

# Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

## Criminology: Themes and Criminological Case Studies (SCQF level 8)

**Unit code:** J80N 48  
**SCQF level:** 8 (24 SCQF credit points)  
**Valid from:** session 2024–25

### **Prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 2.0) 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 builds on learners' knowledge and understanding of criminology by introducing them to theories associated with specific themes. They consider a range of individual criminological case studies that have had significant political, criminal, social or judicial consequences.

The unit is aimed at learners who want to further their knowledge and skills in criminology.

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 criminology, for example National Qualifications at SCQF level 6, Professional Development Award (PDA) in Criminology at SCQF level 7 or Higher National Qualifications at SCQF level 7, or other similar qualifications
- ◆ other knowledge, skills and experience relevant to the unit

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

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

## Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

- 1 critically analyse the political, criminal, social or judicial consequences of criminological case studies, related to a theme
- 2 critically analyse criminological theories in relation to case studies on a theme
- 3 critically evaluate opposing criminological theories in relation to case studies on a theme

## Evidence requirements

Learners should provide written or oral evidence covering all unit outcomes, produced under open-book conditions. You should give the task at an appropriate point in 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 between 2,500 and 3,000 words, and oral responses must be 18 to 22 minutes in duration.

Learners study four themes in total: two from the approved course themes list, and a further two from the subject-specific list. Learners taking this as a stand-alone unit also study these four themes.

Learners must study two from this list of approved course themes:

- ◆ History and social change
- ◆ Power and control
- ◆ Our changing world
- ◆ Deviance
- ◆ Inequalities
- ◆ Globalisation
- ◆ Culture and identity
- ◆ Human environments
- ◆ Ethics
- ◆ Origins of behaviour

Learners must study a further two from this list of subject-specific themes:

- ◆ Punishment
- ◆ Social harms and social justice
- ◆ Police organisation and culture
- ◆ Extraordinary behaviour

You assess learners on one theme from the four they study in the unit, and on one criminological case study related to that theme.

Learners' responses must include:

- ◆ explanation of one criminological case study related to a theme
- ◆ critical analysis of the political, criminal, social or judicial consequences of a criminological case study, related to a theme
- ◆ critical analysis of two criminological theories on one case study, related to the theme — these theories can either support or refute the criminological thinking on the chosen theme
- ◆ critical evaluation of two opposing theories on one criminological case study, related to a theme

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

Learners must fully reference their assessment, using reliable sources appropriate for SCQF level 8. They must list all sources in a bibliography or reference list, in a recognised standard format such as Harvard or APA.

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The SCQF level of this unit provides additional context relating to the quality of evidence.

Learners should:

- ◆ contribute information that is complex, accurate and relevant to its purpose and audience
- ◆ integrate knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of different viewpoints to present evidence and arguments in a logical and coherent way
- ◆ use a structure that is appropriate to the purpose
- ◆ select the most appropriate sources of information and accurately reference source materials

## Knowledge and skills

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

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 1</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ a range of criminological case studies, each related to a theme</li> <li>◆ the significant political, criminal, social or judicial consequences of specific criminological case studies, related to a chosen theme</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 1</b> Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ critically analyse the significant political, criminal, social or judicial consequences that a specific criminological case study has had, related to a chosen theme</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 2</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ criminological theories that can be applied to specific criminological case studies, related to a chosen theme</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 2</b> Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ critically analyse criminological theories, in relation to a case study on a chosen theme</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 3</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ how to critically evaluate theories that can be applied to criminological case studies related to a chosen theme, using related evidence, concepts, ideas or other viewpoints</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 3</b> Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ critically evaluate opposing criminological theories on a criminological case study related to a chosen theme</li> </ul>

## Meta-skills

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

The unit helps learners develop the meta-skills of self-management, social intelligence and innovation. 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 topics and assessment method.

### Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ focusing: completing the assessment work to clear deadlines; being proactive in planning and developing assessment responses
- ◆ integrity: acting in an ethical way to complete assessments; developing good working relationships with peers; including citations and referencing for assessments; considering plagiarism and intellectual property
- ◆ adapting: acquiring new knowledge and skills; using different technologies to communicate and complete assessments; using a virtual learning environment (VLE); reflecting on own performance to improve approach
- ◆ initiative: starting work as early as possible; decision making; self-motivation; reading and thinking about theories, research evidence and sources; using library facilities; setting own deadlines

### Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ communicating: listening to information on theories, research and sources; explaining ideas; producing suitable, understandable assessment responses; sharing written or oral ideas and opinions on themes and criminological case studies covered in the unit
- ◆ feeling: discussing theories and expressing opinions; understanding other perspectives and respecting other viewpoints in discussions
- ◆ collaborating: working together on formative presentations; taking account of others in planning and carrying out tasks; building relationships with peers

### Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ curiosity: seeking knowledge about theories and individual criminological case studies, making the most of library research time; taking part in class discussion; questioning motives, ideas, information and sources of evidence

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- ◆ sense-making: participating in discussion; understanding why people behave as they do; considering and evaluating ideas
- ◆ critical thinking: making logical connections and reasoned judgements through discussion; drawing conclusions based on evidence; reviewing and evaluating research evidence

Learners could also develop other meta-skills in the unit depending on the learning and teaching activities you carry out. These include:

- ◆ social intelligence: leading
- ◆ innovation: creativity

You can find more information on how to develop these in the Educator Guide.

## **Literacies**

Learners develop core skills in the following literacies:

### **Numeracy**

Learners develop numeracy skills by understanding facts and statistics related to individual criminological case studies. This could include, for example, data on gender, ethnicity and corporate crime.

### **Communication**

Learners develop communication skills during formative and summative assessment. It is part of the evidence requirements for the unit to ensure learners convey complex ideas in a well-structured and coherent way, with academic references where appropriate. You can give learners opportunities to carry out oral presentations and engage in discussions.

### **Digital**

Learners develop digital skills and computer literacy by using digital packages to produce assessments, and internet sources to research information on criminological case studies. You can give them guidance on appropriate sources. Using a 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 the unit, there are opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of social sustainability while studying themes in criminology, with links to the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#).

The unit fits with the following UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- 5 Gender equality: through encouraging all learners to understand the role of gender in crime and criminal justice and the impact this has on the community both locally and globally.
- 10 Reduced inequalities: through reducing inequalities within and among countries. This fits in with themes such as inequalities (racial policing, racial profiling, class discrimination) and international policies.
- 13 Climate action: through proactive research into criminological case studies that focus on environmental disasters. This helps learners to understand the impact of climate change.
- 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions: through promoting the sustainable development of peaceful and inclusive societies, with access to justice for all, and accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, particularly in policing and the criminal justice system.

## Delivery of unit

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

This unit works well alongside Social Sciences: Social Policy, the mandatory HND Social Sciences unit.

The overall unit delivery time is a notional 120 hours of contact time for delivery and assessment. We expect learners to commit a further 120 hours of self-directed study.

The amount of time allocated to each outcome is at your discretion. We suggest the following distribution of time:

**Outcome 1** — critically analyse the political, criminal, social or judicial consequences of criminological case studies, related to a theme  
(50 hours)

**Outcome 2** — critically analyse criminological theories in relation to case studies on a theme  
(50 hours)

**Outcome 3** — critically evaluate opposing criminological theories in relation to case studies on a theme  
(20 hours)

## **Additional guidance**

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

### **Content and context for this unit**

The unit aims to provide an interesting and engaging introduction to individual cases of crime, and analysis and evaluation using criminological theories.

The unit provides an overview of four themes. Whether you deliver it as a freestanding unit or as part of the group award, you should deliver two themes from the approved course themes list and a further two from the subject-specific list. Where possible, learners should influence the topics chosen for delivery. You select one of the four themes for summative assessment. Learners can select one criminological case study on which to base the summative assessment.

You can find further details of the course themes in the Educator Guide.

We suggest areas of study in the following list of themes. This is an indicative list. You are not expected to cover all aspects suggested under each theme. You are not limited to the criminological cases provided as examples. You can introduce other appropriate criminological case studies. You can allow learners to choose their own individual criminological case study for summative assessment, as long as it relates to one of the four chosen approved course themes or subject-specific themes.

### **Approved course themes**

Learners must study two themes from this list.

