TASMANIAN ASSESSMENT, STANDARDS & CERTIFICATION

External Assessment 2026

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SOCIOLOGY

BHS315116

Pages: 16
Questions: 8
Answer Booklets: 2

Preparation time for this exam: 15 minutes

Suggested working time: 2 hours

Instructions:

- There are **two (2)** sections to this exam paper.
- You must answer **one (1)** question from each section in **essay** form:
  - **Section A** – answer **one (1)** question
  - **Section B** – answer **one (1)** question.
- Write your answers for each section in a **separate answer booklet** and write the question number you are answering on the front cover of each answer booklet.
- The exam is **two (2) hours** in length. The suggested working time for each section is **approximately 60 minutes**.
- All answers must be written in **English**.
- You **must** make sure your answers address the listed criteria.

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Guide to Exam Structure

	Questions available	Questions to answer	Suggested working time	Marks available
Section A	4	1	60 minutes	All criteria assessed using extended ratings of A+ to z
Section B	4	1	60 minutes	
Totals	**8**	**2**	**120 minutes (2 hours)**	

Criteria

You **must** make sure your answers address:

- Criterion 1 analyse theories about socialisation, identity construction and deviance
- Criterion 2 analyse theories about institutions
- Criterion 7 communicate sociological ideas, information, opinions, arguments and conclusions.

Section A – Socialisation: Conformity and Deviance

- In essay form, answer **one (1)** question, in response to the material in **one (1)** or more of the stimulus materials provided in this section.
- Write your answer in a **separate answer booklet**.
- The suggested working time for this section is **approximately 60 minutes**.
- This section assesses **Criteria 1** and **7**.

Stimulus 1 – Socialisation, Social Control and Conformity

Creating conformity in public places

Everyday life is shaped or constrained by laws, rules, or conventions and by socialised norms about social interactions. Some of these rules are implicit and exist in tradition or convention; others are more explicit and written down as legislation, regulations or guidelines.

Some modern forms of social control assume an agreement by a person that they will behave or act in the expected manner in exchange for access to certain benefits. Codes of behaviour or dress that exist at the entrance to cinemas, clubs and sporting facilities all assume this contractual agreement. Entering suggests agreement to those rules and regulations for accepted behaviour and dress. Complex webs of such informal contracts exist in everyday life and seek to manage individuals' activity and conduct with the aim of securing social order.

Deviance, and its management or prevention, is built into the social and physical environment and reflects the situational nature of behaviour. Various symbols and signs displayed in public places indicate acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The aim is to induce conformity to particular social norms or at least attempt to minimise deviant behaviour. Such social control is usually experienced as normal, natural and often not noticed or questioned.



Figure 1: A traffic sign with multiple parking and pedestrian rules, including no parking, time-limited parking, and pedestrian crossing restrictions.

Source: Text adapted from Roach Anleu, S. (2023) Deviance, crime and social control. In J. Germov & M. Poole (Eds*) Public Sociology* (pp. 338-360). Routledge.

Image Source: https://www.thoughtco.com/social-control-3026587

Stimulus 2 – Socialisation and Identity Construction

The modern self must be flexible

We are born into a pre-existing society, language and culture. We rely on existing culture, as well as our relationships with others, to form our 'selves'. We also have multiple selves, taking on different identities in different social contexts, and our identity changes over time. The interactive nature of 'self' arises in the process of socialisation and explores the influence of others and the individual's interpretation of those perceptions.

Social status can be understood in terms of individual characteristics, talent and effort as well as ascribed social markers. An essential element of the shift to modern society is the increased focus on the individual and individual choices. Giddens (1991) outlined the construction of the self as part of a reflective process of connecting personal identity and social changes. The modern 'self' must be flexible and responsive to changing demands and situations. Online interactions extend the social space in which individuals can explore and experiment with presentations of self, including the existence of multiple selves projected to a broader range of audiences.



Figure 2: Cartoon of two (2) characters on a stage discussing the impact of situation on roles and rules.

Source: Text adapted from Van Krieken et al (2021) *Sociology* (7th edn). Pearson.

Image Source: https://ristogjorgjiev.com/2024/06/19/unveiling-the-theatrical-self-how-goffmans-insights-transformed-my-view-on-social-interactions/

Stimulus 3 – Alternative Sociological Theories of Deviance

Repeat offenders of youth crime inflating statistics

Many news reports overstate the extent of youth crime because they do not consider or communicate the extent of repeat offending. Victoria Police's commentary on the Crime Statistics Agency 2023 revealed that 82 repeat offenders were arrested more than 10 times over the same period in 2023. Only 40% of arrests in that period were the individual's first offence.

