

Higher Sociology

Subject-specific guidance on gathering key evidence in session 2020–21



Please read this guidance alongside [National Courses: guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates](#) and the SQA Academy resource, [Quality assurance of estimates for National Courses](#).

Gathering key evidence for Higher Sociology

This document and *National Courses: guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates* will give you additional support and guidance to support your decision making for session 2020–21. Evidence should be gathered later in the course, as a realistic reflection of a candidate's attainment. It is important to note that it is not the **quantity** of evidence, but the **quality** of evidence, in relation to its predictive value, that will support you during this process.

The following types of key evidence are likely to provide a good predictive value and may be helpful to you, although there may be other types of key evidence you would like to use.

Types of key evidence

Key assessment evidence should be gathered from occasions where candidates have been given opportunities to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and understanding across all components of the course:

- ◆ Human Society (question paper)
- ◆ Culture and Identity (question paper)
- ◆ assignment (coursework)

Component 1: question paper

You have the flexibility to choose how you gather assessment evidence for your candidates. The most robust evidence for the question paper component is that which has been generated using an assessment task that replicates, as far as possible, the SQA question paper. The evidence does not need to be generated on a single occasion if this is not practical under restrictions current at the time of the assessment. It should, however, be generated under supervision and control, where possible.

The following assessment evidence is required for the question paper component:

- ◆ Human Society
- ◆ Culture and Identity

This is in line with the modifications planned for Higher Sociology. You also have the flexibility to include additional evidence relating to the assessment of 'Social Issues' if you wish but this is not a requirement.

When producing your provisional results, you may wish to take account of other assessment evidence, such as end of topic tests, that you have for your candidates. Please note that smaller assessment tasks are likely to be less demanding than a larger, holistic assessment and you should consider this when producing your provisional results.

Assessment advice

Assessment evidence must reflect the question paper by requiring candidates to:

- ◆ demonstrate understanding of society by explaining sociological perspectives, theories and concepts
- ◆ explain the sociological significance of relationships among individuals, groups and institutions in a changing social world
- ◆ explain and evaluate research methods used in sociology
- ◆ use sociological theories to analyse and explain human social behaviour
- ◆ use knowledge and understanding to evaluate research and evidence to support explanations

Assessment tasks should consist of a mix of question types which generate a range of responses:

- ◆ extended-response
- ◆ restricted-response
- ◆ description
- ◆ explanation, including exemplification
- ◆ evaluation
- ◆ application of perspectives, theories and sources and/or research methods
- ◆ analysis

Questions can be made up of one part or multiple parts (for example (a), (b) and so on). Questions requiring a brief answer should be accessible to C candidates. Questions requiring an extended-response should stretch A candidates by allowing them to demonstrate detailed skills and knowledge, however, some of the marks should still be accessible to C candidates.

At least 50% of the total marks should be accessible to C candidates and at least 70% of the marks should be accessible to A candidates.

Assessment resources

Assessment resources that you can use to generate candidate evidence for the question paper component include:

- ◆ questions from SQA past papers

- ◆ adapted questions from SQA past papers
- ◆ centre-devised assessment tasks such as class tests and larger, holistic assessments

SQA past papers are in the public domain and can be readily accessed by candidates and therefore, in their entirety, do not form suitable assessment tasks. You can, however, extract and adapt questions from these papers for use in centre-devised assessment tasks.

Component 2: assignment

You should deliver the assignment in line with the requirements of the course specification and coursework assessment task. Candidates tend to perform better in the assignment than the question paper, and you should take this into consideration when producing your provisional results.

Using additional assessment resources for session 2020–21: key information

It is important that you use valid and reliable assessment when gathering evidence in session 2020–21.

In Higher Sociology, SQA will provide a question paper for session 2020–21. Please note that the marking instructions have not been standardised based on candidate responses. You may therefore need to agree within your centre how to consistently mark an item if a candidate response is not covered by the marking instructions.

The Higher Sociology question paper will only be available on SQA's secure website — you must treat this confidentially, in the same way as other live assessment materials.

You have the option to use the question paper as an internal assessment for gathering candidate evidence. Question papers can be split to support assessments you carry out during class time.

If you use a question paper in part or in its entirety, you should remind candidates that they must not discuss the content of the paper with anyone, including friends, family or on social media.

The question paper reflects the planned modifications. You have flexibility in how you choose to use this question paper. If you wish to use the paper as a basis for smaller assessments, then a possible option is to deconstruct the paper and deliver separate assessments as follows:

- ◆ Human Society (30 marks); suggested duration: 50–60 minutes.
- ◆ Culture and Identity (25 marks) suggested duration: 45–55 minutes.

Alternatively, you can use the paper as a larger, holistic assessment. If you wish to do this, covering 'Human Society' and 'Culture and Identity', then the suggested duration is 110 minutes.

Please note, this question paper is being provided as an additional assessment resource and is not mandatory. You have the flexibility to use the whole paper or parts of it in conjunction with other assessment resources described in the previous section.

Understanding the national standard

You will find six examples of candidate responses from the Higher question paper, along with associated commentaries, on [SQA's Understanding Standards website](#).

In addition, the [specimen question paper and past paper marking instructions](#) detail how marks are allocated for each question type.

In relation to the assignment, you can find eight examples of candidate responses from 2018, along with associated commentaries, on [SQA's Understanding Standards website](#).

Other resources to support understanding of the standard include:

- ◆ course specification
- ◆ course reports
- ◆ SQA past papers and marking instructions
- ◆ coursework assessment task

Summary

Provisional results for Higher Sociology should be a holistic judgement based on a candidate's demonstrated attainment in each of the following three key pieces of assessment evidence:

- ◆ Human Society (question paper)
- ◆ Culture and Identity (question paper)
- ◆ assignment