Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

Social Anthropology A: Anthropological Approaches to Understanding Society (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J73S 47

SCQF level: 7 (8 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.

This edition: August 2024 (version 2.0)

Unit purpose

This unit introduces learners to the work done by social anthropologists in understanding people and their diverse social relations and practices, particularly in the rituals and symbolism they use. Learners also begin to study the main methods of social anthropological research.

The unit is aimed at learners who have a general interest in social anthropology, as well as those who want to use it as the basis for further study, or in a related career.

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 social anthropology, for example units at SCQF levels 5 or 6, or other similar qualifications
♦ other knowledge, skills and experience relevant to the unit

This unit works well alongside Social Anthropology B: The Body.

Learners normally study the unit as part of 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 key concepts related to social anthropological approaches
2. explain how social anthropological research methods differ from those of other social sciences
3. explain diverse ways in which rites of passage are measured and marked

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.

Written responses must consist of 1,250 to 1,500 words, and oral responses must be 9 to 12 minutes in duration.

Learners' responses must include:

♦ an explanation of how social anthropologists work with people they are researching
♦ use of the terms 'kinship', 'ritual' and 'symbolism' in a social anthropological context
♦ a description of at least two different societies or cultures, explaining diversity in the rites of passage in each
♦ explain Arnold van Gennep's theory about rites of passage
♦ possible limitations, and other ethical considerations in a particular case
♦ a conclusion that demonstrates an understanding of the nature and value of a social anthropological approach

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 and others could give an oral response.

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 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
♦ present ideas clearly and coherently
♦ use a structure that is appropriate to the purpose
♦ provide supporting evidence and references

Knowledge and skills

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

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 1 Learners should understand: ♦ concepts used by social anthropologists to describe diverse forms of society — notably basic ideas of kinship, ritual and symbolism ♦ the holistic way concepts of kinship, ritual and symbolism extend into wider institutions of society, such as politics and economics	**Outcome 1** Learners can: ♦ correctly use concepts used by social anthropologists, such as kindship, ritual and symbolism ♦ describe at least two different societies or cultures that use these concepts
Outcome 2 Learners should understand: ♦ the features of research methods used by social anthropologists ♦ ethical concerns about these methods ♦ the use of the term 'ethnography'	**Outcome 2** Learners can: ♦ explain how social anthropologists go about their research ♦ discuss possible limitations, and other ethical considerations in a particular case
Outcome 3 Learners should understand: ♦ social anthropological theory about rites of passage through life, particularly that of Arnold van Gennep ♦ how rites of passage in a particular society or culture reflect wider social arrangements	**Outcome 3** Learners can: ♦ explain Arnold van Gennep's theory about rites of passage through life ♦ explain how rites of passage work in at least two different societies or cultures

Meta-skills

Throughout this 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 assessments and projects by working to clear deadlines and understanding the required steps to produce appropriate work

♦ integrity: acting in an ethical manner in completing assessments or carrying out work for projects; linking ethics (a topic in outcome 2) to class discussions to support good working relationships; producing citations and referencing for assessments

♦ adapting: understanding ways of thinking about the world that differ from learners' experiences; acquiring new knowledge and skills as well as using different technologies to communicate and complete assessments; working through a virtual learning environment (VLE)

♦ initiative: carrying out independent research to find examples of other societies to illustrate learned concepts; comparing findings with peers or outside the learning environment; getting started on projects and assessments promptly; demonstrating making good decisions and staying motivated; reading and thinking about theories and research evidence, or sources; using library facilities; checking in with lecturers to discuss projects; meeting 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, cultural experiences and opinions on theories and topics

♦ feeling: discussing theories, expressing opinions, and understanding other perspectives; sharing and respecting cultural diversity and other viewpoints in discussions; identifying how members of other societies might feel

♦ collaborating: working together on formative presentations and project work; taking account of others in planning and carrying out tasks; building relationships with peers; sharing experiences of interacting with people from different backgrounds

♦ leading: assuming responsibility; considering others; sharing information

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

♦ curiosity: seeking knowledge about theories and research; carrying out library-based research; taking part in class discussions and debates to consider a variety of ways of thinking developed by different peoples

♦ creativity: giving feedback on unit delivery to encourage new ways of working; suggesting better ways to approach an issue; analysing case studies to see whether they offer better solutions to common problems

♦ sense-making: exploiting opportunities for discussion; blending the range of ideas by considering and evaluating them

♦ critical thinking: making logical connections and reasoned judgements through discussion, debate and drawing conclusions based on evidence; reviewing and evaluating research evidence

Literacies

Learners develop core skills in the following literacies:

Numeracy

Learners develop numeracy skills by understanding facts and statistics relating to demography and population, including growth, decline or gender.

Communication

Learners develop communication skills in 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.

Learners can communicate their own diverse experiences of society in the world. Learners can improve their knowledge and understanding of anthropology by reading and interpreting ethnographic writing.