Items stolen by young people often included groceries, fuel, cigarettes and alcohol, which fits with the increased price of these items. The data revealed a 38.7% increase in thefts from retail stores, including supermarkets. Property and deception offences had the largest increase of any crime category from 2022/2023.

Young people are struggling in a rental and housing crisis, where finding long-term, safe and affordable housing options is becoming more difficult. The increase in theft of items such as groceries and fuel points to young people being unable to afford necessities, a driving factor behind an increase in crime.

The national research on 10–13-year-olds charged with offending, commissioned by the Institute of Criminology, found the following among those whose charges proceeded to court:

- they had high levels of hardship and trauma
- there were family difficulties with child protection involvement
- 50% had previous contact with police as a victim of family violence
- a high percentage had disengaged from school
- many had substantial mental health and disability issues and 60% had at least one diagnosed psychiatric disorder
- (compared to 14-year-olds and older) they were more frequently First Nations, female and aged 13 at offending.

Source: Text adapted from https://youthlaw.asn.au/the-facts-in-youth-crime/

Stimulus 4 – Relativity of Deviance

Illegal graffiti or street art?

More than 8,000 incidents of graffiti are reported annually to the New South Wales police. Indeed, it only takes a quick walk through the streets of Sydney to catch a glimpse of the diverse forms of graffiti and street art, from simple tags to elaborate murals. Some see it as art, while others label it as vandalism. These differing views make the management of graffiti and street art difficult for authorities.

Western Sydney University research, led by Dr Cameron McAuliffe, has helped local governments rethink their policies on graffiti and develop strategies that benefit the community.

“Street art is not a pure good, and graffiti is not a pure bad,” says McAuliffe. “They both play an important role in growing creative economies and building communities.”

For decades, many local and state governments in Australia have waged a zero-tolerance ‘war on graffiti’. Many local councils have explicitly criminalised graffiti and have introduced harsh penalties as a deterrent.

Despite graffiti evolving into a legitimate art form, local government policies have not caught up. Urban authorities have continued costly removal procedures, which have been ineffective at keeping urban spaces clear of spray paint.

Other research by McAuliffe revealed that attitudes towards graffiti and street art vary depending on where it is located. These values can shift over time, as existing graffiti is painted over by others or the property is sold.



Figure 3: A price tag on a street sign pole illustrating the annual cost of cleaning graffiti off street signs.

Source: Text adapted from https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/future-makers/issue-one/the-writing-on-the-wall

Image Source: https://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-06/price-tag-pop-up-event-shows-graffiti-clean-up-costs/5433140

Section A – Socialisation: Conformity and Deviance

- In essay form, answer **one (1)** question from this section.
- Use the material in **one (1)** or more of the stimulus materials provided in Section A, as well as information from the course.
- Use sociological terms and concepts in your answer.

Question 1 – Socialisation, Social Control and Conformity

Explain and evaluate the process of socialisation as a means of social control. With reference to the stimulus materials, discuss the development of social norms in Australia. Outline and evaluate at least **two (2)** theoretical explanations in your answer.

OR

Question 2 – Socialisation and Identity Construction

Explain and evaluate the role socialisation plays in establishing how an individual's identity is created. With reference to the stimulus materials, discuss the development of the self. Outline and evaluate at least **two (2)** theoretical explanations in your answer.

OR

Question 3 – Sociological Theories of Deviance

Explain and evaluate why some young people are more likely to be involved in deviant behaviour in contemporary Australian society. With reference to the stimulus materials, outline and evaluate at least **two (2)** alternative theories of deviance in your answer.

OR

Question 4 – Relativity of Deviance

Explain and evaluate how definitions of deviance are dependent on place, time and group. With reference to the stimulus materials, explain how deviance is a relative concept. Outline and evaluate at least **two (2)** theoretical explanations in your answer.

