

## SOCIOLOGY 3

COURSE CODE: BHS315116

### INVESTIGATION PROJECT GUIDELINES

These guidelines provide students, teachers and markers with details about what students have to do for the Investigation Project that forms part of the external assessment for this subject.

This document does not repeat essential information found in other documents and must be read in the context of:

- THE COURSE DOCUMENT  
(<https://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/students/courses/humanities-and-social-sciences/bhs315116/>)
- THE TASC GUIDE TO AUTHENTICITY AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY  
(<https://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Authenticity-and-Academic-Integrity-Guide-1.pdf>)
- THE TASC DOCUMENT *HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR FOLIO*  
(<https://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/students/folio-assessment/>)

The course Assessment Report located at (<https://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/students/courses/humanities-and-social-sciences/bhs315116/>) addresses issues, strengths and weaknesses about the assessment of the previous year's folios and should be read in conjunction with the guidelines.

Markers will use marking guidelines to mark the Investigative Project. TASC would strongly encourage teachers to use the marking guidelines to assess the projects internally.

**The final Investigative Project must be electronically submitted by the student to their teacher for external assessment.**

The teacher cannot extend this published final "due to teacher date", however they may set an earlier deadline for the purpose of internal assessment.

# INVESTIGATION PROJECT

You must investigate a sociological problem or issue that focuses on Module 3 of the course, Equality and Inequality in contemporary Australian Society, and addresses **ONE** of the following three topics as described in the syllabus:

1. The causes and consequences of inequality; political, social and/or economic.

OR

2. Social differentiation and structured inequality as reproduced through socialisation.

OR

3. Structured inequality as it occurs through the institutions of family, school, work and/or media.

You are to study **ONE** of these topics in relation to at least one of the following social categories; Gender, Indigenous People, Ethnicity, Age, Youth or Rural/regional Australians in contemporary Australian society. Your investigation must reflect the discipline of sociology and incorporate empirical evidence. It is recommended that you narrow the focus to a specific aspect of one of the topics.

The Investigation Project will be assessed externally by TASC to determine ratings on the below Criterion:

Criterion 5: Use ethical sociological research methods

Criterion 6: Use evidence to support a sociological point of view

Criterion 7: Communicate sociological ideas, information, opinions, arguments and conclusions

If a project is not submitted you cannot achieve a Satisfactory Achievement (SA) or better in this course.

The investigation must reflect the discipline of Sociology, incorporate empirical research that involves the use of appropriate processes and procedures, and culminate in a written report that forms the basis for the assessment. The project report will be **between 800 and 1200 words** in length.

The report must include reference to at least three different types of sources, one of which must be your own primary research. Sources are to be referenced using the APA referencing system.

Where the empirical research involves other people or participants, you must follow the Ethical Concerns-A Guide for Students (See Appendix I). You should use students or teachers from your school, family and close friends as participants. You must inform participants of their ethical rights.

You must comply with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf> in any research activity. You are reminded of your responsibility to conduct research, which is not likely to cause any harm at all to participants

You are required to submit your proposed topic and initial plan to your teacher for formal approval before beginning your research. A pro-forma plan is provided in Appendix III – INVESTIGATION PROJECT PLAN. Please note: The plan is NOT to be submitted to TASC for assessment.

You must consult with your teacher on at least the following occasions:

1. Before commencing the research to discuss the feasibility of your topic and your proposed method of research. At this time you should submit your plan for formal approval
2. Before undertaking any personal research involving other people as participants, to discuss how the investigation will meet the Ethical Guidelines (Appendix I) and to have your research instrument approved
3. After about 10 hours of work, you must show evidence of progress
4. When submitting your report, teachers must see working notes and any other materials that show the investigation and report are your work.

## ADVICE TO STUDENTS

The task consists of six stages:

