



National 5 Modern Studies

Course code:	C849 75
Course assessment code:	X849 75
SCQF:	level 5 (24 SCQF credit points)
Valid from:	session 2017–18

The course specification provides detailed information about the course and course assessment to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the course and the course assessment in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed.

This document is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver the course.

Contents

Course overview	1
Course rationale	2
Purpose and aims	2
Who is this course for?	2
Course content	3
Skills, knowledge and understanding	3
Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work	8
Course assessment	9
Course assessment structure: question paper	9
Course assessment structure: assignment	10
Grading	13
Equality and inclusion	14
Further information	15

Course overview

The course consists of 24 SCQF credit points which includes time for preparation for course assessment. The notional length of time for a candidate to complete the course is 160 hours.

The course assessment has two components.

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper	80	2 hours and 20 minutes
Component 2: assignment	20	1 hour

Recommended entry	Progression
<p>Entry to this course is at the discretion of the centre.</p> <p>Candidates should have achieved the fourth curriculum level or the National 4 Modern Studies course or equivalent qualifications and/or experience prior to starting this course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ other qualifications in Modern Studies or related areas◆ further study, employment or training

Conditions of award

The grade awarded is based on the total marks achieved across all course assessment components.

Course rationale

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

Every course provides opportunities for candidates to develop breadth, challenge and application. The focus and balance of assessment is tailored to each subject area.

The National 5 Modern Studies course encourages candidates to develop a greater understanding of the contemporary world and their place in it. They also have opportunities to develop important attitudes such as respect for the values, beliefs and cultures of others; openness to new thinking and ideas; and a sense of responsibility and global citizenship.

The course emphasises the development and application of skills. The focus on evaluating sources and making decisions develops thinking skills, as well as skills in literacy and numeracy. Investigative and critical thinking activities give candidates opportunities to gain important experience in contributing to group work and working on their own.

Purpose and aims

The course uses a multidisciplinary approach to develop candidates' knowledge and understanding of contemporary political and social issues in local, Scottish, United Kingdom and international contexts. Candidates develop the skills to interpret and participate in the social and political processes they will encounter in their lives.

Candidates develop:

- ◆ a range of research and information-handling skills including: evaluating information/evidence in order to support and oppose a view; making decisions and drawing conclusions; constructing detailed arguments; communicating views, opinions, decisions and conclusions based on evidence
- ◆ detailed understanding of the democratic process
- ◆ detailed understanding of social and economic issues at local, Scottish, national and international levels
- ◆ ways of addressing needs and inequalities
- ◆ an understanding of different views about the extent of state involvement in society
- ◆ an understanding of the nature and processes of conflict resolution
- ◆ an understanding of human and legal rights and responsibilities and their application in different societies

Who is this course for?

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

Course content

The National 5 Modern Studies course has three areas of study: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom; Social Issues in the United Kingdom; International Issues. There is considerable flexibility in the themes which can be studied within each area in order to allow for personalisation and choice.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course

The following provides a broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the course:

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

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment

The following provides details of skills, knowledge and understanding sampled in the course assessment.

Component 1: question paper

The question paper has three sections. Candidates must answer one part from each section. There are options in each section to allow opportunities for personalisation and choice. The question paper will sample from the knowledge and understanding as follows:

Section 1: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom

Candidates develop knowledge and understanding of the UK's political system, including the place of Scotland within this system. Candidates then have a choice of contexts for study which are drawn from **either** the Scottish political system **or** the United Kingdom's political system. Candidates develop knowledge and understanding of the main institutions and organisations which make up political life in their chosen context. They develop knowledge and understanding of the ways in which society is informed about, able to participate in and influence the political system. They develop an understanding of their rights and responsibilities in contemporary democratic political society.

Knowledge and Understanding

Option 1: Democracy in Scotland

Power and decision-making

- ◆ features of a democratic political society
- ◆ devolved and reserved matters
- ◆ role and powers of Scottish First Minister

Participation

- ◆ rights and responsibilities of individuals
- ◆ opportunities for individuals
- ◆ elections and campaigning (role of individuals, political parties and the media)

Influence

- ◆ the media *and either*
- ◆ pressure groups *or*
- ◆ trade unions

(Study of the group/organisation chosen should focus on role, purpose, aims, methods and critical evaluation of the extent to which influence is exercised in democracy.)

