

Route map through assessment

Course: Modern Studies

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 modern studies, 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 Modern Studies National 5.

http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/nq/m/nqresource_tcm4741317.asp

Modern Studies National 5 course content

The main SQA modern studies page can be found at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45629.html>, with National 5 information specifically located at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45702.html>. Staff should also regularly check the updates and announcements section of this page.

The course specification can be found at

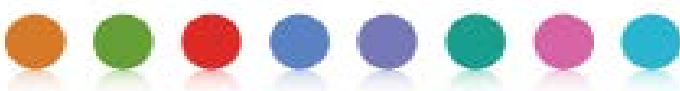
http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseSpec_N5_SocialStudies_ModernStudies.pdf.

There are three units: Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom, Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom and Modern Studies: International Issues.

Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom key issues: In this unit learners focus on Scottish politics **or** UK politics. 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. The concepts for both UK and Scottish politics focus on representation, participation, election campaigns and influence (focus on trade unions **or** pressure groups **or** the mass media). See page 25 of the SQA course and unit support notes:

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnitSupportNotes_N5_SocialStudies_ModernStudies.pdf

Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom key issues: In this unit learners focus on social inequality **or** crime and law. In social inequality concepts include understanding poverty (causes and consequences), how poverty affects specific groups (eg gender, race and disability) and the organisations tasked



with tackling poverty. In crime and law concepts include types of crime, causes of crime, the impact of crime, the role of the police, drug and alcohol laws, and the criminal justice system. See page 42 of the SQA course and unit support notes:

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnitSupportNotes_N5_SocialStudies_ModernStudies.pdf

Modern Studies: International Issues key issues: In this unit learners focus on a world power **or** an international issue. In world power concepts include selecting a suitable country, political issues in that country, socio-economic issues, government responses and reactions, and the rights and responsibilities of individuals within the world power. In international issues concepts include the cause of the issue, the consequence of the issue, attempts at resolution and potential problems arising, and the rights and responsibilities of individuals relating to the issue. Both options should consider some level of theoretical content. See page 62 of the course and unit support notes for a suggested overview.

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnitSupportNotes_N5_SocialStudies_ModernStudies.pdf

A course comparison from National 3 to National 5 is also available.

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

Unit assessment

All units are available as free-standing units of study. In order to gain the full course award 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.

Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_SocialStudies_N5_ModernStudies_Democracy_Scotland_UnitedKingdom.pdf

Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_SocialStudies_N5_ModernStudies_SocialIssues_UnitedKingdom.pdf

Modern Studies: International Issues

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_SocialStudies_N5_ModernStudies_SocialIssues_UnitedKingdom.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 SQA. The most traditional approach is a unit-by-unit basis. There are similarities between this approach and end-of-unit assessments, which may have been used for NABs in the past. Another option is 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 specification

Modern Studies National 5 requires learners to sit a final question paper and to complete an assignment, which assess the added value of the course.

The question paper is marked out of 60, will be graded from A to D and is a timed examination of 1 hour and 30 minutes in total that is externally marked by SQA.

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 through carrying out a survey, for example. The write-up will assess this process and will be marked externally by SQA. The assignment is worth 20 marks in total, or a third of the learners' final grade:

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/GAInfoNational5ModernStudies.pdf

Verification

The verification process should be a supportive one.

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.

Quality assurance: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58448.html>.

Prior verification

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

If staff devise their own assessments these can be sent to SQA for prior verification, free of charge. This is only necessary where significant changes have been made to the unit assessment provided by SQA. This should give departments confidence that their proposed assessments are fit for purpose and meet the national standard.

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 always engaged in, such as peer marking. A sample of learners' work should be marked by more than one staff member in a department, and in single-person department an arrangement should be made with another local authority school.

External verification

In modern studies schools will submit a sample of their 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 in total will be asked for.

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

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

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

Education Scotland support materials

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

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/nqcoursematerials/subjects/modernstudies/index.asp>

Other useful websites

A quick guide to finding vital information about Curriculum for Excellence:

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/keycfesupport/index.asp>

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/zxsnb9q>