question paper, and will not appear in any question paper.

Verification Key Messages

Key messages from round 1 of verification in session 2015/16 are available from the relevant subject pages of our website at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects. You can access them from the 'Verification and Course Reports' heading in the Assessment support section.

Looking ahead to session 2016/17

Understanding Standards programme

Our Understanding Standards programme will continue in session 2016/17 when we will publish more candidate evidence and commentary materials. We will also deliver a series of Understanding Standards events on Course assessment. In addition to this, throughout the session we will gather and publish assessment case studies to share good practice in assessment.

To access candidate evidence and commentaries for externally assessed Components of Course assessment, visit www.understandingstandards.org.uk

Candidate evidence and commentaries for Units and internally assessed Components of Course assessment are available from our secure website.

For more information on Understanding Standards, visit www.sqa.org.uk/understandingstandards

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training

We are still offering free CPD training for teachers and lecturers, where particular areas of concern are identified which are not addressed by the Understanding Standards programme. This CPD support is subject-specific and is tailored to cover one or more qualification levels according to requirements.

Where there is sufficient demand, we may deliver CPD training through online webinars and, where appropriate, publish the recordings and related materials on our website after the webinar has taken place.

During session 2015/16 we delivered a CPD webinar for sociology National 5 and Higher Unit Assessment and you can access the associated materials from www.sqa.org.uk/understandingstandards

Stay informed

Subscribe to our newsletters

We currently issue two key newsletters for teachers and lecturers:

- Centre News (weekly)
- New National Qualifications update (monthly)

Both of these newsletters contain the latest news and updates for the National Qualifications. Centre News also includes subject-specific news and a regular reminder of key dates during the session.

To subscribe to our newsletters, visit <http://mailer.sqa.org.uk>

Visit your subject pages

Make sure you regularly visit your subject pages, where you can access documents and assessment support materials for your Courses, Verification Key Messages and information on coursework. You will also find the latest news updates for your Courses in the 'Updates and announcements' section.

Visit www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects

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Contact us

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