Representation

- ◆ role of MSPs
- ◆ representation of women and minority groups
- ◆ purpose, function and composition of Committees in the Scottish Parliament

Voting systems

- ◆ key features and outcomes of the system used to elect MSPs to the Scottish Parliament, including the strengths and weaknesses of this system

Option 2: Democracy in the UK

Power and decision-making

- ◆ features of a democratic political society
- ◆ devolved and reserved matters
- ◆ role and powers of Prime Minister

Participation

- ◆ rights and responsibilities of individuals
- ◆ opportunities for individuals
- ◆ elections and campaigning (role of individuals, political parties and the media)

Influence

- ◆ the media *and either*
- ◆ pressure groups *or*
- ◆ trade unions

(Study of the group/organisation chosen should focus on role, purpose, aims, methods and critical evaluation of the extent to which influence is exercised in democracy.)

Representation

- ◆ role of MPs
- ◆ representation of women and minority groups
- ◆ purpose, function and composition of the House of Lords

Voting systems

- ◆ key features and outcomes of the system used to elect MPs to the UK Parliament, including the strengths and weaknesses of this system

Section 2: Social Issues in the United Kingdom

Candidates have a choice of social issues within Scotland and the UK. Contexts for study focus on either social inequality or crime and the law.

In the social inequality context, candidates focus on social and economic aspects of contemporary social inequality in the UK. They develop knowledge and understanding of the causes and consequences of social inequality and attempts by government, other organisations and individuals to tackle it.

In the crime and the law context, candidates focus on the nature, extent and causes of crime, the impact of crime on individuals and society and the role of individuals, the police, the legal system and the state in tackling crime.

For course assessment, knowledge and understanding and critical evaluation of Social Inequalities or Crime and the Law must be able to be applied across **at least two** of the following groups:

- ◆ social class
- ◆ age
- ◆ gender
- ◆ minority groups

Knowledge and Understanding

Option 1: Social Inequality

Nature of social inequality

- ◆ nature and extent of inequality in Scotland and/or the UK
- ◆ evidence of social inequalities in Scotland and/or the UK, such as official reports and academic research

Causes of social and economic inequality

- ◆ employment/unemployment
- ◆ income
- ◆ educational attainment
- ◆ discrimination

Consequences of social and economic inequality

- ◆ on individuals
- ◆ on families
- ◆ on communities
- ◆ on wider society

Option 2: Crime and the Law

Nature of crime

- ◆ nature and extent of crime in Scotland and/or the UK
- ◆ evidence of crime in Scotland and/or the UK, such as official reports and academic research

Causes of crime

- ◆ social causes and explanations of crime
- ◆ economic causes and explanations of crime
- ◆ biological causes and explanations of crime

Consequences of crime

- ◆ on perpetrators
- ◆ on victims
- ◆ on families
- ◆ on communities
- ◆ on wider society

<p>Responses to social inequality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Government responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — government responses to inequality — effectiveness of government responses ◆ Private sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — private sector responses to inequality — effectiveness of private responses ◆ Voluntary sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — voluntary sector responses to inequality — effectiveness of voluntary sector responses 	<p>Criminal justice system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ role and structure of the criminal courts (including the children’s hearing system) ◆ powers of the criminal courts (including the children’s hearing system) ◆ effectiveness of criminal courts in tackling crime <p>Responses to crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Government responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — government responses to crime — effectiveness of government responses ◆ Police <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — role, structure and powers of the police in Scotland — effectiveness of the police in Scotland in tackling crime ◆ Prisons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — purpose and effectiveness of prisons — purpose and effectiveness of alternatives to prisons
--	---

Section 3: International Issues

Candidates have a choice of contexts for study. Contexts for study must be either a socio-economic and political study of a major world power or a significant world issue.

The study of a world power focuses on the political system of the world power, its international relations and socio-economic issues within the major world power. The major world power studied **must** be drawn from one of the G7 countries (excluding the UK) or one of the following: Brazil, China, India, Russia, South Africa.

The study of a world issue focuses on a significant recent issue, its causes and consequences, and attempts at resolution. The world issue studied must be a contemporary issue which impacts on a number of countries. The world issue must draw from one of the following global issues:

- ◆ a significant regional or international conflict (war or terrorism)
- ◆ a significant regional or international economic issue
- ◆ a significant regional or international humanitarian issue

Knowledge and Understanding

Option 1: World Power

Political system

- ◆ political system
- ◆ participation
- ◆ representation

Influence on other countries

- ◆ political influence
- ◆ economic influence
- ◆ military influence

Social and economic issues

A *minimum of three issues* should be studied. At least one issue covered should be a social issue and one an economic issue.

