



Higher National Unit Specification

General information

Unit title: Criminology: The Accused's Journey (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J00G 34

Superclass: EE

Publication date: April 2018

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 02 (June 2022)

Unit purpose

This unit looks at the accused's journey from initial arrest through disposal, including any trial and sentencing, within the Scottish Criminal Justice System. It also looks at the efficacy of the Scottish System in comparison with other criminal justice systems.

It forms an optional unit within the HNC/HND Social Science frameworks and could be delivered either as part of an HNC/HND or as a standalone unit. It provides a natural transition from SCQF level 6 Criminology units and also serves as a step up to the SCQF level 8 *Criminology* unit. However, it does not require prior knowledge of criminology.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Describe the accused's journey through the Scottish Criminal Justice System.
- 2 Evaluate the Scottish Criminal Justice System.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

Recommended entry to the unit

Learners are recommended to have achieved SCQF level 6 in at least one social science discipline and/or English to allow them to present information in an appropriate manner and to develop skills at this level.

Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont.)

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Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of core skills are highlighted in the support notes for this unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of core skills or core skill components in this unit.

Context for delivery

If this unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes although it is also offered as a stand-alone unit.

Equality and inclusion

This unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

Where evidence for outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Learners should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Describe the accused's journey through the Scottish Criminal Justice System.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Description of the range of bodies involved in the Criminal Justice System in Scotland
- ◆ Explanation of at least two bodies from: charging an individual with an offence; prosecution/defence of an individual; sentencing; custodial/non-custodial sentences; rehabilitation of offenders and parole/rehabilitation
- ◆ Differentiation of summary and solemn proceedings
- ◆ Identification of the different exit points from the Scottish Criminal Justice System

Outcome 2

Evaluate the Scottish Criminal Justice System.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Identification and evaluation of key similarities and differences between the legal system in Scotland, England and Wales, and one other country
- ◆ Identification and evaluation of key similarities and differences between the criminal justice system in Scotland, England and Wales, and one other country
- ◆ Evaluation of how the differences impact on offending rates, recidivism and the victims

Evidence requirements for this unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can:

Outcome 1

- ◆ accurately describe the main institutions that comprise the Scottish Criminal Justice System. These are: The Police; Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS); Scottish Court Service and Judiciary; Scottish Prison Service and Parole Board.
- ◆ accurately describe the different roles that these institutions play in the accused's journey and the different disposals available at each stage.
- ◆ identify the different routes that different types of crimes entail.

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Outcome 2

- ◆ evaluate the similarities and differences of the legal systems in Scotland, England and Wales, and one other country.
- ◆ accurately identify key differences between criminal justice systems in Scotland, England and Wales and one other country, and evaluate them in terms of their effectiveness in dealing with offenders, reducing reoffending and supporting victims of crime.

This unit could be assessed using a variety of methods including open-book essays, oral presentations. A written response should be 750–1,000 words per outcome; an oral response should be 6–8 minutes per outcome. Regardless of the assessment method chosen, the learner must submit a bibliography presented in a standard referencing format, such as Harvard.



Higher National Unit Support Notes

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Unit support notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this unit

This unit introduces the learner to the Scottish Criminal Justice System and evaluates it against two other criminal justice systems.

Outcome 1 considers the whole of the accused's journey from their initial point of contact with the CJS (usually the Police) through to their release from the system and subsequent consequences. This would include any release conditions such as being registered on the Sex Offenders Register, or convictions that will remain on the 'always disclose' list, such as terrorism, hijacking, rape and murder.

It will consider the different disposals available from within each institution, that is, the various exit points from the Criminal Justice System from the Police through the courts. This will include the options available to police officers after arrest, for example, officers with Police Scotland have the power to issue formal warnings, fixed penalty tickets or to refer to Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS). The COPFS decides whether there are sufficient grounds to proceed in or out of court, or to close the case without proceeding. COPFS also determines which court the case is referred to which impacts on disposal options available.

Learners will be required to differentiate between summary and solemn proceedings.

The main stages of the accused's journey are as follows:

- ◆ Arrested and charged by members of Police Scotland
- ◆ Report sent to Procurator Fiscal; decision made
- ◆ Court hears pleas and case progresses through the system or is closed
- ◆ Court trial and sentencing, including role of Criminal justice social work
- ◆ Prison custody through the Prison Estate and eventual release

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

Delivery of this unit can follow the natural stages of the accused's journey and ask the learner to evaluate this journey for efficacy. Case studies can illustrate the processes and institutions using real-life cases that are on-going in local newspapers or courts or that have been written up.

Both outcomes can be taught concurrently, or they could be considered separately.

Delivery could be broken down so that each class explores a different stage of the accused's journey. The powers of Police Scotland, and the role of government in making laws, can be considered. There is scope to explore the origins of Scots Law and its impact on the type of court hearing a case is likely to have. The different laws can also be considered.

On-going evaluation can include comparisons between the Scottish and other systems at each point of the accused's journey. Formally, they will compare the Scottish system to that in England and Wales along with one other country. It is expected that the USA with its harsher sentencing or Norway with its focus on rehabilitation would be suitable comparators.

Learners can discuss such as the cost of the CJS, reoffending rates, non-custodial sentences. They can consider the number of offenders/prisoners per head of population in different countries. They should consider the victim in terms of information and support provided, victim (impact) statements in court and follow-up.

Field trips to a court in session can be arranged to allow learners to see the process in action. With the exception of closed court cases (for example those involving a child victim), the public can observe court proceedings. Contact should be made in advance. Local prisons are also able to arrange visits where time and numbers allow. Again, advance contact should be made to facilitate a visit.

