

Route map through learning, teaching and assessment

Course: Modern Studies

Level: Higher

This route map is intended to assist staff in planning and delivering the overall vision for Curriculum for Excellence. It has been developed to signpost the relevant support materials available to assist staff in the planning of learning, teaching and assessment of Higher Modern Studies.

The vision for the new 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.

Education Scotland has published support materials to help staff develop programmes of learning drawn from three sources: course materials commissioned by Education Scotland, other support materials produced by staff seconded to Education Scotland and course materials provided by staff through their education authorities. Further materials will be added as they become available.

These support materials are not intended to constrain staff, hence they are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. They provide suggestions on approaches to learning and teaching that will promote development of the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills for Higher Modern Studies. Staff are encouraged to draw on these materials, and existing materials, to develop their own programmes of learning which are appropriate to the needs of learners within their own context.

The link to Education Scotland's support materials can be found below together with a number of other subject-specific links staff may find helpful as they **develop programmes of learning** for Higher Modern Studies. These links are followed by a sequential list of the key guidelines, advice and support for the Higher Modern Studies **qualification**. This information is intended to support staff in deciding the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and assess learners.

Useful links for learning and teaching Higher Modern Studies

Education Scotland NQ Course materials on Glow (login and password required)

A wide range of learning and teaching resources to help staff develop programmes of learning

http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/nqcoursematerials/subjects/m/nqresource_tcm4828792.asp (copy and paste this link into your browser)

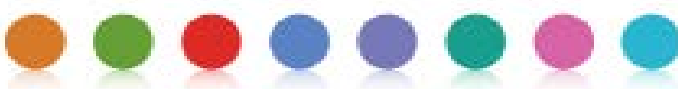
SQA course and unit support notes providing advice and guidance on learning and teaching

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnitSupportNotes_Higher_SocialStudies_ModernStudies.pdf

National Assessment Resource on Glow (login and password required)

Materials that inform planning for learning, teaching, moderation and assessment.

<https://www.narscotland.org.uk/>



Higher Modern Studies Course Content

The main SQA Modern Studies page can be found at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45627.html>.

Pages specifically relating to Higher are at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47922.html>. Staff should regularly check the updates and announcements section of this page.

There are three units in Higher Modern Studies:

- Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom
- Social Issues in the United Kingdom
- International Issues.

Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom: In the Democracy unit, staff and learners are able to choose between focusing on Scottish or UK politics. Notwithstanding this, learners need to have a broad understanding of the current devolved political structure so that they are best able to apply their understanding in whichever context is selected for further study. See page 23 of the course and unit support notes for a suggested overview.

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnitSupportNotes_Higher_SocialStudies_ModernStudies.pdf

The mandatory course content for both UK and Scottish politics focuses on:

- Representation
- Voting systems
- Election campaigns
- Influence.

Case studies should be used throughout to exemplify Political issues in Scotland or The United Kingdom (depending on the focus of study).

Social Issues in the United Kingdom: In the Social Issues unit, staff and learners are able to choose between focusing on Social Inequality or Crime and Law. See page 33 of the course and unit support notes for the specific information regarding mandatory content coverage:

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnitSupportNotes_Higher_SocialStudies_ModernStudies.pdf

In the Social Inequality focus, mandatory course content includes:

- Evidence of inequality in the United Kingdom
- Theories and causes of social inequality
- The impact of inequality on specific groups
- Attempts to tackle inequality and how effective this has been.

Case studies should be used throughout to exemplify social inequality with regard to specific groups, eg ethnic minorities, women, or those on a low income.

In the Crime and Law focus, mandatory course content includes:

- The role of law in society
- Theories and causes of crime
- The impact of crime on society
- Methods of tackling crime and their effectiveness.

International Issues: In the International Issues unit, staff and learners are able to choose between focusing on a world power or an international issue. Specific information regarding mandatory content coverage is contained on page 44 of the course and unit support notes.

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnitSupportNotes_Higher_SocialStudies_ModernStudies.pdf

In the World Power focus, mandatory content includes:

- political system and process
- recent socio-economic issues
- the role of the world power in international relations.

The world power selected must be a member of the G20 (including the EU), but excluding the UK.

In the International Issues focus, mandatory content includes:

- causes of the issue
- consequences of the issue
- attempts at the resolution of the issue
- effectiveness of resolution.

The major world issue chosen for study should be one which has contemporary relevance, has implications beyond a single country or region and affects other countries, either as direct participants or as parties to an attempted resolution.

