INVESTIGATION PROJECT

There have been a number of significant changes to the guidelines in recent years primarily in formulating an aim or goal for the research and in the word limit, thus candidates and teachers are advised to read through the document carefully.

The guidelines now recommend that candidates formulate a research question or aim rather than a hypothesis for their Investigation Project. Candidates who do formulate a hypothesis are not disadvantaged by this choice, but it is no longer a requirement nor recommended.

Please note, the word count has been changed and does not include the methodology or the words in figures and tables in the results section and brief descriptors of this data. The final word count should be given as well as the cumulative word count in the side margin in 200s. Candidates are allowed 10% plus or minus the word limit of 800 – 1 200 before being penalised on Criterion 7.

There were a number of very well put together reports with interesting topics chosen from within the provided guidelines. Successful candidates demonstrated their level of analysis and thorough preparation in terms of secondary research. They used sociological language consistently throughout the report, did not rely solely on electronic sources but used the suggested range and demonstrated the effort they had gone to, to identify appropriate Australian texts on sometimes more obscure topic areas. These candidates were rewarded.

Candidates who did well were also more inclined to take advantage of the no word limit instruction for the research methodology sub section and here demonstrate their understanding and the careful preparation they had utilised when formulating and undertaking their primary research. For example considerations such as describing how they may have arrived at a method of measuring SES, how they were careful to avoid stereotyping by using appropriate classification systems, how they were aware of potentially intrusive or sensitive areas of research. Research methodology needs to explain the steps the research took. It is a description of your research method. A good indicator of a sound methodology is whether someone reading your methodology, could follow it to replicate your research.

However there were also a number of very poorly researched and referenced folios. Candidates need to remember that their topic of research should be refined in consultation with their teacher and that careful consideration should be given to the focus question that fits best with the research topic. Candidates should consider the available range of secondary sources before they undertake their investigation. Failure to do so can create substantial problems and flaws in the final product. A literature review prior to undertaking the Investigation Project is a way that candidates can check for available material before making a final decision on their topic for research.

It is recommended that a cover page should be at the front of the folio with the following information: The Focus question and topic as outlined on page 2 of the IP Guidelines. Often there were no ‘sign posts’ at the beginning for marker to know which focus question was being addressed. Candidates should clearly state how their project addresses equality / inequality. It was disappointing to see that important
and TQA suggested sociological concepts for the inequality unit were often not exploited. Little or often no mention and provision of definitions and terms such as equality, inequality, cultural and social capital, life chances, ascribed and achieved status, stratification, gendered inequality, ethnocentrism, xenophobia etc. There was also a tendency in a number of reports to seemingly dump a brief mention of theory in introductions and or discussion without the candidate making clear why this theory was connected to the topic at hand.

Weaker projects made similar mistakes to past years, word limit significantly over or under the word limit, poor organisation and incorrect report format, weak introductions, failure to acknowledge limitations of research, failure to provide a copy of the research instrument. Poor proof reading was also a feature of many weaker projects. Candidates should check graph headings and labels closely. Spell check doesn’t pick up the mistakes in these and mistakes were frequent. All axis must be labeled and headings should be descriptive of what the graph is showing.

Many candidates conducted qualitative research in the form of interviews or open-ended questions. For this reason, there is no word count on tables so that candidates may present part of the data they have collected in the Results section of their report. This is an opportunity for candidates conducting this type of research to demonstrate that they have read and extracted data ready for analysis in their report. It is important that candidates analyse their collected data and cross-reference this to sociological sources in order to examine not just the existence of inequality but the consequences. The analysis is of their collected data and therefore, there needs to be significant inclusion of this in the discussion and analysis. It is this feature that distinguishes their research report from an essay on the same topic.

There are some projects where opinion is relevant, for example the study may be researching young people’s awareness of available support for mental health. Clearly, here their opinion is a key finding. However many research project are not about the opinions of Year 11 and 12 candidates. If the project is looking at the under representation of women in managerial jobs, then go out and find out if this is the case, don’t ask candidates if this is the case. ‘Do you think...’ ‘Do you know ...’ is useless, irrelevant information. Too many IPs look at very interesting issues, then didn’t follow through with sound research method.

