

Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

History A: Exploring an Historical Period (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J6EN 47
SCQF level: 7 (8 SCQF credit points)
Valid from: session 2024–25

Prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 3.0) August 2024

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year.

This unit specification is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information required to deliver and assess the unit.

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Unit purpose

This unit develops learners' skills in evaluating and interpreting data from one of the following specified periods:

- ◆ Scottish Society 1660–1789
- ◆ British Social and Economic History 1750–1850
- ◆ Modern Europe 1789–1870
- ◆ Medieval British History 597–1188
- ◆ History of the Gaels: Earliest Times
- ◆ Modern British History 1485–1603
- ◆ 20th Century Europe 1900–1929
- ◆ Ireland 1780–1850
- ◆ The Middle East 1914–1948
- ◆ The USA 1600–1787
- ◆ Afghanistan 1919–1996

The unit is aimed at learners who have a general interest in history as well as those who want to use it as the basis for further study.

Entry to the unit is at your centre's discretion. However, we recommend that learners have one or more of the following:

- ◆ good communication skills
- ◆ previous study of history, for example National Qualifications (NQ) at SCQF levels 5 or 6
- ◆ other knowledge, skills and experience relevant to the unit

Learners normally study the unit as part of Higher National Certificate (HNC) Social Sciences. They can also study it on a stand-alone basis.

If learners study the unit as part of HNC Social Sciences, they may be able to progress to HND Social Sciences or a degree programme in a related subject.

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

- 1 explain the main developments associated with a specific situation, a particular event or a series of events
- 2 reach a measured conclusion on an issue, event or series of events using evidence from primary and secondary sources

Evidence requirements

Learners should provide written or oral evidence covering all unit outcomes, produced under open book conditions. You should give learners the assessment task at an appropriate point of delivering the unit. Learners should submit their work for marking on a date that you have provided or agreed with them.

Learners must produce a written response of approximately 1,500 words, or an oral response that is 10 to 12 minutes in duration.

Responses must include:

- ◆ identification of the situation, event or events in the context of the historical period
- ◆ an explanation of a main development of the specific situation, event or events
- ◆ an explanation of a set issue or events within a chronological framework
- ◆ an explanation of different interpretations or viewpoints of an issue or events using primary and secondary sources
- ◆ a valid and measured conclusion

You can choose to use a mix of methods of assessment across a cohort, depending on what is most suitable for each learner; for example, some could give a written response, others could give an oral response and others could respond in the form of a blog.

Learners must fully reference their assessment, using reliable sources appropriate for SCQF level 7. They must list all sources in a bibliography or reference list, in a recognised standard format such as Harvard or APA.

The SCQF level of the unit provides additional context relating to the quality of evidence. Learners must:

- ◆ contribute information that is complex, accurate and relevant to its purpose and audience
- ◆ present ideas clearly and coherently
- ◆ use a structure that is appropriate to the purpose
- ◆ provide supporting evidence or references

Knowledge and skills

The following table shows the knowledge and skills covered by the unit outcomes:

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 1 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ the main developments of an historical situation, event or events◆ the range of different sources of information	<p>Outcome 1 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ explain different interpretations or viewpoints of issues or events◆ explain a main development of an historical situation, event or events
<p>Outcome 2 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ how to interpret differing viewpoints of an issue, event or events to reach a conclusion	<p>Outcome 2 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ reach valid and measured conclusions about an historical event or issue from evidence provided in primary and secondary sources

Meta-skills

Throughout this unit, learners develop meta-skills to enhance their employability in the social sciences sector.

The unit helps learner develop the meta-skills of self-management, social intelligence and innovation meta-skills. Learners should develop meta-skills naturally throughout the unit. You should encourage learners to develop a minimum of one area in each of the three categories, but they do not need to cover all suggested subsections. The following suggestions may help shape delivery and assessment, and vary depending on the chosen topic and assessment method.

Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ focusing: explaining and interpreting accurate and relevant sources related to the period of study
- ◆ integrity: engaging with differing primary and secondary sources to identify the validity and reliability of their origin and content; interpreting different historians' accounts of the period of study
- ◆ initiative: reading different historians' accounts; identifying evidence to help make decisions about what could be valuable and relevant information and what could be misinformation

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ communicating: discussing and debating the main developments of a specified historical period; using digital technology to create presentations to convey understanding of the historical period
- ◆ collaborating: creating presentations in groups

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ curiosity: engaging with different viewpoints or interpretations of an historical issue; questioning ideas and information relevant to the historical topic of study
- ◆ critical thinking: using sources of information to discuss and debate different interpretations about an historical issue or event; drawing overall conclusions from evidence
- ◆ sense-making: drawing valid and measured conclusions based on source evidence

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August 2024

There are other meta-skills that learners could develop in the unit, depending on the learning and teaching activities you carry out. These include:

- ◆ self-management: adapting
- ◆ social intelligence: feeling, leading
- ◆ innovation: creativity

Literacies

Learners develop core skills in the following literacies:

Communication

Learners develop communication skills by producing well-structured written or oral communication on complex topics. They can demonstrate their development of these skills in discussions, formative work and summative assessments. Learners can also develop their oral communication skills by giving detailed oral presentations on their knowledge of, and interpretation of, data from a specified period.