1. *Background reading* within the field of Sociology to establish the availability of information on the topic. Research up-to-date information from sociological texts, articles, talking to people, videos and so on which demonstrate the current thinking or positions on the issue, problem or topic.
2. *Refining your topic* and a plan to investigate it by:
  - a. determining the aims or goals of your study or deciding on a research question to be investigated.
  - b. deciding how you will undertake this investigation.
  - c. submitting your plan to the teacher for approval. To this end, you are **required** to submit your proposed topic and initial plan to your teacher for approval **before** beginning the research. Your teacher must then approve the topic and initial plan and may suggest modifications to the plan. A pro-forma plan is provided on the TASC website but does not form a part of the written report.  
**Do not include your plan when submitting your report.**
3. *Designing your instrument* to collect the empirical evidence. You must follow the Ethical Guidelines where the empirical research involves other people or participants (See Appendix I). Participants in any research should be students or teachers from their school, family and close friends. Participants must be informed of their ethical rights.  
You must use a statement similar to the one below on any research instrument used in your project. You will need to adapt the statement according to the research method used and the research topic.  
*Your participation in this questionnaire/case study is appreciated. This questionnaire/ study is about (...). The information will remain confidential. Please don't indicate who you are. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with a question you are not required to answer it. If you wish to withdraw, you are free to do so. Please place your form in the box provided.*
4. *Collecting data*  
Before any data collection is undertaken, the research instrument (questionnaire, etc.) must be discussed with and approved by your teacher.  
Before the collection of data, each participant must be informed of their ethical rights. Ethical Guidelines must be followed (refer to Appendix I). Ethical concerns must be fully discussed with and approved by your teacher before undertaking any such personal research.  
You are encouraged to use only students or teachers from your school, family and close friends.  
Survey, observational and experimental data collected outside the school or family are considered inappropriate if they violate ethical principles. This does not mean a member of the public cannot be interviewed if he or she is willing.  
Any methodology that involves a member of the public must be discussed with your teacher before the collection of the data and each participant must personally complete the Ethics Consent Form (refer to Appendix I) before participating. If these guidelines are not observed your teacher will not sign the declaration form. TASC will then determine what action is taken.  
If the research involves using the Ethics Consent Form, you must submit the form to your teacher with the finished report. **The ethics consent forms are not submitted to TASC.**
5. *Analyse the data.*  
The empirical evidence/data which you have collected
6. *Writing up the study.*  
(See Appendix II- Guide for Writing the Report).

Each investigation project culminates in you writing a report that forms the basis for your assessment in the task.

## WHAT YOU MAY DO

*You can choose the topic from the appropriate unit but...*

- You should conduct a 'primary source' investigation supported by secondary sources rather than do a 'secondary sources only' (e.g. library research) investigation.
- Information for the report must be gathered from at least THREE different types of sources (e.g. personal investigation, a Sociological text and a journal article). If more than one method of personal investigation is undertaken, only TWO can be considered as separate types of sources, e.g. a survey and an experiment but not two surveys. Texts, journal articles, online programs etc. that are sourced from the internet are viewed as different sources, acknowledging that this is a source of publication for many types of information.

*You can choose the people you want to be the subjects for your investigation but ...*

- You are encouraged to choose as the participants for your investigation students and teachers from your school, family members and close friends.
- You can however, involve, members of the public provided they are willing participants and your teacher agrees that they can be involved (see Appendix I: Ethical Concerns).

*You can choose the form of the report but...*

- No matter what form is chosen, the report must satisfy the requirements of these guidelines.

*You can consult with whomever you wish but...*

- You must be able to satisfy your teacher that the work contained in your report is your own work. All external sources must be acknowledged and referenced appropriately.
- Whenever you have an important decision to make, consult your teacher.

## PRESENTATION

Electronic Submission: the Investigative Project must be submitted to the teacher electronically as a PDF file. See the [TASC website](#) for detailed instructions

You are advised to check this copy carefully prior to submission, as TASC **WILL NOT** be responsible for files that are non-operational and cannot be viewed by examiners, therefore **CANNOT** be assessed.

It is recommended that you model the report on the Appendix II - Guide for Writing the Report. The guide shows the sorts of things a report should contain and a way that it can be structured. However, if you and your teacher think that using a different form would improve your report, then you can use that instead.

The following points will assist you in formatting your report:

- Your report should be written in formal language using third person.
- Use a font that is easy to read such as size 12 Times New Roman (or similar), 1.5 spacing, aligned to the left, with a 2.5 cm margin. Do not type your entire report in bold print.
- A cover page should be used that contains your TASC candidate number, the topic you have chosen, your research aim or question and your final word count
- It is not necessary to start each section of the IP on a separate page.
- The aim and research question must be at the end of the Introduction, not in the Methodology.
- The Introduction section must not be longer than the Discussion section and not contain lists of irrelevant definitions.
- The Methodology needs to be written in the past tense and should not include secondary sources.
- Tables are often used in the results section of a research report to display large amounts of data concisely and may be used effectively to show results of interviews organised under themes or other suitable headings. Illustrations other than tables, e.g. graphs, are referred to as figures. Tables are referred to as Tables. Graphs should have titles and have axes labelled.