Poor referencing was disappointing as there is a number of referencing tools and guidelines available for candidates in addition to that provide by the TQA. This includes the UTas documents, which can be accessed by the link in the IP Guidelines, regarding APA and Harvard Referencing. These documents are very well set out with examples for candidates to follow. There are also a variety of online referencing tools cite ace, cite this for me and Reference Me (app for IPhone). Too often the in-text referencing did not match the reference list. Authors’ names were frequently misspelt e.g. van Krieken was Kriekan. Teachers are encouraged to explicitly teach this skill and explain the relevance of this for academic integrity in whatever candidates will do now and into the future. The use of sociological sources is encouraged and, where possible, Australian sources as the research is about CAS. Sparks Notes and Wikipedia are not credible sources.

Please ensure no names of candidates, schools or subjects are mentioned particularly if an ethic consent form is attached. Ethic consent forms should stay with the teacher. If the candidate is doing a survey only a disclaimer needs to be attached each respondent does not need to sign an ethics consent form.
WRITTEN EXAMINATION

A good answer is a structured response to the question supported by reference to the stimulus material and sociological concepts, theories and perspectives. General advice to teachers is to place deviance and other sociological theories in the context of the perspectives. The answer should contain discussion related to the specific question posed that demonstrates not only knowledge but also understanding of the theories and perspectives. This should include a critique of theories and perspectives in terms of strengths and weaknesses. The application of these theories and perspectives to the stimulus material is an important part of the discussion and logical conclusion, rather than a regurgitated response.

The marking tool used to assess the written papers is based upon the criteria standards as documented in the course document. It is very important that candidates familiarise themselves with these standards so that their constructed answer meets the requirements of the standards. Of particular note are the standards for Criterion 6: Construct an argument that includes alternative theoretical explanations. Three standards are cited in the course document for an ‘A’ rating and two of these specifically mention the required use of theoretical perspectives. It was noted by several examiners that candidates articulated sociological theory but did not necessarily refer to any perspectives in their response.

**Question 1 (257 responses)**

This was the most popular question answered and asked candidates to explain and evaluate alternative sociological theories as to why some groups of young people are more likely to be involved in acts that are considered deviant, such as young people involved in alcohol infused violence.

As stated in previous examiners’ reports, candidates are advised to use their time wisely as this question often produces a long answer. Candidates should focus on 2 or 3 theories of deviance in detail, rather than give a superficial account of four or more. Stronger answers made repeated reference to the stimulus to demonstrate their understanding of the alternative theories offered and how they applied to the specific situation. They also linked the discussion of sociological theory to the sociological perspectives to demonstrate a deeper understanding. Weaker answers failed to refer to the stimulus. When offering alternative sociological theories to explain behaviour, it is important for candidates to include in their discussion the merits and constraints of the various theories. They should also draw sound conclusions based on their discussion and evaluations.

**Criterion 4** Analysis and evaluation was quite consistently well done for the four main theories of deviance and better answers were able to formulate conclusions supported by their discussion. Evaluation of the theories leading to these conclusions is an important part of a response to this question. Disappointingly, there were several candidates who did NOT refer to the stimulus at all.

**Criterion 5** This criterion was addressed well by the majority of candidates with the inclusion of a wide range of concepts associated with the theories of deviance.

**Criterion 6** Alternative theories of deviance were explained in general terms by most candidates. Some weaker answers lacked detail and relied upon learned material rather than a vigorous discussion of the issue of deviance through the stimulus material and the application of the theories. It is important for candidates to have an overview of this issue of deviance including the position of sociological perspectives.
**Question 2** – (42 responses)

This question required candidates to explain how socialisation plays a major role in shaping an individual’s sense of identity. There were several candidates who had prepared well for this question and this was evidenced in their detailed discussion of the construction of self.