- ◆ employment
- ◆ poverty/inequality
- ◆ population movement
- ◆ health
- ◆ education
- ◆ crime and the law

Effectiveness in tackling social and economic issues

A *minimum of three issues* should be studied. At least one issue covered should be a social issue and one an economic issue.

Option 2: World Issue

Nature and causes of the conflict/issue

- ◆ political causes
- ◆ social causes
- ◆ economic causes

Consequences of the conflict/issue

- ◆ impact on those immediately affected
- ◆ impact on other countries and their governments (including the UK)
- ◆ regional and/or wider international consequences

Attempts to resolve the conflict/issue

- ◆ bilateral, regional and/or international organisations — role and motivation
- ◆ military attempts to resolve conflict/issues
- ◆ non-military attempts to resolve conflict/issues

Evaluation of international organisation(s) in tackling the conflict/issue

- ◆ evidence of success/failure
- ◆ reasons for success/failure
- ◆ consequences of success/failure

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ employment ◆ poverty/inequality ◆ population movement ◆ health ◆ education ◆ crime and the law | |
|---|--|

Component 2: assignment

Candidates have an open choice of a Modern Studies topic or issue. Their choice should refer to a contemporary political, social or international issue and should not be constrained by the content of the question paper.

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

Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

This course helps candidates to develop broad, generic skills. These skills are based on SQA's Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work and draw from the following main skills areas:

1 Literacy

- 1.1 Reading
- 1.2 Writing

2 Numeracy

- 2.3 Information handling

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

- 4.6 Citizenship

5 Thinking skills

- 5.3 Applying
- 5.4 Analysing and evaluating

These skills must be built into the course where there are appropriate opportunities and the level should be appropriate to the level of the course.

Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the course support notes.

Course assessment

Course assessment is based on the information provided in this document.

The course assessment meets the key purposes and aims of the course by addressing:

- ◆ breadth — drawing on knowledge and skills from across the course
- ◆ challenge — requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
- ◆ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This enables candidates to:

- ◆ draw on, extend and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding they have acquired during the course
- ◆ extend and apply their skills, knowledge and understanding

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

Course assessment structure: question paper

Question paper

80 marks

The question paper allows candidates to demonstrate application of the following skills and breadth of knowledge and understanding from the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment section:

- ◆ supporting and opposing a view using a limited range of sources of information
- ◆ making and justifying a decision using a limited range of sources of information
- ◆ drawing and supporting conclusions using a limited range of sources of information
- ◆ giving detailed descriptions and explanations with some analysis

The question paper has three sections. Each section has two optional parts and in each option, candidates must answer four questions: three questions assess knowledge and understanding; the fourth question assesses evaluating skills using sources.

Each section comprises restricted/extended-response questions requiring candidates to draw on the knowledge and understanding and apply the skills acquired during the course. There is differentiation within each question.

Section 1: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom

Candidates have the option of answering questions on democracy in Scotland or democracy in the United Kingdom.

Section 2: Social Issues in the United Kingdom

Candidates have the option of answering questions on social inequality or crime and the law.

Section 3: International Issues

Candidates have the option of answering questions on world powers or world issues.

The question paper component has 80 marks out of a total of 100 marks for course assessment. The question paper is therefore worth 80% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

Setting, conducting and marking the question paper

The question paper is set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. Candidates complete this in 2 hours and 20 minutes.

Specimen question papers for National 5 courses are published on SQA's website. These illustrate the standard, structure and requirements of the question papers candidates sit. The specimen papers also include marking instructions.

Course assessment structure: assignment

Assignment

20 marks

The assignment allows candidates to demonstrate challenge and application by demonstrating the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ choosing, with minimum support, an appropriate Modern Studies topic or issue
- ◆ finding at least two sources, of different types, as independently as possible, and collecting relevant evidence from them
- ◆ evaluating the effectiveness of the two sources used, commenting on their specific strengths and weaknesses
- ◆ applying Modern Studies skills to the evidence collected
- ◆ drawing on knowledge and understanding to explain and analyse key features of the topic or issue
- ◆ reaching a well-supported conclusion, supported by evidence, about the topic or issue

Candidates use specified resources during the production of evidence stage. A structured template is available for the production of evidence.

The assignment component has 20 marks out of a total of 100 marks for course assessment. The assignment is therefore worth 20% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

Setting, conducting and marking the assignment

The assignment is set by centres within SQA guidelines. SQA provides a brief for the generation of evidence to be assessed. Candidates have an open choice of contemporary

Modern Studies topic or issue to research. Evidence is submitted to SQA for external marking. All marking is quality assured by SQA.

