

Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

History: Themes from a Historical Perspective (SCQF level 8)

Unit code: J7D8 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.

The information in this unit specification may be reproduced in support of SQA qualifications only on a non-commercial basis. If it is reproduced, SQA must be clearly acknowledged as the source. If it is to be reproduced for any other purpose, written permission must be obtained from permissions@sqa.org.uk.

This edition: August 2024 (version 2.0)

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2023, 2024

Unit purpose

This unit builds upon learners' knowledge and understanding of historical perspectives, explanations and sources. It introduces learners to themes that relate to certain developments in human society. They analyse the main developments of an event or series of events, critically evaluate different interpretations or responses to the event(s), and critically evaluate the contribution of sources that enhance the understanding of the event(s) related to a chosen theme.

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

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 history, for example National Qualifications at SCQF level 6 or Higher National (HN) Qualifications at SCQF level 7, PDA in History 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 Higher National Diploma (HND) 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 analyse the main developments associated with a particular historical event, or series of events, related to a theme
- 2 critically evaluate different interpretations of, or responses to, a particular historical event, or series of events, related to a theme
- 3 critically evaluate the contribution of selected sources in enhancing the understanding of a particular historical event or series of events, related to 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 to 3,000 words, or an oral response that is 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:

- ◆ Warfare
- ◆ Welfare state
- ◆ 20th century to 1945
- ◆ 20th century from 1946 onwards
- ◆ Pandemics (prior to COVID-19)
- ◆ Medieval history
- ◆ Early modern history (1500s to circa 1799)

- ◆ Modern history (1800s onwards)

You assess learners on one theme from the four they study in the unit.

Learners' responses must include:

- ◆ an identification and explanation of the key points and main developments associated with an event or series of events related to a chosen theme, set in their historical context
- ◆ an analysis of the main developments associated with an event or series of events related to a chosen theme
- ◆ a critical evaluation of different interpretations or responses to an event, or series of events, set into historical context, and related to a chosen theme
- ◆ a critical evaluation of the contribution of selected primary sources in enhancing the understanding of an event, or series of events related to a chosen theme; this should include identification of sources, description of historical context, explanation of key information and data, and consideration of the values and limitations of the sources

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

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.

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

Learners must:

- ◆ 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 or references
- ◆ ensure historical content is related to context and verifiable using historical sources
- ◆ provide robust evidence of analysis of historical interpretations
- ◆ ensure historical sources selected are credible

Knowledge and skills

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

| Knowledge | Skills |
|---|---|
| <p>Outcome 1 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the main developments associated with a particular event, or series of events, related to a chosen theme | <p>Outcome 1 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ identify an event, or series of events, within the chosen theme ◆ analyse the main developments associated with an event, or series of events, related to the chosen theme |
| <p>Outcome 2 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ different viewpoints, interpretations or responses to a particular event, or series of events, related to a chosen theme ◆ the context of different interpretations of or responses to a particular event, or series of events, related to a chosen theme ◆ why it is important to consider different viewpoints, interpretations or responses to a particular event, or series of events | <p>Outcome 2 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ describe the context of different interpretations of, or responses to, a particular event, or series of events, related to a chosen theme ◆ critically evaluate different interpretations of or responses to a particular event, or series of events, related to a chosen theme |
| <p>Outcome 3 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ how to identify a source or sources that enhance the understanding of a particular event, or series of events, related to a chosen theme ◆ how to make critical judgements on the contribution of selected sources in enhancing the understanding of a particular event, or series of events, related to a chosen theme | <p>Outcome 3 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ identify sources that enhance the understanding of a particular event, or series of events, related to a chosen theme ◆ describe the historical context of the sources ◆ explain what key information or data sources contain ◆ apply critical evaluation skills to judge the values and limitations of the selected sources in understanding a particular event, or series of events, related to a chosen theme |

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 the assessment and project work to clear deadlines; being proactive in planning and developing assessment responses
- ◆ integrity: acting in an ethical way to complete assessments and carry out work for projects; developing good working relationships with peers; including citations and referencing for assessments
- ◆ adapting: acquiring new knowledge and skills; using different technologies to communicate and complete assessments; using a virtual learning environment (VLE); reflecting on 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 viewpoints, research and sources; explaining ideas; producing suitable, understandable assessment responses; sharing written or oral ideas and opinions on themes and topics covered in the unit
- ◆ feeling: discussing viewpoints and expressing opinions; understanding other perspectives, 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
- ◆ leading: taking account of others; sharing information in a useful way

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ curiosity: seeking knowledge about different viewpoints and research; making the most of library research time; taking part in class discussion and debates; questioning motives, ideas, information and sources of evidence
- ◆ creativity: developing new ways of working and approaching tasks; providing novel and individual analysis of sources
- ◆ sense-making: participating in discussion; blending a range of ideas; considering and evaluating ideas
- ◆ critical thinking: making logical connections and reasoned judgements; drawing conclusions based on evidence; reviewing and evaluating research evidence

Literacies

Learners develop core skills in the following literacies:

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 historical events and developments. 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 sustainability as learners consider interpretations, facts and the contexts of historical events and periods, which link to the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#), through the lens of our understanding of society today.