#### **History and social change**

Al Capone, a notorious gangster during the 1920s Prohibition era, epitomised organised crime with activities such as bootlegging. His case emphasised the need for legal reform and increased law enforcement against organised crime. His prosecution demonstrated that even influential figures could be brought to justice. Capone's activities disrupted society, exposed political corruption and highlighted the complex link between organised crime and the legal system.

Roe v Wade (1973) significantly shaped US abortion laws, addressing privacy rights and legalising abortion. Evolving abortion laws reflect changing societal views on reproductive rights, autonomy and women's bodies, and have an impact on the legal and ethical aspects of reproductive justice and control.

#### **Power and control**

Furman v Georgia (1972) is a landmark case. It addressed the constitutionality of the death penalty and its application, and led to profound changes in the criminal justice system in the US.

The 'Me Too' campaign (2006) exemplifies the criminological dynamics of power and control by highlighting the systemic abuse and exploitation prevalent in society. It emphasises the

ways in which individuals in positions of power can exert control over vulnerable individuals, particularly within the context of sexual harassment and assault. It was reprised in 2020, in the case of United States v Weinstein.

### **Our changing world**

The MOVEit cyber-attack in 2003 exposed vulnerabilities in managed file transfer (MFT) software, emphasising the need to secure digital infrastructure. This large-scale international cyber-attack highlighted the shift from lone hackers to organised networks exploiting digital weaknesses for various gains. Following the MOVEit breach, a legal action was initiated against MOVEit publisher Progress Software, potentially setting a precedent for similar actions against software firms targeted in supply chain attacks. Progress Software faces allegations of negligence and breach of contract in five nationwide class action lawsuits in the US.

‘Unabomber’ Ted Kaczynski’s case (1986) exemplifies the interplay of a changing world and the criminal justice system. His reclusive and anti-technology stance stemmed from personal grievances and led to a series of nationwide bombings. The case prompted a complex examination of his radicalisation, mental health, and his motivations within the context of criminal prosecution and psychological evaluation.

### **Deviance**

The ‘Bling Ring’ case (2008) involved celebrity-obsessed teenagers and high-profile burglaries. This case highlighted societal values, celebrity culture and peer influence leading to criminal behaviour, questioning norms and the justice system’s response. While the legal proceedings in the Bling Ring case were relatively straightforward, it set a precedent for how the justice system handles cases involving high-profile individuals. It underscored the importance of prosecuting burglary and theft cases involving celebrities with the same seriousness as any other case.

Edward Snowden’s leak of classified National Security Agency documents in 2013 exemplifies deviance with far-reaching social, political and criminological impacts. It brought unauthorised government surveillance to light, igniting debates on privacy, government power and the delicate balance between security and civil liberties. Snowden’s actions also triggered discussions about the moral responsibility of whistleblowers, emphasising the need for legal protections to encourage accountability without undue punishment.

### **Inequalities**

The case of Kalief Browder (2015) saw Browder, a young black man, held at a jail on Rikers Island for years without trial for a minor theft charge, before he took his own life. The case exemplifies the role of inequalities in the criminal justice system, by highlighting the impact of pretrial detention, racial disparities and the lack of resources for vulnerable individuals.

The 1993 murder of Stephen Lawrence in the UK had profound consequences across political, criminal, social and judicial domains, particularly with reference to racism. The flawed investigation brought to light systemic problems in the justice system, eventually resulting in the convictions of two suspects in 2012. The case triggered widespread public outrage and catalysed discussions about racial inequality, contributing to a significant shift in public opinion against racism. The Macpherson inquiry exposed the presence of ‘institutional

racism' within law enforcement agencies, leading to extensive institutional reforms and legislative changes addressing hate crimes and racism. Lawrence's murder drove lasting racial justice changes in the UK.

### **Globalisation**

The Enron scandal (2001) involved the manipulation of financial records and fraudulent activities. The case demonstrated the intersection of corporate misconduct and globalisation. The company's global reach highlighted the challenges of regulating and prosecuting complex white-collar crimes across international boundaries.

The case of Julian Assange (2010), the founder of WikiLeaks, facing extradition across multiple jurisdictions including Sweden and the US, exemplifies how cross-border cyber-crimes and information leaks trigger globalised criminal justice responses.