Digital

Learners develop digital skills and computer literacy by making use of mini formative presentations using PowerPoint, or other information and communication technology (ICT) presentation tools and sites. This may also be used to support oral communication. Learners also develop skills by accessing information using internet searches and relevant historical source sites such as the [National Galleries of Scotland](#) or [Scran](#) to gather information. Using a virtual learning environment (VLE) also supports digital skills.

Learning for Sustainability

Learning for Sustainability aims to build the values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and confidence needed to develop practices and make decisions that are compatible with a sustainable and equitable society. In this unit, there are opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of social sustainability while studying specified periods, looking at specific events that can be compared with society today. This can occur when considering viewpoints and explanations and context for events, particularly where societies are very different from what we experience today.

The unit fits with the following [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#):

- 3 Good health and wellbeing: through comparing living conditions in a specified historical period to the expectations of today.
- 5 Gender equality: through exploring how gender impacts circumstance in a specified historical period, with comparison to the present day.

Delivery of unit

This unit is in the 'named social sciences' section of HNC Social Sciences. You can deliver it as part of the group award or as a stand-alone unit.

It is one of two units in the HNC Social Sciences group award that cover history. This unit works well if delivered alongside History B: Historical Debates at SCQF level 7. There should be no unnecessary overlap in content, either within or between units.

The amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your centre's discretion; however, you should consider both outcomes together when you deliver the unit. The overall unit delivery time is a notional 40 hours of contact time for delivery and assessment. We expect learners to commit a further 40 hours of self-directed study.

It would be useful for learners to have access to a laptop or other digital device.

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Content and context

This unit aims to provide an interesting and engaging introduction to history. You can use it as a foundation for subsequent History units.

History is the study of the past, and historical knowledge presents learners with a clearer understanding of the world in which we live. For example, there is an opportunity within the topic Scottish Society 1660–1789 to present a backdrop to the development of the social sciences by introducing learners to the rationalism of the Enlightenment, which was to influence agrarian, industrial, political and scientific changes. Exploring and identifying the mammoth social impact these revolutions had on society at this time also allows learners to link this knowledge to other social science subjects, such as sociology, geography, economics and philosophy, and could offer them a clearer understanding of these areas.

The choice of periods allows you to work within your area of specialism. It also offers learners the opportunity to explore past events in a format that is engaging and interesting.

You should cover only one of the specified periods.

Approaches to delivery

You should structure the teaching programme to allow time for learners to develop meta-skills. You should also allow for assessment practice within the notional hours suggested.

It would be beneficial to take a varied and active learning approach, where learners engage in supported, independent and collaborative learning. You should encourage learners to take a participative and practical approach. Delivery methods you could use include:

- ◆ demonstration
- ◆ tutorial question and answer sessions
- ◆ debate
- ◆ individual and group research tasks
- ◆ presenting findings
- ◆ VLE
- ◆ digital tools and social media
- ◆ film and visual images
- ◆ close reading of sources

The section on meta-skills provides further guidance on incorporating different skills into delivery and evidence.

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August 2024

You can shape delivery and assessment to support learners to develop their academic skills such as time management, multi-tasking ability, digital skills, essay writing skills and questioning ability. You can design formative and summative activities and assessments that encourage learners to practise the skills that they need to progress to the next level of study.

You should encourage a questioning approach at all times, as it leads learners to think like social scientists and be analytical and enquiring, rather than passively accepting facts. This empowers learners by building on essential, transferable skills.

You should introduce primary and secondary sources to highlight different explanations and interpretations of a topic. This allows learners to develop their analytical and evaluative skills.

For example, you could consider the debate surrounding the Treaty of Union 1707 for outcome 1. This topic would immediately highlight to learners that history is not simply a narrative. Learners could examine and explain the main developments associated with the event, using various pieces of evidence and interpretations to help them reach a conclusion.

For outcome 2, the development in the Highlands throughout this period could allow learners to weigh up whether changes to Highland society could be attributed more to a reaction against Jacobitism than to commercialism. Learners could reach a measured conclusion by drawing on both arguments.

Approaches to assessment

You can generate evidence using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable for learners.

We recommend that you assess the unit holistically, as that is best to reduce the learners' assessment burden. You can decide to use a portfolio approach with two or more assessment tasks issued at different times in the unit delivery, if that is better for your learners. Learners can choose what format their submission takes, as long as it addresses each element of each outcome.

The assessment could take the form of an open-book essay or structured questions. Learners must provide a response of approximately 1,500 words, or an individual oral presentation, or a poster exhibition 10 to 12 minutes in duration, or any other method that appropriately meets the evidence requirements. For example, learners could provide evidence requirements in the form of an individual blog or website, consisting of approximately 1,500 words.