The assignment has two stages:

- ◆ research
- ◆ production of evidence

Time

In the research stage, candidates choose a topic or issue which allows them to analyse a contemporary issue. They research the issue and organise their findings to address the topic, using the specified resources collected during their research to support them in the production of evidence. The research stage is designed to be capable of completion over a notional period of 8 hours.

Candidates should undertake the research stage at any appropriate point in the course. This will normally be when they have developed the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding.

The production of evidence for assessment must be completed within 1 hour and in one sitting. Candidates should undertake the production of evidence stage in time to meet the submission date set by SQA.

Supervision, control and authentication

The research stage is conducted under some supervision and control. This means that, although candidates may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, assessors should put in place processes for monitoring progress and ensuring that the work is the candidate's own and that plagiarism has not taken place. For example:

- ◆ interim progress meetings with candidates
- ◆ questioning
- ◆ candidate's record of activity/progress
- ◆ assessor observation

Group work approaches are acceptable as part of the research stage. However, there must be clear evidence for each candidate to show that they have met the evidence requirements.

The production of evidence stage is conducted under a high degree of supervision and control. This means that candidates:

- ◆ must be in direct sight of the assessor (or other responsible person) during the assessment
- ◆ must not communicate with each other
- ◆ should have access only to the specified resources

Resources

During the research stage, there are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access. During the final production of evidence stage, candidates should have

access only to the specified resources, which consist of material collected during the research stage on up to two single-sided sheets of A4.

During the final production of evidence stage, candidates should have access only to the Modern Studies Research Sheet. The purpose of the Modern Studies Research Sheet is to help candidates in presenting the findings of their research and applying their skills, knowledge and understanding. The Research Sheet is not marked. However, it must be included with the assignment from the candidate.

Reasonable assistance

Assessors should provide reasonable guidance on the types of topic or issue which will enable candidates to meet all the requirements of the assignment. They may also guide candidates as to the likely availability and accessibility of resources for their chosen topic or issue.

Candidates should work on their research with minimum support from the assessor.

Assessors must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.

Candidates must undertake the production of evidence independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the production of evidence taking place. The term 'reasonable assistance' is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. If a candidate requires more than what is deemed to be 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment or it may be that they have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

Reasonable assistance may be given on a generic basis to a class or group of candidates, eg advice on how to develop a project plan. It may also be given to candidates on an individual basis. When reasonable assistance is given on a one-to-one basis in the context of something that a candidate has already produced or demonstrated, there is a danger that it becomes support for assessment and assessors need to be aware that this may be going beyond reasonable assistance.

In the research stage, reasonable assistance may include:

- ◆ directing candidates to the instructions for candidates
- ◆ clarifying instructions/requirements of the task
- ◆ advising candidates on the choice of a topic or issue
- ◆ advising candidates on possible sources of information
- ◆ arranging visits to enable gathering of evidence
- ◆ interim progress checks

In preparing for the production of evidence stage, reasonable assistance may include advising candidates of the nature and volume of specified resources which may be used to support the production of evidence.

At any stage, reasonable assistance does not include:

- ◆ providing the topic or issue for the candidate
- ◆ directing candidates to specific resources to be used
- ◆ providing model answers
- ◆ providing detailed feedback on drafts, including marking

Evidence to be gathered

The candidate evidence required for this assessment is:

- ◆ completed assignment produced under a high degree of supervision on the Modern Studies report template
- ◆ the Modern Studies Research Sheet which is limited to two single-sided sheets of A4

Volume

There is no word count for the assignment; however the Research Sheet is limited to two single-sided sheets of A4.

Grading

A candidate's overall grade is determined by their performance across the course assessment. The course assessment is graded A–D on the basis of the total mark for all course assessment components.

Grade description for C

For the award of grade C, candidates will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

Grade description for A

For the award of grade A, candidates will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

Equality and inclusion

This course is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the assessment arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

Further information

The following reference documents provide useful information and background.

- ◆ [National 5 Modern Studies subject page](#)
- ◆ [Assessment arrangements web page](#)
- ◆ [Building the Curriculum 3–5](#)
- ◆ [Design Principles for National Courses](#)
- ◆ [Guide to Assessment](#)
- ◆ [SCQF Framework and SCQF level descriptors](#)
- ◆ [SCQF Handbook](#)
- ◆ [SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)
- ◆ [Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers](#)
- ◆ [Educational Research Reports](#)
- ◆ [SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools](#)
- ◆ [SQA e-assessment web page](#)

Administrative information

Published: April 2017 (version 1.0)

History of changes to course specification

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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

Note: You are advised to check SQA's website to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of the course specification.

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2012, 2017