Section B – Institutions: Power and Politics

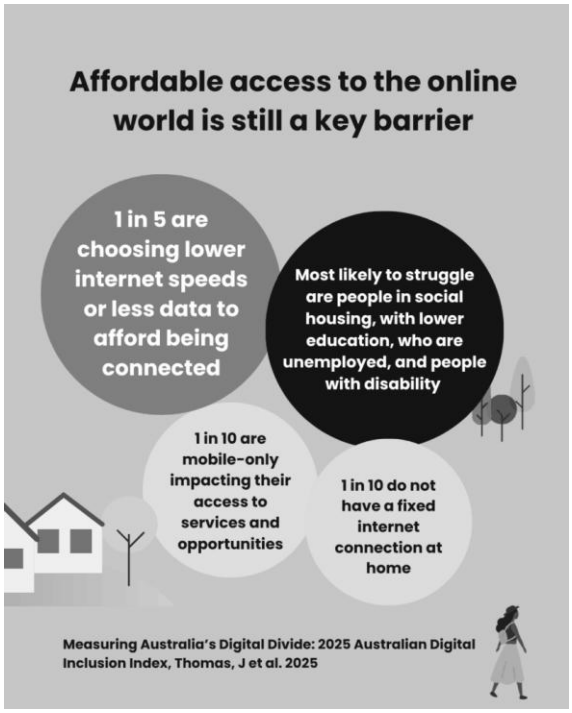
- In essay form, answer **one (1)** question, in response to the material in **one (1)** or more of the stimulus materials provided in Section B.
- Write your answer in a **separate answer booklet**.
- The suggested working time for this section is **approximately 60 minutes**.
- This section assesses **Criteria 2** and **7**.

Stimulus 5 – Media

News access in a digital age

Traditional print and broadcast networks, news outlets and commercial television organisations still matter very much in the digital age. Commercial and public media outlets such as News Corp Australia and the ABC exercise considerable influence over public opinion and political agendas. This is despite the many changes to their operations caused by digitalisation and network communications. Federal elections in Australia often provide examples of this influence. The 2013 front page of the Murdoch-owned Daily Telegraph showed then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd with the text 'Kick this mob out'. People look to established and/or trusted media outlets when seeking information about issues of public concern. However, at the same time, individuals have been empowered by new networks of mass communication supported by new technologies.

These include social media, user-generated online content, podcasts, vlogs and mobile media.



The tensions between the breakdown of state monopolies on broadcasting and emerging new networks of communication have not necessarily resulted in greater equity of access to information and resources. Instead, the digital divide continues to limit access to the internet and ICT devices impacting the less privileged.

Source: Text adapted from Van Krieken et al *Sociology* 7th Edition. Pearson 2021.

Image Source: https://goodthingsaustralia.org/news/new-digital-inclusion-research-shows-the-divide-is-closing-but-more-to-do

Figure 4: Infographic about the digital divide, highlighting issues like lower internet speeds and the impact on individuals.

Stimulus 6 – Work

Artificial Intelligence impact is gender based

A new research brief from the International Labour Organization (ILO) warns that GenAI (generative artificial intelligence) is set to affect women's jobs more than men's. The brief shows that women's jobs are disproportionately vulnerable to GenAI for three main reasons: women are overrepresented in jobs most susceptible to automation; women remain underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) occupations; and GenAI systems themselves often reflect and reproduce the gender biases embedded in societies.

The study found across countries with available data, occupations dominated by women are almost twice as likely to be susceptible to GenAI as male-dominated ones. Around 29% of female-dominated occupations are impacted by GenAI, compared to just 16% of male-dominated occupations.

These risks are closely linked to occupational segregation. Women are heavily concentrated in clerical, administrative and business support roles, (such as secretaries, receptionists, payroll clerks and accounting assistants), where many tasks are routine and structured and therefore at higher risk of substitution by GenAI. By contrast, men are more represented in construction, manufacturing and manual trades, where tasks are less easily automated. Such risks are compounded for women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including on the basis of race, ethnicity, disability or migration status. Without safeguards, GenAI can amplify these inequalities at scale.

