

Advanced Higher

The *Advanced Higher* in *Modern Studies* makes a contribution to a well-balanced individual curriculum with appropriate emphasis given to the skills of communicating, independent learning, creative thinking and critical appreciation of the media.

Course aims

The aims of the *Advanced Higher Modern Studies* Course are to develop and enhance important skills.

These skills include:

- ◆ organising and analysing complex data
- ◆ adopting a structured approach to research of a contemporary topic
- ◆ constructing and sustaining lines of argument which reflect the complexity of the issues they address
- ◆ presenting conclusions in a clear way, while reflecting the complexity of the topic under consideration
- ◆ critical analysis of political and social science research, including evaluating evidence and detecting and explaining a lack of objectivity
- ◆ participating in debate and discussion, through which attitudes of open-mindedness and tolerance are fostered

Research methods

In addition to the above mandatory content in relation to each context, candidates should examine case studies to illustrate the operation, advantages and disadvantages of political and social science research methods. The research methods which should be studied are:

- ◆ methods of observation; participant and non-participant observation; covert and overt observation
- ◆ in-depth interviewing methods: focus groups, structured and unstructured interviews
- ◆ surveys and questionnaires: sampling; postal questionnaires; telephone questionnaires; internet- based surveys; opinion polls
- ◆ official statistics; methods of presentation and analysis

Candidates should also be aware of the ethical issues concerning research, the principles involved in sampling and the importance of objectivity, the relevance and application of basic statistical techniques, and be familiar with the terminology involved (i.e. mean/median/mode; reliability; validity; correlating data/comparing trends and patterns; significance). Where appropriate, the relevance of new technology should be emphasised.

This Unit is not intended to develop in-depth competence in applying quantitative techniques to political and/or social research. There are other Units in other frameworks that would be more appropriate for that purpose.

Examples of case studies through which research methods could be studied include:

- ◆ reliability of official statistics

Students need to exemplify their arguments with current research methods/findings and explain how to present findings - [the Understanding Glasgow](#), [GCPH website](#) and [accompanying research papers show the way.](#)

Relevant web resources for Glasgow

Understanding Glasgow (Glasgow Indicators project) - www.understandingglasgow.com

Glasgow Centre for Population Health web site - www.gcph.co.uk

GoWell – 10 year research study into effects of regeneration on health and wellbeing - <http://www.gowellonline.com>

The Glasgow Story – provides historical perspective- <http://www.theglasgowstory.com/index.php>

Understanding Glasgow [film series](#) and the [assets case studies](#).