The second outcome could be formatively assessed through a debate, with different groups of learners acting as proponents of different criminal justice systems. This would allow evaluation to arise from the debate. Individual write-up would be required for summative assessment to ensure that each learner individually meets the outcome.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Assessment for each outcome should be open-book and could use an essay or an oral presentation using PowerPoint or academic posters. Each assessment should include a bibliography or reference page. A written response should be 750–1,000 words per outcome; an oral response should be 6–8 minutes per outcome.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

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Centres should make sure they can authenticate a learner's work. This may be done by questioning a learner about their work, by seeing drafts of work under construction, by having partial write-up in the presence of the assessor or by using an anti-plagiarism tool, such as Turnitin or SafeAssign, which checks internet sites.

NB: It is important that the language used in the assessment instrument reflects SCQF level 7 in each type of task.

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the evidence requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

It is possible to develop *Communication* at SCQF level 6 if the assessment takes the form of an essay or oral presentation. For Written Communication at SCQF level 6 the skill is: produce well-structured written communication on complex topics. To develop this skill learners can be encouraged in both formative and summative assessment to present all essential ideas/information and supporting detail in a logical and effective order; use a structure that is organised and use paragraphing to make distinctions between facts, opinions, arguments and conclusion, use a format, layout, and word choice which are appropriate to the content and context, and use spelling, punctuation, vocabulary and sentence structures which are consistently accurate. It is part of the evidence requirements for the unit to ensure learners convey complex ideas in a well-structured and coherent way. This can be stressed in delivery and in formative work, as well as being considered in summative assessment.

The learners could be tasked with producing a written communication which presents, analyses, and evaluates a substantial body of information. These skills can be developed through formative activities, without being formally assessed for certification of the core skill.

It is important to develop essay-writing skills for learners' future progression. In doing this, learners should also be encouraged to use an appropriate referencing method, such as Harvard, for any formative or summative essays. Referencing, citation and bibliography skills are best developed using the vehicle of formative essay writing. It is part of the summative assessment to have an appropriate bibliography submitted in a standard referencing format.

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For Oral Communication at SCQF level 6 the skill is: produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic. In both formative and summative assessment, the learner could be encouraged to give a detailed oral presentation. The specific skills of using an appropriate level of vocabulary, consistent spoken language structures and formality, conveying all essential information, opinions, or ideas with supporting detail accurately and coherently, and with varied emphasis as appropriate and responding to others, taking account of their contributions would be developed in an oral presentation or in an oral explanation of a poster exhibition. Although a summative assessment would require individual work and individual presentation, a formative assessment could be constructed that would encourage learners to work in a small group, with a few people contributing to the presentation. This may allow a learner to experience the demands of oral presentation before choosing this as an option for summative assessment of the unit (if the centre is able to give a choice).

As it is important that learners submit a bibliography (or reference section) in a standard format, such as Harvard for the summative assessment, even oral assessment methods should incorporate an appropriate bibliography.

For the core skill of *Information and Communication Technology* at SCQF level 5 the skills are: 'Accessing Information, use ICT independently, effectively, and responsibly to access information within a range of tasks' and 'Providing/Creating Information, use ICT independently, effectively, and responsibly to carry out a range of processing tasks'. This unit can help to develop such skills by the use of mini formative presentations using PowerPoint or other ICT presentation tool that will also support the development of oral communication. A summative assessment using ICT presentation methods is also possible. Specific areas of accessing information using Internet searches or VLE use and providing and creating information can be developed in such tasks. Creating a Blog or a website for the summative assessment is another way in which this core skill can be developed. This could be used where learners (and their lecturer) have particular skills and interest in ICT.

For the Core Skills of *Working with Others* at SCQF level 6, the skills are 'Working Co-operatively with Others, in complex interactions, work with others co-operatively on an activity and/or activities', and 'Review Co-operative Contribution, review work with others in a co-operative activity and/or activities'. Learners will be involved in complex interactions, work with others co-operatively on an activity and/or activities, particularly researching particular case study material, which can be done as a group (although the reporting should be done individually to ensure each learner meets all evidence requirements). This skill can also be developed through a formative debate. It would be appropriate to encourage learners to reflect on their own contribution to any group activity, either for formative or summative assessment.

Thinking, analytical and critical skills could be developed by posing questions at appropriate points in the delivery, enabling discussion and promoting the need for learners to take responsibility for learning by encouraging the development of research skills via the internet or using text books.

Citizenship can be addressed through a deeper understanding of offenders and victims, along with knowledge of the different bodies involved in the system. Visits to different institutions can also enhance citizenship.

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Employability can also be enhanced as different roles in the Criminal Justice System are understood and explored.

History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	References to ASPs have been removed from the unit spec.	17/06/22

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General information for learners

Unit title: Criminology: The Accused's Journey (SCQF level 7)

This unit introduces you to the accused's journey through the Scottish Criminal Justice System then it evaluates the efficacy of the system.

The first outcome tracks the accused's journey from the initial point of contact, through to trial or alternative disposal before trial, to sentencing, rehabilitation and any requirements on completion of their sentence. You will look at the different institutions involved in processing an accused, and the roles of the people within them. Consideration will also be given to the different levels of court and the difference between solemn and summary proceedings.

The second outcome compares the Scottish Criminal Justice System with that of other countries. It will contrast the Scottish system, with its checks and balances, against both the system in England and Wales, and in one other country.

Assessment will be through an open-book using an essay-style task or presentation. A written response should be 750–1,000 words per outcome; an oral response should be 6-8 minutes per outcome.

This unit will develop your core skills in *Communication* and *Working with Others*, particularly if the evaluation section incorporates a debate and discussion. Your evaluation skills will be strengthened and you will develop a greater understanding of the different people involved with and affected by the accused. This aids in understanding the broader aspects of citizenship while also increasing your knowledge about different employment opportunities within the Scottish Criminal Justice System.