Job security and stability among full-time and part-time workers, August 2020

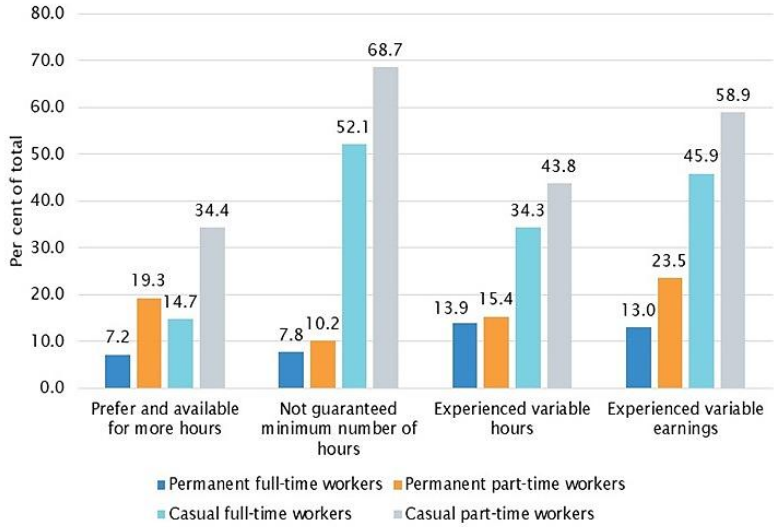


Figure 5: Graph showing the distribution of various working hours across different conditions of employment.

Source: Text adapted from https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/new-ilo-data-confirm-women-face-higher-workplace-risks-generative-ai-men

Image Source:

https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_departments/Parliamentary_Library/Research/Statistical_Snapshots/2021-22/TrendsCasualEmployment

Stimulus 7 – Education

Student postcode a predictor of educational success

The new report – *Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out?* – shows a wide gap in educational opportunity from early childhood through to adulthood.

It shows gaps in a wide range of critical skills and capabilities from school entry, with First Nations children, children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and children in very remote areas being at least twice as likely as their peers to have a developmental vulnerability. Too often these gaps grow as students get older, with students not receiving the support they need to catch up to their peers.

Students' postcode and their family's resources are consistently linked to success on key indicators. Where you grow up and your family's resources strongly influence your access to critical educational opportunities and services from early childhood through to adulthood. Students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely than the national average to:

- participate in pre-school (5.5 percentage point gap)
- finish school (14.8 percentage point gap)
- gain or be working towards a post-school qualification (20.2 percentage point gap).

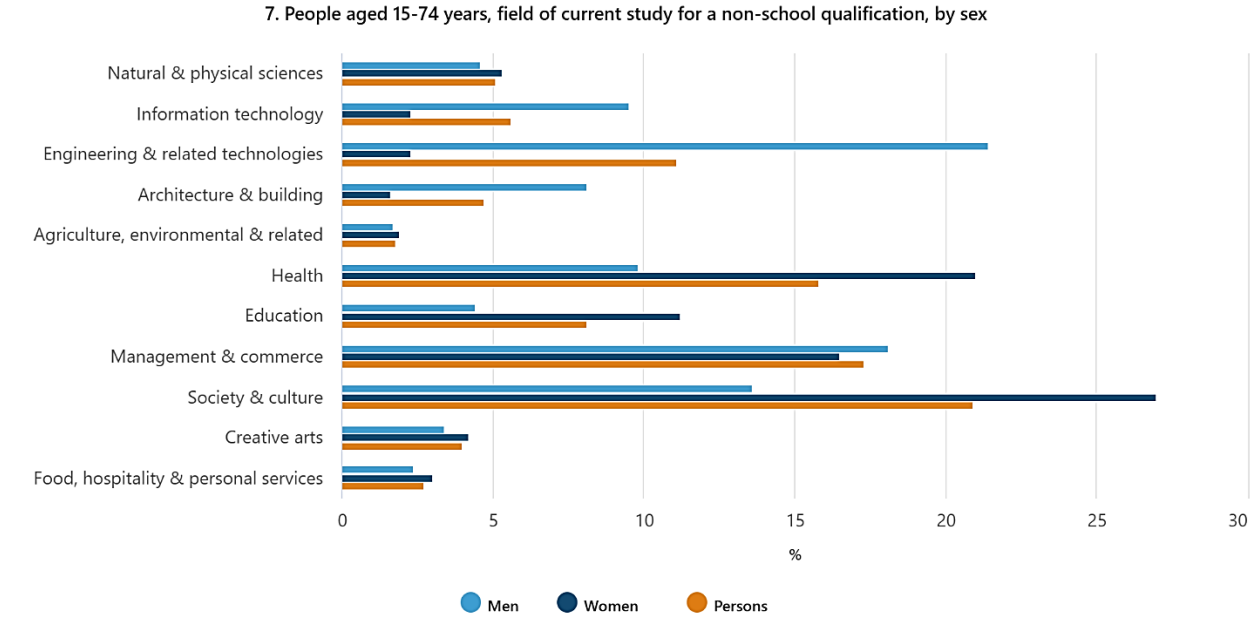


Figure 6: Study of people aged 15 to 74 years undertaking a non-school qualification, by sex.