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

- 4 Quality education: through discussion on how a selected historical period used education, comparing to the UN SDG aim of inclusive and quality learning for all learners that enables them to realise their potential to continue with education.
- 5 Gender equality: through encouraging all learners to understand the role of gender historically and how this has impacted on the modern world.
- 8 Decent work and economic growth: through studying differences in employment in a historical context.
- 10 Reduced inequalities: through ensuring learners understand why inequality exists through a historical perspective.

Delivery of unit

This 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 if delivered alongside Social Sciences: Social Policy, the mandatory unit from HND Social Sciences.

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 you allocate to each outcome is at your discretion; however, you should consider all outcomes together when you deliver the unit.

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Content and context for this unit

This unit aims to develop learners' knowledge and understanding of an event, or series of events, from a historical period. Learners develop skills in analysing the main developments of an event, or series of events, critically evaluating different interpretations of, or responses to, the event or series of events, and the contribution to understanding made by specific historical sources.

The unit provides an overview of four themes. Whether you are delivering the unit 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.

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 and you can introduce other appropriate historical events as you think appropriate.

Approved course themes

Learners must study two from this list:

History and social change

- ◆ Universal suffrage in the 19th and 20th century
- ◆ The ending of enslavement in the United States, and the American Civil War
- ◆ Civil rights in the United States in the 20th century

Power and control

- ◆ The rise of fascism
- ◆ Nazi Germany 1933 to 1945
- ◆ Henry VIII and the Church
- ◆ The Church and Reformation in Scottish Society

Our changing world

- ◆ The Agricultural Revolution in Britain circa 1700
- ◆ The Industrial Revolution and its impact on Britain and the world
- ◆ The American Wars of Independence

Deviance

- ◆ The Holocaust
- ◆ History of crime and punishment in Scotland in the 18th and 19th centuries, and/or 20th century

Inequalities

- ◆ Racial inequality in the UK after World War II
- ◆ Indigenous rights in North America and Australia
- ◆ Poverty and paupers in Scotland in the 19th century

Globalisation

- ◆ The British Empire
- ◆ Trade and migration in early modern Scotland (circa 1500 to 1800)
- ◆ Scottish emigration, which can include all, or some of, the Highland Clearances, the Lowland Clearances, emigration in the 20th century

Culture and identity

- ◆ Gender in the 19th century
- ◆ Homosexuality as a social and criminal issue in the UK

Human environments

- ◆ Poverty, slums and clearance during the 19th and 20th centuries in Scotland
- ◆ The exploration of Africa in the 18th and 19th centuries
- ◆ Urbanisation in the 19th and 20th centuries

Ethics

- ◆ History of Anti-Semitism
- ◆ Family values and morality from the 18th to 20th century

Origins of behaviour

- ◆ Witch trials and witch crazes in early-modern societies
- ◆ The Enlightenment

Subject-specific themes

Learners must study two from this list:

Warfare

A consideration of warfare from 1500, such as:

- ◆ The English Civil War
- ◆ The Napoleonic Wars
- ◆ The Crimean War
- ◆ The Boer War
- ◆ World War I or II
- ◆ War in Afghanistan

Welfare state

Evaluation of the welfare state:

- ◆ before the Liberal reforms
- ◆ after the Liberal reforms but before the Labour reforms
- ◆ after the Labour reforms

Learners could study poverty and poor relief in the 19th century; for example, before and after the Poor Law (Scotland) Act 1845.

20th century to 1945

- ◆ A study of modern history that could include the reasons for, and the events of World War I
- ◆ The persecution of Jewish people in the 20th century, including the Holocaust
- ◆ The Russian Revolution and post-Revolution Russia
- ◆ The United States 1900 to 1941

20th century from 1946 onwards

This could be a continuation of the previous topic, such as:

- ◆ The Cold War
- ◆ The development of Israel
- ◆ Civil rights in the United States

Or, it could be any other suitable topic, such as:

- ◆ Scottish history
- ◆ The fall of the British Empire
- ◆ Black history (in the USA or the Commonwealth or the decolonised African context)

Pandemics (prior to COVID-19)

- ◆ The Great Plague of London in 1665
- ◆ The cholera epidemics of the 19th century
- ◆ The Spanish flu pandemic of 1918 to 1919
- ◆ The HIV/Aids pandemic of the 1980s

Medieval history

- ◆ An evaluation of the Wars of the Roses
- ◆ The discovery of the Americas
- ◆ Western Europe's trade with the Byzantine Empire
- ◆ The fight for Scottish independence
- ◆ The Crusades