The question lends itself to a wide variety of answers and the sociological theories applicable, including discussion of deviance. Good answers included discussion on the functionalist, conflict and interactionist perspectives with regard to socialisation. The works of relevant sociologists such as Colley, Mead and Goffman were referred to accurately in better answers. Most candidates also included an examination across the life cycle with reference to primary, secondary and tertiary socialisation and the role of agents of socialisation such as family, education, peer group and media in construction of identity. Able candidates demonstrated their understanding of the tensions within the socialisation process with robust discussion of the issue of agency and free will.

Several interesting answers included references to cultural transmission theory in order to discuss the development of deviant behaviour as part of self-identity. Good discussion around culture, subculture and norms of society formed part of these answers. It is important that candidates use the stimulus material within their answer and evaluate the theories.

**Question 3** - (82 responses)

The question required candidates to show how deviance is difficult to define and that the relative definitions of deviance can be best explained through examining subcultures, countercultures and mainstream society.

Better answers showed that deviance is relative to time, gender, religion and age. These answers showed how deviance is a social construct (often manipulated by the media). The stronger candidates showed that deviance is difficult to define because of the ever-changing norms and values of CAS. These stronger candidates also demonstrated an understanding of the relationship between socialisation and deviance.

Most candidates referred to Stimulus 1 only. It was pleasing to see the ‘A’ candidate make an attempt to use stimulus 4 and utilise appropriate quotes from this to support their argument. Candidates who discussed the Labelling theory used stimulus 2 very effectively. A clear understanding of the use of the terms in the cartoon showed how labelling occurs.

Generally candidates understood the role of the functionalist and conflict perspectives in explaining how deviance is relative. Better answers were able to relate this to CAS.

Overall, candidates had a sound understanding of the sociological explanations of deviance. Stronger candidates then related these to the stimulus and showed how the explanation related to relativity. The weaker candidates gave generalised accounts of the explanations of deviance – their answers may have been better suited to Question 1.
Criterion 4

Analysis and evaluation varied from extremely well done – to no attempt. The stronger answers showed a real ability to discuss theories and perspectives, specifically answer the question, make appropriate use of the stimuli and apply concepts and ideas to the various stimuli.

Criterion 5

A broad range of ability here. Stronger candidates defined and demonstrated a clear understanding of a wider range of appropriate concepts and ideas. These candidates backed this up with examples from the stimuli and their course work. Then showed their relevance to the question. Weaker candidates tended to demonstrate rote understanding of concepts and little application to the stimuli.

Criterion 6

Better candidates created logical, well-constructed answers – clearly relating their knowledge and understanding to the question. They made clear links between the stimuli and the theory. Weaker candidates’ work was marred by poor use of paragraphs, lack of organisation and minimal attempt to actually ‘answer the question’ – that is relating their material to the question. Poor introductions were common amongst those candidates who seemingly had written pre-prepared answers.

Question 4 – (15 responses)

This question required a discussion of the process of socialisation and mechanisms of social control. Although only a small number of candidates answered this question there was a wide disparity in the quality of responses. Some candidates may have been better to answer question 2 as they did not adequately address the central issue of social control but relied upon a discussion of the socialisation process. Better answers were able to discuss the issue of social control, agents of socialisation and formal and informal sanctions. Candidates needed to discuss the functionalist and the conflict perspectives on the formation of the norms of society and the enforcement of those norms through formal and informal means.

Question 5 (97 responses)

Overall this question produced high quality and sophisticated answers. As this can be a longer answer with a complex structure, candidates should work to a plan to develop their argument leading to logical conclusion. A clear understanding of stratification is an important element of the question, including the acknowledging the contrasting view of the functionalist and the conflict perspectives on stratification. Stronger answers showed a definite attempt to answer the question and covered two institutions very effectively. Weaker answers contained minimal knowledge and understanding of sociological concepts with no attempt to relate concepts, theories and perspectives to the stimulus material or the question. Some responses only discussed only one institution.