If learners choose an oral method, we recommend that you record this in some form or provide assessor notes on the presentation for external verification purposes. Learners must show evidence of meeting all evidence requirements. Ideally, they would complete oral presentations or poster exhibitions individually. If a group presentation is used, individual learners must show coverage of all evidence requirements. To do this, they may need to provide additional responses to structured questions or an essay. Learners should submit their work for marking on a date that you have provided or agreed with them.

NextGen: HN published prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 3.0)
August 2024

You could combine the unit with History B: Historical Debates at SCQF level 7 in an enhanced project combined assessment.

You can choose to use a mix of methods across a cohort, as it may be more suitable for some learners to give a written response and for others to use an oral method or create a blog. It is possible to combine a poster exhibition with an oral presentation. The time across all evidence requirements covered would be 9 to 11 minutes in total. For example, if using a poster and an oral presentation, it would be 9 to 11 minutes for both of these together, not 9 to 11 minutes each. They should also be done on the same occasion. Whichever method learners choose, they must be able to access notes, textbooks and other materials, as it is an open-book assessment.

You should make learners aware of the importance of good judgement in selecting appropriate academic sources. You should encourage them to choose academic sources rather than generic search engines, to enable them to be more confident of information and better equipped to progress to SCQF level 8 units.

If you are using a blog or creation of a website as a way of gathering evidence, it should not be in the public domain. Rather, it should be on an intranet or private area of your VLE to reduce the likelihood of plagiarism.

Authenticating learners' work is essential. It would be helpful to collect notes or visual presentation materials from learners as further evidence of meeting SCQF level 7 in the presentation. You should monitor learners' progress throughout to authenticate submitted work. Where possible, you should use plagiarism detection software.

It is important that learners' responses to the assessment are at SCQF level 7.

Opportunities for e-assessment

Assessment that is supported by information and communication technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software, may be appropriate for some assessments in this unit.

If your centre wants to use e-assessment, you must ensure that you apply the national standard to all evidence and that conditions of assessment (as specified in the evidence requirements) are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence.

Equality and inclusion

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

You should take into account the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs is available on the assessment arrangements web page:

www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Information for learners

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This information explains:

- ◆ what the unit is about
- ◆ what you should know or be able to do before you start
- ◆ what you need to do during the unit
- ◆ opportunities for further learning and employment

Unit information

This unit introduces you to the study of history by focusing on one specified historical period.

You should have good communication skills and an interest in history. It would also be helpful to have some basic digital skills.

During the unit, you learn how to examine and explain major developments in human societies and the impact they have had.

You also learn how to analyse various interpretations and explanations surrounding the topic and how to reach a valid conclusion from evidence provided in primary and secondary sources. Throughout the unit, you develop an enquiring mind and skills in interpreting viewpoints using primary and secondary sources of information.

On completing the unit, you will be able to:

- 1 explain the main developments associated with a specific situation, a particular event or a series of events
- 2 reach a measured conclusion on an issue, event or series of events using evidence from primary and secondary sources

You are assessed using an open-book assessment covering both unit outcomes. This means that you have access to materials such as textbooks, notes and your virtual learning environment (VLE). You can give your assessment response in writing or orally. If your assessment response is written, it must be approximately 1,500 words, and if it is oral, it must be approximately 10 to 12 minutes long.

During the unit, you develop academic skills such as time management, multi-tasking ability, digital skills, essay writing skills and questioning ability, developed in the formative and summative activities and assessments.

You also develop key literacies such as communication, developed in formative and summative assessment. You learn to convey complex ideas in a well-structured and coherent way, with references where appropriate. Your lecturer may also use oral presentations and discussions to help you improve your communication skills. You develop digital skills and computer literacy by using digital packages to produce assessment

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August 2024

evidence and using internet sources to research information on specific historical periods or to look at primary and secondary sources of information.

The unit introduces you to Learning for Sustainability ideas, with links made to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly while studying specific events that may allow comparison to society today.

This unit can support learning in other related units, such as History B: Historical Debates at SCQF level 7. You may be able to study HND Social Sciences or a degree programme in a related subject if you study the unit as part of HNC Social Sciences.

Meta-skills

Throughout the unit, you can develop meta-skills to enhance your employability in the social sciences sector.

Meta-skills include self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

You develop these naturally as you take part in the range of learning and teaching activities and produce assessment responses. Improving meta-skills such as organising your time (self-management) and communicating ideas clearly (social intelligence) are useful for future study and employment, as well as during this course.

Administrative information

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Superclass: DB

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ In 'Evidence requirements', the length of written and oral responses was increased. List of requirements reworded for clarity and second bullet point deleted.◆ In 'Knowledge and skills', the wording for 'knowledge' in outcome 1 was changed to fit better with the evidence requirements. Additional bullet point added for 'skills' in outcome 1.◆ In 'Approaches to assessment', additional information allowing group presentations was added.◆ Rewording or additional sentences to standardise statements across HNC Social Sciences units in 'Unit purpose', 'Evidence requirements', 'Meta-skills' and 'Information for learners'.	June 2023
3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Removed reference to requirement to use holistic assessment in 'Evidence Requirements' and 'Information for learners'.◆ In 'Approaches to assessment', additional words that a holistic or portfolio approach can be used were added.	April 2024

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