- You must attach to the report other **necessary** and **relevant** materials inserted as appendices. This material may consist of, for example, raw data and transcripts of interviews but should not consist of work that more properly belongs in the body of the text e.g. graphs of data referred to in the report. The body of the report must 'stand alone' without the appendices. All appended material must be relevant and **must be referred to in the body of the report**.
- As stated, a copy of interview transcripts must be included in the appendix.
- **All references used and referred to in the report must be in the reference list.** No references not used in the report should be listed.
- The appendices are included in the evidence that markers consider when they make judgments about the quality of the research (Criterion 5). As a bare minimum, the material in the appendices should be efficiently set out and clear.
- You must proof read your work and check spelling of names and terminology.

## WORD COUNT

The body of the report must contain between 800 and 1200 words. You must show a cumulative word count in the left-hand margin. This cumulative word count must be at intervals of 200 words (i.e. at 200 words, 400 words, 600 words ...) and the total word count must also be shown. Investigative Projects that are significantly (plus or minus 10%) under or over the prescribed word count will be penalised under Criterion 7.

### Included in the count:

Every word (including words such as 'the' and 'a') must be included in this count. Quotes **are** included in the word count. The final word count should be included at the end of the report, before the reference section.

### Not included in the count:

The word count **does not** include the words in the methodology or the results including figure (table or graph) descriptors in the results section. References, including in-text referencing, and headings, also do not count as part of the 800-1200 word limit.

**Important Note:** Your name or the name of your school, teacher or participants must not appear anywhere in the report. Your work **MUST** only be identified by your student number.

## INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

The investigation project must be the student's own work; however, it is not the intention that students should decide upon a title and then be left to their own devices. The teacher must approve an initial plan, the primary research, and check work in progress.

It is intended that students become accustomed to working autonomously and collaboratively and be secure in the knowledge that the teacher is available for advice.

Students will need your input: during the planning stage; while they are conducting the primary research; when reporting; and in the final submission process.

Students will need to consult with their teacher at least on these occasions:

1. The student's plan must be submitted to the teacher and approved before they begin the research. A pro-forma plan is provided in Appendix III – INVESTIGATION PROJECT PLAN.

**Please note:** The plan is NOT to be submitted to TASC for assessment. You are required to retain copies of the approved plans.

2. Before the student instigates any personal research involving other people as participants, he or she must check with their teacher that the investigation meets the **Ethical Concerns-A Guide for Students**.
3. After about ten hours of work, the student will need to show you evidence of their progress.

4. When submitting the final report the student will need to show you their working notes and any other materials that verify the work submitted is the student's. The student is free to consult with whomever he or she wishes but they must be able to satisfy you that the work contained in the report is his or her own work.

As a guide, you can expect students to need about 25 hours (5 weeks or equivalent) of class and other time for the investigation. You can choose when to allocate time to your class, bearing in mind the submission date. Time allocated does not have to be consecutive.

If the research involves using Ethics Consent Forms, these must be submitted to you with the finished report. The ethics consent forms are retained by you and not submitted to TASC.

## INSTRUCTIONS TO MARKERS

The criteria to be assessed through the marking of the Investigative Project are:

- Criterion 5: Use ethical sociological research methods
- Criterion 6: Use evidence to support a sociological point of view
- Criterion 7: Communicate sociological ideas, information, opinions, arguments and conclusions

### PENALTIES

Markers must penalise by at least one rating, Investigative Projects that are significantly (plus or minus 10%) under or over the prescribed word count under Criterion 7.

Markers must penalise Criterion 7 by at least one rating for inappropriate use of appendices and / or referencing.

If the project does not address the ethical guidelines i.e. if felt to be 'unethical'. The Investigative Project is to be marked and the marker is required to advise the Marking Coordinator and the Investigative Project is to be referred to TASC for consideration.

## APPENDIX I

# ETHICAL GUIDELINES

Students need to be aware that they are unqualified as researchers of Behavioural Science, so when designing and conducting research, they must always place the rights, privacy and dignity of their participants above the value of the information gained.

The following aspects of your report must be fully discussed with your teacher, and approval gained. A sample consent form is included. This is to be used as a guide to devise one appropriate for your research. This must be submitted to your supervising teacher.

### ETHICAL CONCERNS

**Informed Consent:** You must always ask permission for participants to be involved in an interview, experiment or survey or to make an observation. The only time permission is not needed is when you make a detached observation in a public place. Any manipulation of a variable is considered an experiment and so consent must be obtained.

You must have the consent of your participants **before** involving them in your investigation. The records of consent that you must keep depend on who are to be the participants.

If you are involving **only** students and teachers from your school, family and close friends, then you need to keep a record of who gave their consent and when. Permission must be obtained from the Principal and teacher when working with younger children in the same school. If you are involving members of the public, you **must have** them complete a consent form before you begin your investigation project. A sample *Consent Form* that you can use follows. The consent form must be submitted to, and approved by, your teacher before you can ask people for their consent.