Criterion 4

Effective answers used the stimulus materials widely and appropriately to support the discussion. Candidates who critically analysed and evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of sociological perspectives and theories using the stimuli scored well. Weaker answers were from candidates who did not show a direct relationship between their information and the question in their response. Often information from the stimulus material was re-stated or described but not related to the question. There were some who did not even mention the stimulus material.
Criterion 5
Stronger responses contained extensive use of appropriate sociological terms and language. Candidates linked their terms and concepts to the question, stimulus material

Provided recent information. Weaker responses contained minimal knowledge and understanding of sociological concepts. Some candidates used terms, giving partial (often inaccurate) definitions with no attempt to relate these to stimulus or question.

Criterion 6
Good responses showed comprehensive understanding of Functionalist, Conflict and Interactionist perspectives and used stimulus materials to demonstrate their knowledge. Where it was appropriate to the institutions discussed, stronger answers showed the relevance of the Feminist Perspective and how that perpetuates stratification through patriarchy. Some candidates showed an awareness of the relationships between legislation and stratification e.g. Maternity Allowance and Equal Opportunity Act. Good responses aligned theories to perspectives e.g. Bourdieu (Conflict); Douglas (functionalist) and provided additional evidences from relevant texts and ABS.

Question 6 (17 responses)

This question focused on power and politics in society and had an interesting statement referring to power as the ability of people or groups to exert their will over others according to Max Weber as a lead in to the question. Only a small number of candidates answered this question. Most candidates were well prepared and referred to the institutions of family and education. This year there were several very good answers on the power and politics of the media. It is encouraging to see teachers and candidates diverging from more traditional answers exploring this very contemporary issue in modern Australian society.

The key to answering this question well is to not only define power and politics but also integrate these concepts into the structure of the answer to show how power is gained and maintained. The implications of the use of power by groups within CAS and how this is viewed by the main sociological perspectives is integral to a good response.

Question 7 (127 responses)

A growing number of candidates are answering the question on interrelationships between institutions. While this question may attract weaker responses because of the more general nature of the question, it is still a requirement that the discussion be within the area of sociology and include reference to the major perspectives. It is important that candidates answer the question and not just write all they know about two institutions, the relationships between the institutions needs to be the focus of their response, in other words answer the question.

Well-structured essays concentrated on two main institutions and provided clear evidence of the interactions between the two institutions with reference to the stimulus material an additional material from the course. Strong links were made between Family and Education, Education and Work and Media and Work. Better links were able to draw upon legislation to support their argument and to link this to show how changes in legislation may also alter the relationship between two institutions, for example work and education. Feminist theory was included appropriately by several candidates,
particularly in relation to family and education and/or work. Candidates are required to refer to the sociological perspectives and are encouraged to incorporate this into their answer rather than tack on as an afterthought at the end of the essay.

**Question 8 (153 responses)**

This was the most popular question for candidates and there were many responses that demonstrated good preparation by candidates. As the question is relatively predictable, candidates should aim for a balance in discussing their chosen institutions. There is too much to include everything into one essay, thus candidates are encouraged to think about what to include and what to leave out. It may be better to write more extensively on two institutions than to attempt to cover three. Weaker answers were from candidates who spent too much time on one institution, usually family, and not enough written about second one. Some candidates neglected to mention theoretical explanations even though the question asked for them. Some candidates would have been better to answer Question 7 on interrelationships as they included very little about changes to the institutions in their response.

**Criterion 6**  
Better answers were able to incorporate an analysis of the stimulus material into their constructed argument. Evaluating the proposed theoretical perspectives is a required part of this criterion. This posed a problem for candidates who did not include any reference to the perspectives in their answer.

**Criterion 7**  
A wide variety of terms concepts and additional material was included into better answer. This provided evidence of the depth of knowledge that candidates had on changes to the institutions over the past 50 years in CAS. References to legislation, movements such at the Feminist Movement and statistics were mostly accurate and provided detail to the more comprehensive responses.

**Criterion 8**  
This criterion allows candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of sociological theory, including the major perspectives studied as part of the course. Linked with Criterion 6, candidates who were able to apply the perspectives to the institutions and to analyse the changes to those institutions from those perspectives as well as evaluate the strengths and weaknesses were rewarded. Several candidates only explained the perspectives with no attempt to apply or evaluate them.
## Award Distribution

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## Student Distribution (SA or better)

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