

GCE Subject Level Guidance for Sociology

May 2014

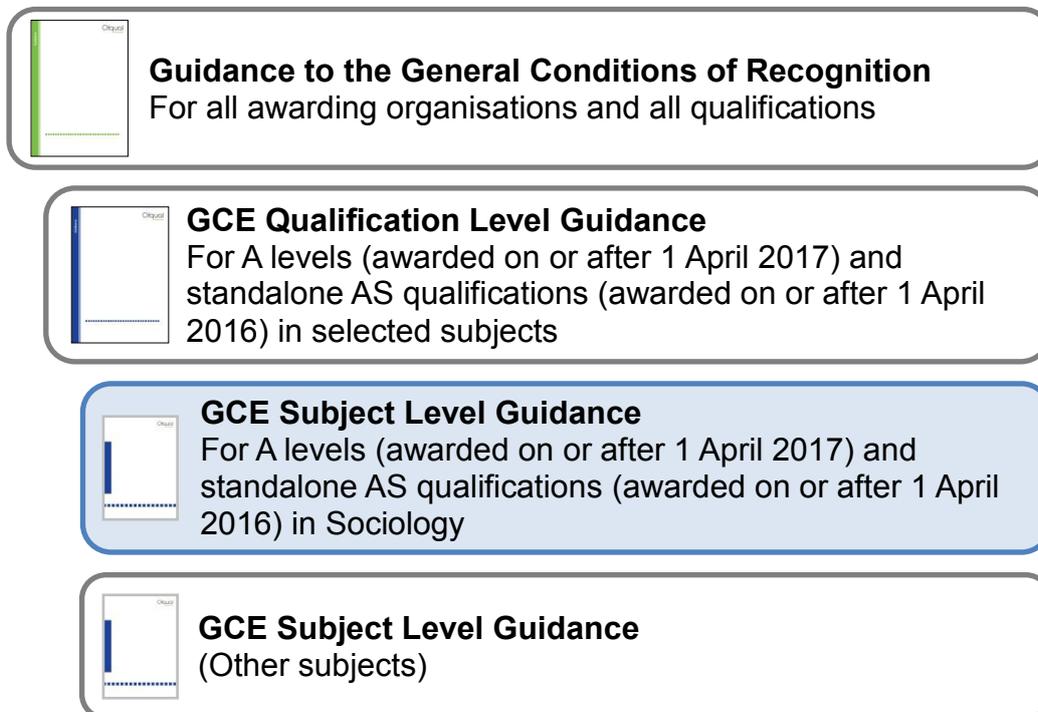
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Introduction

About this document

This document (highlighted in the figure below) is part of a suite of documents which outlines our guidance for awarding organisations offering GCE Qualifications.



This document sets out guidance which applies to the following qualifications:

- all GCE A levels in Sociology awarded on or after 1 April 2017; and
- all standalone GCE AS qualifications in Sociology awarded on or after 1 April 2016.

This guidance supports the GCE Subject Level Conditions and associated requirements for Sociology.¹

This document constitutes guidance for the purposes of section 153 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the '2009 Act') and Condition GCE(Sociology)1.2.

An awarding organisation has a legal obligation under the 2009 Act to have regard to this guidance in relation to each GCE Qualification in Sociology that it makes available or proposes to make available. Condition GCE(Sociology)1.2 imposes the

¹ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/gce-subject-level-conditions-sociology/

same obligation in respect of the guidance below which is issued under that Condition.

An awarding organisation should use the guidance to help it understand how to comply with the GCE Subject Level Conditions and associated requirements for Sociology.

Guidance set out in this document

This document provides guidance on assessment objectives for GCE Qualifications in Sociology
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Guidance on assessment objectives for GCE Qualifications in Sociology

Condition GCE(Sociology)1.2 allows us to specify requirements and guidance relating to assessment objectives for GCE Qualifications in Sociology.

We published our requirements in relation to assessment objectives in *GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Sociology*, and reproduce them in the table below.