A course comparison of National 5 and Higher is also available.

http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/H_Modern_Studies_Course_comparison.pdf

Unit assessment

Units are mandatory when taken as part of the full Higher Modern Studies course but they can be standalone. Unit support notes follow on from the course support notes.

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnitSupportNotes_Higher_SocialStudies_ModernStudies.pdf

All units are available as free-standing units of study. In order to gain full course award, however, learners will be expected to overcome all relevant outcome and assessment standards from each unit, in addition to the final question paper and assignment.

Each unit specification gives details of the relevant outcome and assessment standards. There are two outcomes per unit, one based on skills and one based on knowledge and understanding. The relevant outcome and assessment standards for Higher Modern Studies can be found at:

Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom

- http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_SocialStudies_H_ModernStudies_Democracy_Scotland_UnitedKingdom.pdf

Social Issues in the United Kingdom

- http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_SocialStudies_H_ModernStudies_SocialIssues_UnitedKingdom.pdf

International Issues

- http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_SocialStudies_H_ModernStudies_InternationalIssues.pdf

Learners must meet all of the relevant outcomes and assessment standards. Evidence should be generated naturally through the learning and teaching approaches employed by staff. Assessment evidence can be drawn from a variety of activities and presented in a variety of formats. All of the evidence does not have to be generated from one activity but can be taken from several tasks and assessments carried out in the duration of the course. Learners should have access to resources to complete relevant assessment tasks and no time restrictions should be imposed. Staff should use their professional judgment when considering assessment evidence to ensure that minimum competency is met. Quality assurance procedures should be integral to this process.

Three different ways of gathering evidence have been suggested by the SQA. The most traditional approach is on a unit-by-unit basis. Another option is that of the combined approach, which links knowledge, understanding and skills from two units. Staff may also choose to move toward the portfolio approach as their confidence grows. Here, evidence is gathered from classroom tasks. Unit assessment support is recorded on the SQA Secure website.

Course assessment

Higher Modern Studies requires learners to sit a final question paper and to complete an assignment, which assesses the added value of the course.

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseAssessSpec_Higher_SocialStudies_ModernStudies.pdf

The question paper is marked out of 60, will be graded from A–D, and is a timed examination of 2 hours and 15 minutes, which is externally marked by SQA. It will test knowledge, understanding and skills with greater emphasis on knowledge and understanding. A specimen question paper is available at:

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/ModernStudiesSQPH.pdf.

The assignment requires learners to complete a final 'write up' after they have conducted some level of social research. Learners will have free choice in selecting a topic of study, from which they will research further information, for example through carrying out a survey. The write-up will assess this process and will be marked externally by SQA. The assignment is worth 30 marks, or one third of the learner's final grade.

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/GAInfoHigherModernStudies.pdf

Assignment

The assignment is a new component of the course assessment. Learners will have a free choice of topic or issue. Research will be undertaken in the classroom and at home. This supplementary information will be different for each learner, as will their processing and analysing of the data collected. SQA will provide a brief and set a submission date. Staff are expected to conduct the assignment under a high level of supervision and control. Learners will be permitted to take two sides of A4 paper containing data into the assessment which should be submitted with the assignment. No marks will be given for the processed data but learners must make reference to it, otherwise they will not be able to achieve full marks. A structured template is available for the production of evidence. Learners will be given 1 hour 15 minutes to write their report. It will be externally marked by SQA out of 30 marks. A greater emphasis will be placed on skills.

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/GAInfoHigherModernStudies.pdf

Verification

The verification process is designed 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 and carried out by SQA.

Information on quality assurance is available at: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58448.html>.

Prior verification

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/Prior%20Verification%20Centre%20Guidance%20FINAL.pdf

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

http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/InternalVerificationGuideforSQAcentres.pdf

As a matter of course staff should be quality assuring their assessments by carrying out activities that they have used previously. For example, 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 presenting centre to cross mark.

External verification

http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Evidence_required_for_verificationevents.pdf

Schools must retain the evidence until 31 July in each academic year.

http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/SQA_Evidence_retention_requirements_A3_table.pdf

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

Results services

http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/FA6669_SQA_Results_Services_A5_8pp_brochure_web.pdf

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/65427.html>

SQA offer two services to replace the appeals service:

- Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service (details to be provided to SQA within ten days of the learner sitting the external assessment)
- Post-results Service – this consists of either a clerical check and/or a marking review if the centre has concerns about the results of an individual or group.