Early modern history (1500s to circa 1799)

- ◆ The development of trade between Scotland and the Baltic states
- ◆ The discovery of Australasia
- ◆ The development of the United States

Modern history (1800s onwards)

- ◆ Ireland
- ◆ The Industrial Revolution
- ◆ The British Empire
- ◆ The unification of Germany
- ◆ Britain in India

The list of approved course themes, along with the subject-specific themes provided, allows you to work within your areas of specialism and, at the same time, offers learners the opportunity to explore past events in an engaging and challenging format. For example, you could choose from the first list, history and social change, along with power and control. You could then choose 20th century to 1945, and 20th century from 1946 to the end of the century. Learners could explore the changes and events that happened in, for example, the United Kingdom in the 20th century.

Learners must demonstrate skills in analysis and critical evaluation to achieve all three outcomes. They should consider current historical views, and use both primary and secondary sources.

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 do not need to spend an equal time on each of the four themes. You can choose to focus more on some of the themes.

You should deliver this unit in a way that enables learners to understand both how to critically evaluate different interpretations or responses to historical events, and the contribution of sources that enhance the understanding of events related to chosen themes. You should include varied teaching methods, such as individual and group research, debates, presentations, and tutorials to ensure a learner-centred approach. You should use teaching methods that fully engage all learners with the topic. 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.

Present themes and events chronologically where possible and practicable. Learners should be aware of what they are studying from the outset of delivery to enable them to develop more fully their analytical and evaluative skills.

You should introduce primary and secondary sources early in the delivery of this unit to enable learners to practise critical analysis in preparation for the assessment. Practising analysis and highlighting different interpretations of events ensures learners are suitably prepared for the assessment. This also helps them prepare the skills they need for 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.

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 four themes are studied, you must assess only one theme. 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.

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. Learners can choose to submit their assessment evidence in any format that meets each outcome. Learners should use at least two historians' interpretations of an event, or series of events, in their assessment response. You can use primary or secondary sources for outcome 3.

The assessment could take the form of an open-book essay question or a set of structured questions. Learners must provide a written response of 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 2,500 to 3,000 words.

You can choose to use a mix of assessment 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 additional responses to structured questions, or an essay. Learners should submit their work for marking on one submission 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 emigration from Scotland after World War I considering why Scots left, where they went and their reasons for leaving. They could cover problems with ship lists from the SS Metagama as sources, and the value of historical evidence, in an oral presentation. In this case, the total time across all three outcomes and all evidence requirements would be 18 to 22 minutes. So, the learner would spend 18 to 22 minutes orally presenting the poster content.

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.

Information for learners

History: Themes from a Historical Perspective (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 builds on your knowledge and understanding of historical perspectives, explanations and sources. You explore themes that relate to certain developments in human society. You analyse the main developments of an event or series of events; critically evaluate different interpretations or responses to an event, or series of events; and critically evaluate the contribution of sources that enhance the understanding of the event, or series of events, related to a chosen theme.

The unit is aimed at learners who want to further their knowledge and skills in history. Before you start the unit, you should have good communication skills and an interest in history. You should have previous study of history at SCQF level 7 or similar. It would also be helpful to have some basic digital skills.

On completing the unit, you can:

- 1 analyse the main developments associated with a particular event, or series of events, related to a theme
- 2 critically evaluate different interpretations of, or responses to, a particular event, or series of events, related to a theme
- 3 critically evaluate the contribution of selected sources in enhancing the understanding of a particular event or series of events, related to a theme

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

- ◆ main developments in a specified event, or series of events, and their place in a historical context
- ◆ different sources, viewpoints or interpretations of a given event
- ◆ how to thoroughly analyse and evaluate sources, viewpoints or interpretations to fully comprehend the event and the impact that event had

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 2,500 to 3,000 words, and if it is oral, it must be between 18 and 22 minutes long.

NextGen: HN published prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 2.0)
August 2024

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 main developments of historical events.

The unit introduces you to Learning for Sustainability ideas, with links made to the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#), which are particularly relevant to the study of specific historical contexts.

You may be able to study a degree programme in a related subject if you study the unit as part of HND 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: DB

History of changes

| Version | Description of change | Date |
|---------|--|------------|
| 2.0 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Removed reference to requirement to use holistic assessment in 'Evidence requirements' and 'Information for learners'.◆ In 'Approaches to assessment', additional words that a holistic or portfolio approach can be used.◆ In 'Evidence requirements', added 'set into historical context' to bullet point 3.◆ In 'Evidence requirements', added 'primary' to sources for clarity on expectations of what learners should use.◆ In outcome 2, 'Skills', added a bullet point on describing the context for clarity on what learners should be able to do. | April 2024 |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

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