### **Culture and identity**

The Qandeel Baloch case (2016) investigated the murder of a Pakistani social media celebrity and feminist. The case underscores the profound impact of culture and identity on social, political and criminological aspects of society. Her fame for challenging norms and advocating for women's rights clashed with conservative society, culminating in her murder. The event illustrates how cultural influences shape violence, and how individuals challenging norms can symbolise wider societal struggles.

In 2007, Amanda Knox was convicted and imprisoned for the murder of Meredith Kercher in Italy. The case and Knox's subsequent acquittal show the impact of culture and identity on social, political and criminological dimensions of society. Cultural differences in behaviour and demeanour shaped perceptions of her guilt or innocence. The case underscores how cultural misunderstandings, media portrayal and national identities influence public opinion, legal outcomes and diplomatic relations in criminal cases.

### **Human environments**

The Exxon Valdez disaster (1989), where an oil tanker spilled millions of gallons of oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound, illustrates the interconnectedness of human environments and the criminal justice system. The subsequent class action jury trial (1994) revealed how corporate negligence and inadequate regulations played a role in the disaster and how this, and the resulting environmental impacts, shaped subsequent legal actions seeking accountability and compensation.

The Broken Windows thesis (1982) in criminology shaped law enforcement policy, promoting proactive strategies to prevent crime. It influenced a shift towards addressing minor offences, community collaboration and data-driven methods, including zero tolerance policies. However, the thesis faced criticism for potentially encouraging over-policing and creating disparities in enforcement, leading to adaptations for more balanced, community-focused approaches.

### **Ethics**

The Watergate scandal in the early 1970s had significant political, social and judicial consequences. President Nixon's resignation was a historic event that eroded trust in the

government and fostered political disillusionment. The scandal led to indictments and convictions of high-ranking officials, and highlighted the power of investigative journalism. Watergate increased political awareness, scepticism of figures of authority and scrutiny of political campaigns. It resulted in legal reforms, the creation of the Federal Election Commission and the reinforcement of the principle that no one — not even the president — is above the law.

The case of the Central Park Five (1989), where five black and Latino teenagers were wrongfully convicted of a brutal assault, underscores the role of ethics in the criminal justice system. It highlights issues of racial bias, coerced confessions and the importance of upholding principles of fairness and justice.

### **Origins of behaviour**

In 2001, Roy Whiting was convicted and imprisoned for the abduction and murder of seven-year-old Sarah Payne. The case, and Whiting's previous convictions, exemplify origins of behaviour within the criminal justice system by shedding light on the complex interplay of factors such as childhood trauma, potential mental health issues and environmental influences, and how they can contribute to the development of criminal behaviour.

In 2004, Lisa Montgomery murdered Bobbie Jo Stinnett and removed her near-term baby from her womb. The case can be understood as a tragic outcome of Lisa's traumatic childhood experiences, subsequent mental health problems and the delusions she experienced during her own pregnancy. The case highlights the importance of addressing mental health issues and providing support to individuals who have experienced severe trauma to prevent such tragedies in the future. Montgomery's execution in 2021 sparked debates about the criminal justice system's handling of individuals with severe mental health issues.

### **Subject-specific themes**

Learners must study two themes from this list.

#### **Punishment**

Nelson Mandela's 27-year imprisonment for anti-apartheid activism made him a symbol of resistance in South Africa. His 1990 release sparked negotiations to end apartheid, and led to the formation of a multiracial democracy. This case exposed the injustice of South Africa's criminal justice system and highlighted the role of international pressure and activism in South Africa's transition from oppression to democracy.

The introduction of mandatory minimum sentencing in America's 'war on drugs', with the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, had far-reaching impacts. It resulted in disproportionately long sentences for non-violent drug offenders, especially in marginalised communities. Criticised for the racial disparities in conviction numbers, it spurred discussions on reforming sentencing policies, addressing systemic inequalities and emphasising rehabilitation over punishment.

### **Social harms and social justice**

The Bhopal gas disaster in 1984 exposed the intersection of social harm, corporate responsibility and social justice. Thousands died when gas leaked from a Union Carbide pesticide plant in Bhopal, India. Subsequent legal cases revealed corporate negligence and regulatory gaps. This incident triggered global discussions on environmental justice, corporate accountability, and government and industry roles in disaster prevention. It prompted changes in safety regulations, and had a considerable impact on perceptions of corporate behaviour and global social justice concerns.