		<i>A level</i>	<i>AS</i>
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ sociological theories, concepts and evidence ■ sociological research methods 	35-45%	40-50%
AO2	Apply sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods to a range of issues	30-40%	30-35%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ present arguments ■ make judgements ■ draw conclusions 	20-30%	20-25%

We set out below our guidance for the purposes of Condition GCE(Sociology)1.2. This guidance explains how we expect awarding organisations to interpret these assessment objectives in terms of:

- the different 'strands' within each of the assessment objectives;
- the further discrete 'elements' within each assessment objective and its strands which questions and tasks could target and/or seek to credit – our expectation is that each and every question/task should target or seek to credit at least one of these elements, and may target or seek to credit multiple elements across one or more assessment objectives;
- the coverage expectations, such as in relation to the different strands and elements within each assessment objective and how those strands and elements should be sampled over time; and
- the key areas of emphasis in each assessment objective and the particular meaning for the subject of any key terms and phrases used; defined terms are shown in bold text, followed by their definitions.

In line with the obligations set out in Condition GCE(Sociology)1.2, we expect awarding organisations to be able to demonstrate how they have had regard to this guidance. For example, an awarding organisation could map how it has regard to the guidance as it:

- develops its sample assessment materials;
- delivers the qualification;
- develops and applies its approach to sampling the elements into which the assessment objectives are divided; and
- monitors the qualification to make sure it addresses all elements appropriately.

AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:			35-45% (A level) 40-50% (AS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ sociological theories, concepts and evidence ■ sociological research methods 			
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Agreements and definitions
1 – sociological theories, concepts and evidence	1a – Demonstrate knowledge of sociological theories, concepts and evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reasonable coverage of each element in each set of assessments (but not every assessment) ■ The degree to which each element is covered overall will depend on the nature of the specific tasks and topics ■ No more than 5% of the marks for each A level specification as a whole should be attributed to recall-only items ■ No more than 10% of the marks for each AS specification as a whole should be attributed to recall-only items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The knowledge and understanding aspects of AO1 should be targeted together rather than discretely in the majority of cases. (This would mean targeting of elements 1a/1b and 2a/2b – also potentially elements 1a/2b and 2a/1b.) In such cases, the marks targeting and/or seeking to credit these elements would not need to be referenced separately. ■ Items requiring recall are targeting knowledge; items requiring ‘non-sequential’ explanation are targeting understanding. ■ Sociological research methods can be targeted and/or credited discretely. However, it is more difficult to separate out theories, concepts and evidence. All three of these would not necessarily be assessed together in an individual question/task; the coverage and balance of them would be demonstrated through specification content mapping. ■ The emphasis on theories, concepts and evidence should be greater than that on research methods.
	1b – Demonstrate understanding of sociological theories, concepts and evidence		
2 – sociological research methods	2a – Demonstrate knowledge of sociological research methods		
	2b – Demonstrate understanding of sociological research methods		

AO2: Apply sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods to a range of issues			30-40% (A level) 30-35% (AS)
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Agreements and definitions
n/a	1a – Apply sociological theories, concepts and evidence to a range of issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reasonable coverage of each element in each set of assessments (but not every assessment) ■ The degree to which each element is covered overall will depend on the nature of the specific tasks and topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The issues addressed could range from specific, real-world examples to more conceptual, esoteric debates. ■ These issues should be targeted through at least two different subject content areas. ■ Items requiring, rather than permitting, the use of a stimulus are targeting AO2. ■ Sociological research methods can be targeted and/or credited discretely. However, it is more difficult to separate out theories, concepts and evidence. All three of these would not necessarily be assessed together in an individual question/task; the coverage and balance of them would be demonstrated through specification content mapping.
	1b – Apply sociological research methods to a range of issues		

AO3: Analyse and evaluate sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods in order to:		20-30% (A level) 20-25% (AS)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ present arguments ■ make judgements ■ draw conclusions 			
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Agreements and definitions
1 – Present arguments	<i>The strand is a single element</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reasonable coverage of each strand in each set of assessments (but not every assessment) ■ The approximate balance between the three strands in each set of assessments should be 40% (present arguments), 40% (make judgements) and 20% (draw conclusions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Presenting arguments is largely an analytical skill, but making judgements and drawing conclusions are largely evaluative. ■ Responses might not necessarily come to a definitive conclusion as it may not be possible to do this in relation to some issues. ■ Items requiring sequential explanation are targeting AO3 – this is where the explanation relates to a ‘how’ (such as a causal relationship or a linked process) since this is an analytical and potentially an evaluative skill.
2 – Make judgements	<i>The strand is a single element</i>		
3 – Draw conclusions	<i>The strand is a single element</i>		

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