If students from **another school** or college are used you must obtain the permission of the Principal and teacher of the students as well as the students themselves. If the students are in another high school/primary school/childcare, parental permission must be obtained. In some circumstances, the person administering the primary research (such as observation in a childcare centre) will require a Working with Vulnerable People License. The Consent Forms signed by your participants must be submitted to your teacher who keeps them as records.

**Invasion of Privacy:** All research must respect the privacy of individuals. This includes inappropriate questions on sensitive issues; inappropriate observations; physical invasion of space; use of results without the participant's permission.

**Confidentiality:** Confidentiality must always be maintained and there can be no unauthorised identification of any individual or group including yourself, your teacher, your school or your participants. When possible, allow participants to respond anonymously. All data and documentation must be kept secure.

**Deception:** Misrepresentation in research must be limited. It is necessary to evaluate the data gathered against any potential harm. If deception is to be involved (such as the necessity not to inform the subject of the true nature of an experiment, as it would interfere with the results) you must ask permission from your supervising teacher.

**Lasting Harm:** This includes not only serious physical or psychological damage, but also making anybody feel embarrassed, gullible or threatening his or her self esteem.

**Debriefing:** The purpose and the results of the research must be sensitively communicated to all participants. This is essential if any deception has occurred. Students must realise lasting harm may be the result of debriefing. If there is any chance of causing harm, use of deception is not permitted.

**Coercion:** Make it clear that participation is entirely voluntary. A participant has the freedom to refuse or withdraw at any time without prejudice.

## SUMMARY

- \* The participant is doing you a favour and may refuse.
- \* A research situation does not free you from normal rules of courtesy and law.
- \* Your interest is in the issue not in the intimate life of the participant.
- \* You have a duty to maintain confidentiality. No investigation can be undertaken without the full approval of your teacher. If at any time you experience problems contact your teacher immediately.

## ONE FINAL THING TO CONSIDER

It is recommended that any written research instrument used should include the statement below, or else some adaptation of it that better suits the research topic and research method used.

*Your participation in this investigation is appreciated. This questionnaire/ experiment is asking about (...). Any information that you give will remain confidential.*

*Your responses should be anonymous, so please do not indicate who you are. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with a question, you are not required to answer it. If you wish to withdraw, you are free to do so.*

# BHS315116 SOCIOLOGY – ETHICS CONSENT FORM

(DO NOT submit this form to TASC with your project)

School/College: .....

I, ..... of .....  
(Participant's Name) (Participant's Address)

hereby consent to be a participant of a human research study to be undertaken by .....  
(Researcher's Name)

I understand the purpose of the research is to investigate .....  
.....  
(Include a statement of your aim or hypothesis)

If you have any concerns please contact .....  
(Teacher's Name and Phone Number)

## I acknowledge:

- . That the aims, methods, possible benefits, and possible hazards of the research study, have been explained to me.
- . That I voluntarily and freely give my consent to my participation in such research study.
- . I understand that the results will be used to complete a written assignment for the TCE BHS315116 Sociology pre-tertiary course.
- . My individual results will not be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation.
- . That I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study, in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from me will not be used.
- . I have the right to refuse to answer any specific questions.
- . I understand I will not be identified by name in this assignment.

## Investigator's Statement:

'I have explained this project and the implications of participation in it to the participant and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.'

Signature of Investigator: ..... Date:.....

## School/College Authority:

The project and its implications have been explained to participants (who are strictly volunteers) and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

Name of School Official: .....

Signature of School Official: ..... Date:.....

## Participant's Statement of Consent

'I have read the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time.'

Signature of Participant: ..... Date:.....

## APPENDIX II

# GUIDE FOR WRITING THE REPORT

This is not prescribed. It is acceptable to use another format if the student, in consultation with the teacher, recognises that the report would be improved.

### GENERAL POINTS

The report must be written in the third person. It is recommended that you use Times New Roman (or similar font), 12 point, 1.5 spacing, aligned to the left. It is not necessary to start a new page for each section of your report. References should be APA.

#### 1. Cover page:

A cover page should be used that contains your TASC candidate number, the topic you have chosen, your research aim or question and your final word count

#### 2. Introduction:

The Introduction should include a brief explanation of the topic of the investigation. Areas covered should include the topic selected, an outline that introduces the central issue to be investigated, a brief literature review, and a statement concerning the aim or research question of the investigation. This section may include definitions of terms that may have a particular meaning and therefore need to be explained for the investigation.

