

Route map through assessment

Course: Sociology

Level: National 5

This document is intended to assist teachers in planning and delivering the overall vision for Curriculum for Excellence.

The vision for the new national qualifications is to create assessment opportunities that follow and support learning and teaching. This follows the principles laid out in *Building the Curriculum 5* and makes assessment a natural part of learning and teaching.

This route map aims to signpost all of the relevant material that is available to support your subject. Your professional judgement is vital and the documents listed below are intended to support you in deciding the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and assess candidates.

Education Scotland has produced a [professional focus paper](#) for sociology, and this is a good starting point as it provides support to help develop learning and teaching approaches that take forward the purposes and principles of Curriculum for Excellence through Sociology National 5.

Sociology National 5 course content

The main SQA sociology page is found [here](#), with those specifically related to National 5 located [here](#). Staff should also regularly check the updates and announcements section of this page.

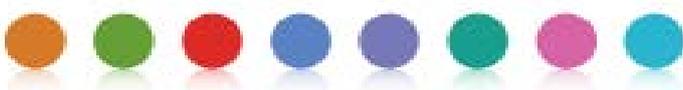
The course specification can be found at http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseSpec_N5_HealthWellbeing_Sociology.pdf.

There are three units: Sociology: Human Society, Sociology: Culture and Identity and Sociology: Social Issues.

Sociology: Human Society general aims: To develop learners' understanding of the sociological approach to studying human societies. Learners will investigate the research methods used in sociology and will describe relationships that exist amongst individuals, groups and institutions from different sociological perspectives.

Sociology: Culture and Identity general aims: To equip learners with a basic knowledge and understanding of how to use sociological concepts to explain culture and identity. Learners will investigate and explain the relationship between culture and identity, and develop skills in collecting, using and communicating information from a range of sources. Learning in this unit will raise awareness of diversity.

Sociology: Social Issues general aims: To develop learners' sociological understanding of contemporary social issues. Learners will develop knowledge of sociological theories and the terminology used to explain social issues. They will also develop skills in using a range of sources, including research evidence, to justify points of view.



More detail on course coverage can be found in the [course and unit support notes](#).

Further mandatory information on course coverage is found on page 7 of the [course assessment specification](#). This breaks each unit down into sections and topics.

A course comparison from National 3 to National 5 is available [here](#).

Course assessment

At National 5 added value will be assessed in a course assessment, which consists of a question paper and an assignment. The course will be graded A–D as outlined in the [course assessment specification](#).

Assessment structure

- Component 1 – question paper 50 marks
- Component 2 – assignment 30 marks

Question paper

There will be a question paper of 1 hour 30 minutes worth 50 marks, which will be set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. The purpose of the question paper is to assess learners' use of skills, and their knowledge and understanding of sociological perspectives, theories and concepts. Learners are required to use sociological explanations and research evidence to respond to questions. The question paper will have three questions: two worth 15 marks and one worth 20 marks. This means that the question paper will have 50 marks out of a total of 80 marks for the course assessment.

A specimen question paper and marking scheme are available [here](#).

Assignment

The assignment is worth 30 marks. Learners will have an open choice of topics and must undertake this assessment independently, although reasonable assistance may be provided at the start of the process. More information on assessment conditions and 'reasonable assistance' can be found on page 4 of the sociology assignment [general assessment information](#). The assignment will be carried out over a period of time and comprises several stages, culminating in a report of 800–1200 words in which the learner will give a sociologically informed view of the topic studied.

General information on the assignment can be found [here](#).

Unit assessment

Units are mandatory when taken as part of the Sociology National 5 course but they can be taken independently. Unit support notes follow on from the [course support notes](#).

Each individual unit also has a National 5 unit specification.

Each unit specification gives details of the outcomes and assessment standards. There are **two** outcomes per unit: one based on skills and one based on knowledge and understanding.

[Sociology: Human Society](#)

[Sociology: Culture and Identity](#)

[Sociology: Social Issues.](#)

It is important to consider the following:

- learners must meet all the outcomes and assessment standards
- evidence should be generated through learning and teaching.
- learners should have access to resources to complete the assessment task.
- staff should use their professional judgment when looking at the assessment evidence and ensure that minimum competency is met
- staff should undertake quality assurance regularly.

Three different ways of gathering evidence have been suggested by the SQA:

- unit by unit – unit outcomes and assessment standards are completed unit by unit
- combined approach – links knowledge and understanding from two units together.
- portfolio – allows learners to take full responsibility for their learning and bring various areas of the course together.

Evidence is gathered on an ongoing basis and is supported by the use of a range of learning and teaching approaches. Unit assessment support is kept on the SQA Secure website.

Verification

The verification process is meant to be supportive and not onerous.

Internal verification is the process of ensuring standards are applied uniformly and consistently within a school in line with national standards. External verification is the process of ensuring that national standards are maintained consistently across all schools.

Prior verification

Staff who devise their own assessments can send them to SQA for prior verification, free of charge. This is only necessary where significant changes have been made to the unit assessment provided. It gives departments confidence that their proposed assessment is fit for purpose and meets national standards.

Internal verification

As a matter of course staff should be quality assuring their assessments by carrying out standardisation exercises, for example agreement trials, dual assessment, cross assessment, double marking and blind marking. A sample of learners' work should be marked by more than one staff member in a department, and in single-person departments an arrangement should be made with another local authority school.

External verification

Schools will submit a sample of learners' evidence for scrutiny by subject-specialist qualification verifiers. SQA intend that every school will be verified over the first few years. Verification will take place in November, February and May. Twelve samples will be asked for.

Schools must [retain the evidence](#) until 31 July of each academic year.

Sociology specific information can be found [here](#).

Key messages from verification will be put up on the SQA website.

Results services

There are no longer any appeals. SQA offers two services: (1) Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service (within ten days of sitting external assessment) and (2) Post Results Service. The latter consists of either a clerical check or a marking review. It is likely that these will be carried out in conjunction with the school SQA co-ordinator.

Education Scotland support materials

Advice and support for new national qualifications (Glow password required):

[Course materials for sociology](#)

[Learning and teaching advice for sociology](#)

Other useful websites

A quick guide to finding [vital information about Curriculum for Excellence](#).

This appears under three headings:

- the latest guidance, updates and plans for embedding Curriculum for Excellence
- information on assessment
- information on the new qualifications.

The BBC has pulled together all its learning content in a new Knowledge and Learning Beta site that includes Class Clips:

www.bbc.co.uk/education

The Bitesize website has also been updated for National 5:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/z33d7ty>