Digital

Learners develop digital skills and computer literacy by using digital packages to produce assessments, and internet sources to research information on social anthropological concepts, different societies and ideas. 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 this unit, there are opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of social and environmental sustainability while studying aspects of daily life in societies that have maintained or are reviving sustainable ways of living within their own environmental constraints. These may link to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

This unit fits with the following UN Sustainable Development Goals:

3   Good health and well-being: using long-standing indigenous methods
4   Quality education: within a local context
5   Gender equality: through studying rites of passage, looking at differences in how societies approach this for different genders
10   Reduced inequalities
12   Responsible consumption and production
13   Climate action: Arctic and Pacific communities
14   Life below water: particularly relevant to Maori
15   Life on land

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 social anthropology units within HNC Social Sciences. This unit works well alongside Social Anthropology B: The Body.

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

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 the study of social anthropology by examining some key concepts in the context of social anthropologists' fieldwork and examples of their findings.

The unit provides an overview of the topics of kinship, ritual and symbolism to explain how different societies and cultures work. In each society or culture, these topics offer windows to understanding institutions that researchers are familiar with, such as politics and economics, in a less recognisable context. A good example could be to consider the ritual and symbolism associated with gift exchange and related expectations of inheritance in any society. Learners could look at the work of various theorists on this topic — notably Marcel Mauss, but the work of Arnold van Gennep is essential for outcome 3 on rites of passage.

Learners can find useful reading suggestions in the Educator Guide.

Approaches to delivery

You should structure the 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 that they need to progress to the next level of study.

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
♦ 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.

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

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.

You can design individual and group research tasks in which you ask learners to think about their own use of ritual in society, like the symbolism and demonstration of kinship seen in celebrations. In particular, learners could consider:

♦ weddings and birthdays: wearing kilts; dancing to ceilidh music; making toasts; cake and candles; giving presents, which symbolise kin relations in general and demonstrate a level of economic ability to others who might be invited

♦ royal events and other national royal celebrations or mourning: events surrounding Queen Elizabeth II's funeral, royal weddings, bank holidays for coronations, bunting and street tea parties

♦ other national celebrations: St Andrew's Day, Burns Night, Hogmanay

♦ political references, which could lead learners to consider how many politicians come from the families of politicians — learners could compare this with the situation in other societies

♦ Christmas: the interesting symbolic detail in traditions established by those who celebrate, many of whom are not Christian

In their work to describe two different societies that illustrate diversity in their rites of passage through life, learners could focus on the transition to adulthood, which could help them draw comparisons with their own experiences.

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.

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; or it could take the form of a portfolio of evidence in various formats gathered during the unit. Learners must provide a response of 1,200 to 1,500 words, or an individual oral presentation or poster exhibition of 9 to 12 minutes in duration, or any other method that appropriately meets the evidence requirements. For example, learners could provide evidence in the form of an individual blog or website, consisting of 1,200 to 1,500 words. Learners can produce this assessment evidence over an extended period, if required.

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.

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 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 of diverse ways in which passage through life may be measured. They could cover the anthropological concepts and explain how social anthropologists work with people they are researching. In this case, the time across both outcomes and all evidence requirements would be 9 to 12 minutes. So, the learner would spend 9 to 12 minutes orally presenting the poster content.

Although it is not an evidence requirement, you could encourage learners to keep an unassessed diary or blog of their learning, which they could refer to when they come to write (or recount) their assessed piece of work. These diaries or blogs can include photographs and videos, perhaps to demonstrate the value of participant observation. Learners could submit edited elements of the diary or blog for assessment.

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.

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.

Authenticating learners' work is essential. You could collect notes or visual presentation materials from learners as further evidence of meeting SCQF level 7. You should monitor learners' progress throughout to authenticate submitted work. Where possible, you should use plagiarism-detection software. Regardless of the assessment method chosen, learners must submit a bibliography citing appropriate sources, presented in a standard referencing format such as Harvard or APA.

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

Social Anthropology A: Anthropological Approaches to Understanding Society (SCQF level 7)

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 way social anthropologists approach understanding diverse peoples in the world.

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

During the unit you learn how social anthropologists do their research and find out how, in at least two societies or cultures, people celebrate rites of passage through life.

On completing the unit you are able to:

1 explain key concepts related to social anthropological approaches
2 explain how social anthropological research methods differ from those of other social sciences
3 explain diverse ways in which rites of passage are measured and marked

You are assessed using an open-book assessment covering all three unit outcomes. This means that you have access to materials such as textbooks, notes and your VLE. You can give your assessment response in writing or orally. If your assessment response is written, it must be 1,250 to 1,500 words, and if it is oral, it must be 9 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.

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 different societies and cultures.

This unit can support learning in other related units, such as Social Anthropology B: The Body. You may be able to study HND Social Sciences or a degree programme in a related subject if you study this 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) is useful for current and future study, and employment.

Administrative information

Published: August 2024 (version 2.0)

Superclass: EE

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	♦ Removed reference to the requirement to use holistic assessment in 'Evidence requirements', and in 'Information for learners'. ♦ In 'Approaches to assessment' additional words that a holistic or portfolio approach can be used were added. Also, additional information allowing group presentations was added.	May 2024

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