Source: Text adapted from https://www.vu.edu.au/mitchell-institute/educational-opportunity/landmark-study-reveals-entrenched-educational-inequality

Image Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2025). *Education and work, Australia, May 2025*.

Stimulus 8 – Family

Modern families defined by love not just genetics

Defining ‘family’ is not straightforward. Legislation in various contexts provides definitions of family and relationships. How Australians define family and decide who is included in their kinship circles is influenced by these legal definitions but is also shaped by culture and personal life experiences and circumstances.

Cultures, values, social expectations and laws have all changed over time and vary from place to place. For example, while marriages and families were once guided by, and created through, obligation and tradition, today relationships are increasingly shaped and defined by love, satisfaction and individual choices (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Coontz, 2005; Giddens, 2002). Federal legislation (laws) passed in 2008 formally recognised de facto relationships across a range of contexts and included de facto same-sex relationships for the first time (Fehlberg et al., 2015).

In Australia, the culture and expectations around having children in one’s family have also shifted; women are having fewer children and there has been a rise in families who have no children (Qu, 2020b). Meanwhile, more of us are creating ‘chosen families’ with non-biological kin and/or those not recognised as family by law (Weeks, Heaphy & Donovan, 2001).

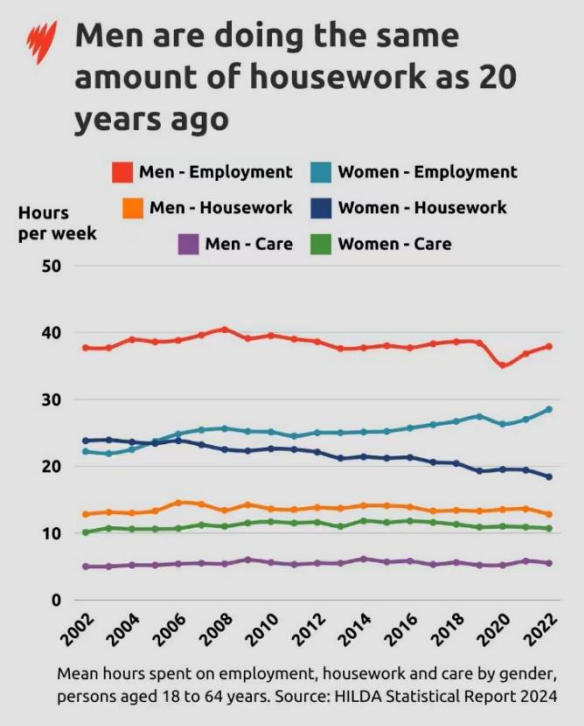


Figure 7: Infographic about the difference between men and women in the hours worked in relation to housework and caring roles.

Source: Text adapted from ‘What is family?’ https://aifs.gov.au/all-research/research-reports/what-family

Image Source: https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/how-australia-is-and-isnt-changing/e7rb2kso0

Section B – Institutions: Power and Politics

- In essay form, answer **one (1)** question from this section.
- Use the material in **one (1)** or more of the stimulus materials provided in Section B, as well as information from the course.
- Use sociological terms and concepts in your answer.

Question 5 – Interrelationships of Institutions

Explain and evaluate how social institutions (media, work, education and/or family) are interrelated. With a focus on **one (1)** institution **(and reference to another institution)** discuss the connected relationship of institutions using the stimulus. Outline and evaluate at least **two (2)** theoretical explanations in your answer.

OR

Question 6 – Changes over Time

Explain and evaluate how a social institution (media, work, education OR family) has changed over time. With reference to the stimulus materials, discuss the changes over time for **one (1)** institution in contemporary Australian society. Outline and evaluate at least **two (2)** theoretical explanations in your answer.

OR

Question 7 – Power and Politics

Explain and evaluate the impact of power and politics on a social institution (media, work, education OR family). With reference to the stimulus material, discuss the impact of power and politics on **one (1)** of these institutions in contemporary Australian society. Outline and evaluate at least **two (2)** theoretical explanations in your answer.

OR

Question 8 – Stratification

Explain and evaluate how social stratification is created and maintained in a social institution (media, work, education OR family). With reference to the stimulus material, discuss the role that **one (1)** of these institutions play in stratification within contemporary Australian society. Outline and evaluate at least **two (2)** theoretical explanations in your answer.

End of Exam

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