The rise of 'Black Lives Matter', a global campaign to highlight racism, discrimination and racial inequality, was fuelled by police violence against black individuals. It underscores the connection between social harm, social justice and criminal justice. High-profile cases like the fatal shootings of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, and the killing of Eric Garner, led to protests and calls for criminal justice reform. The movement exposed systemic racism, police brutality and the unequal treatment of individuals depending on their race. It shaped public opinion and politics, and led to policy changes in areas like police accountability and racial profiling, and contributed to the pursuit of social justice.

### **Police organisation and culture**

In 1991, Rodney King was beaten by police officers in Los Angeles. The incident exposed concerns about police culture, excessive force and racial bias. The officers' acquittal sparked riots and protests, and put a spotlight on police misconduct, the lack of accountability and a call for reform. This event prompted increased scrutiny of police practices, changes in use-of-force policies and a broader discussion about systemic problems in the criminal justice system.

During the UK miners' strikes in the 1980s, police played a central role in maintaining order and facilitating coal deliveries, leading to tensions with the striking miners. This highlighted how police organisation and culture intersected with broader societal, political and criminal justice issues. The consequent clashes underscored the struggle between law enforcement's role in preserving order and upholding government policies, sparking debates on civil liberties, power balance and policy impacts on marginalised communities.

### **Extraordinary behaviour**

The 2012 'Cannibal Cop' case involving former NYPD officer Gilberto Valle focused on Valle's disturbing online discussions around violent fantasies. It raised legal questions about distinguishing fantasy from intent, with Valle claiming the conversations were merely role-play. The case also sparked discussions about internet privacy, free speech and addressing digital threats. Valle's conviction was later overturned, but it triggered debates about law enforcement staff monitoring online behaviour and the need for legal frameworks in such cases.

The 1989 'Night Stalker' case led to the conviction of Richard Ramirez who committed violent murders, assaults and burglaries in Los Angeles. The case highlights how the criminal justice system deals with exceptional criminal behaviour. Ramirez's crimes prompted debates on crime prevention, law enforcement tactics and inter-agency co-ordination, and raised questions about the death penalty, mental health and media coverage of criminal cases.

## **Approaches to delivery**

You should structure the learning and teaching programme to allow time for learners to develop meta-skills, and academic and other transferable skills. You should also allow for assessment practice within the notional hours suggested.

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 they need to progress to the next level of study.

The unit aims to develop learners' skills in comprehensive critical analysis and evaluation of various criminological theories as they are applied to real-world case studies of significant social, political or judicial importance. These criminological case studies should revolve around intricate criminal events or relevant legal arguments (such as *Roe v Wade*, 1973) that have had important consequences on society, politics or the judiciary. Learners should aim to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that contributed to the crime or to the specific legal argument and its impact on the wider social world, by examining each case through the lenses of different criminological theories. You should aim to cover at least four criminological case studies, relating them to relevant themes. You should ensure that you cover four themes, two from the approved course themes and two from the subject-specific themes, in your delivery.

Theories you could discuss with learners include classical, biological, psychological, sociological and conflict theories, among others. You should explore each theory's key principles and assumptions, to give learners a foundation from which they can analyse and evaluate that theory. The background to a criminological case study should include an in-depth account of the situation, including its context, participants and consequences. You should focus on how the facts of the case resulted in consequences throughout society, politics or the judiciary, and the impact on various stakeholders (for example the family, teachers, social workers, media, police, health care professionals). While learners' evaluations should be holistic, you should encourage comparative analysis, where they consider the strengths and weaknesses of each criminological theory as applied to the specific case study. You could also consider any overlaps or contradictions between theories, providing insights into the complexities in understanding crime.

You should discuss the policy implications derived from critically analysing a case using different criminological theories. You should aim to identify potential strategies and interventions to improve things in the future, and address their social and political repercussions. The discussion is likely to cover key findings of the analysis and highlight the most effective criminological theories in explaining the case's dynamics.

You could also reiterate the importance of integrating multiple perspectives for a comprehensive understanding of complex cases with social and political significance. You can find more details on suitable criminological case studies in the Educator Guide.