#### 3. Research Design and Method:

This section should contain a brief outline of the research design and method. Indicate sampling methods, size of sample, participants/subjects, materials, procedures and ethical procedures addressed. It is important to show evidence of Informed Consent e.g. in a statement on a questionnaire.

Students should use the following process to address ethics:

- Identify the risks
- Work out a process to minimize the risks
- Clearly explain the risks to the participants.

If there are serious ethical concerns these should be addressed specifically. Students must state why there is a concern(s) and the measures taken to address this. A copy of the research tool (e.g. questionnaire) should be attached in the Appendices.

#### 4. Results:

This section must include a summary of the key findings of the primary research, inclusive of both qualitative and quantitative data. Include a selection of graphs, tables or other data, such as a brief dot point summary of qualitative data from interview, in support of key findings.

In qualitative studies such as interviews, descriptive statistics may not be appropriate but results must be presented systematically, for example, including the transcript (as an Appendix) and providing a summary of the content or key findings in the results section of the report.

Graphs and tables illustrating the results can be included here. Each graph or table should have:

- Title
- Axes labelled
- Key
- Statement explaining what is shown

Other graphs/tables may be included in the Appendix only if they are referred to in the body of the text. However it must be remembered that the body of the report must stand-alone and thus any significant data should be in the result section, apart from a transcript of interviews.

## 5. Analysis:

Analyse, in written form, the research data collected (analysis and discussion may be combined).

## 6. Discussion:

This section should essentially discuss literature and primary research findings in response to the aim/research question.

Include literature of others to support or refute the primary research, as it relates to the problem/question posed in the Introduction. Essentially the key findings of the research should be discussed and analysed with reference to supporting literature, particularly of a sociological nature. The emphasis is on discussing the findings of the primary research crossed matched to sociological explanations in order to draw conclusions.

Any obvious limitations to the study should be briefly mentioned (e.g. shortcomings with measures, procedures and/or design) together with any suggested modifications or ideas for further research.

## 7. Conclusions:

The investigation should also include a conclusion that summarises the outcomes from the research is clear and concise which accepts, rejects or modifies the aim/research question. No new information should be introduced.

## 8. References:

A list of all sources of information, including data, must be given at the end of the report.

- References must be listed under a sub-heading of each type of source, in alphabetical order.
- The approved referencing system for the report is the APA system.
- Each reference must be referred to in the body of the report.
- References, including in-text referencing, do not count as part of the 800-1200 word limit.
- The reference list, in alphabetic order, under the appropriate sub-heading, is placed at the end of the report but before the Appendices. (See [TASC document Authenticity and Academic Integrity: A Guide](#))

## 9. Appendices:

Other necessary and relevant materials may be inserted as Appendices. This may include additional materials that are considered necessary and relevant such as: numerical raw data in tabular form; a complete copy of the research instrument (e.g. questionnaires, interview schedule, observation checklist/criteria); and interview transcripts. The report, however, must stand alone as complete without Appendices. Extra graphs, tables etc. should NOT be included, if the information is relevant and referred to in the report these types, of results should be in the results section.

All appended material must be referred to in the body of the report. For example, if Appendices are used, within the report there should be a statement along the lines of Transcript 1 contains the responses to interview questions (Appendix 1)'. Graphs and tables illustrating collated empirical data should be included in the result section of the report and not be in the Appendices.

Appendices should contain no more than 250 words (this does not include either questionnaires used for obtaining data or numbers contained in tables and interview transcripts).

# APPENDIX III INVESTIGATION PROJECT PLAN

*Must be approved by your teacher. Do not submit this form with your study.*

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Select the topic you are addressing.

- OR 1. The causes and consequences of inequality; political, social and economic.
- OR 2. Social differentiation and structured inequality as reproduced through socialisation.
- OR 3. Structured inequality as it occurs through the institutions of family, school, work and/or media.

Select the social category you will be studying.

- Gender
- Indigenous Australians
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Youth
- Rural/regional Australians

What is the aim of the investigation?

.....  
.....

What is your hypothesis or research question?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What research method(s) will you use to gather empirical data?

.....  
.....

Why have you selected this methodology?.....

.....

.....  
.....

Who do you intend to use as participants? .....

.....  
.....

How does your study address ethical considerations?

Informed consent .....

.....

Invasion of privacy.....

.....

Confidentiality and security.....

.....

Deception .....

.....

Lasting harm.....

.....

Debriefing.....

.....

Coercion.....

.....

Student name: .....

Student's signature: .....

Teacher's name: .....

Teacher's signature: .....

Date: .....