Learners can benefit from a varied and active learning approach, where they engage in supported, independent and collaborative learning. You should encourage learners to take a participative and practical approach. Delivery methods could include:

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

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

You should deliver the unit in a learner-centred manner and always encourage a questioning approach. In doing so, you engage learners and encourage them to think like social scientists and be analytical and enquiring, rather than passively accepting facts. Developing essential transferable skills also helps learners access further study and employment.

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

## **Approaches to assessment**

Although learners study four themes, you must assess them on only one. You assess learners on only one criminological case study too. 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.

Learners can choose to submit their assessment evidence in any format that meets each outcome. 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.

The assessment could take the form of an open-book essay question or a set of structured questions. Learners must provide a response of approximately 2,500 to 3,000 words, or an individual oral presentation or poster exhibition of 18 to 22 minutes in duration, or any other method that appropriately meets the evidence requirements. For example, learners could provide the evidence in the form of an individual blog or website, consisting of approximately 2,500 to 3,000 words.

You can choose to use a mix of methods across a group, as it may be more suitable for some learners to give a written response and for others to use an oral method. Whichever

method learners choose, they must be able to access notes, textbooks and other materials, as it is an open-book assessment.

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 an essay or additional responses to structured questions. Learners should submit their work for marking on a date that you have provided or agreed with them.

Learners can combine a poster exhibition with an oral presentation. For example, a learner could produce a detailed poster on a criminological case study and cover criminological theories and their evaluation in an oral presentation. In this case, the total time across both outcomes and all evidence requirements would be 18 to 22 minutes.

You could ask learners to produce a report, giving them guidance on what they should focus on. A report is a structured document that presents information, findings, analysis and recommendations on a specific topic or subject. Please refer to the Educator Guide for more information on how learners could lay out a report.

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 9 study.

If learners are creating a blog or website for their assessment, 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. You could collect notes or visual presentation materials from learners as further evidence of meeting SCQF level 8. 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 8.

## **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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

## Information for learners

### **Criminology: Themes and Criminological Case Studies (SCQF level 8)**

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 aims to develop your skills in the critical analysis and evaluation of criminological theories as they are applied to real-world criminological case studies. You learn about cases that have had significant political, criminal, social or judicial consequences. You examine cases through the lenses of different criminological theories and gain an understanding of the factors that contributed to criminality. You also look at the cases' subsequent impacts on wider society.

Before you start the unit, you should have good communication skills and an interest in criminology. It would also be helpful to have some basic digital skills.

On completing the unit, you can:

- 1 critically analyse the political, criminal, social or judicial consequences of criminological case studies, related to a theme
- 2 critically analyse criminological theories in relation to case studies on a theme
- 3 critically evaluate opposing criminological theories in relation to case studies on a theme

You should look to develop an enquiring and critical mind, thinking about ideas such as:

- ◆ the political, criminal, social or judicial consequences of criminological case studies
- ◆ what specific theories might tell us about criminal behaviour
- ◆ the contribution theories have made to our understanding of specific criminological case studies through the lens of selected themes

You are assessed using an open-book assessment covering all 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 2,500 to 3,000 words, and if it is oral, it must be between 18 and 22 minutes long.

During the unit, you develop academic skills such as time management, multi-tasking ability, digital skills, essay-writing skills and questioning ability.

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You also develop key literacies such as communication. 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 complete assessments, and internet sources to research information on criminological case studies and relevant theories.

The unit introduces you to Learning for Sustainability ideas, with links made to the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#). These are particularly relevant to many aspects of the study of criminology, and link directly to several of the course and subject themes, including human environments, deviance, and police organisation and culture.

You may be able to study a degree programme in a related subject if you study the unit as part of the Higher National Diploma (HND) in Social Sciences.

## **Meta-skills**

Throughout the unit, you 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), is useful for current and future study, and employment.

# Administrative information

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**Superclass:** EE

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## History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Removed reference to the requirement to use holistic assessment in 'Evidence requirements', and in 'Information for learners'.</li><li>◆ In 'Approaches to assessment' additional words that a holistic of portfolio approach can be used were added. Also, additional information allowing group presentations was added.</li></ul>	May 2024

Note: please check [SQA's website](#) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.