

# **GCSE Subject Level Guidance for Geology**

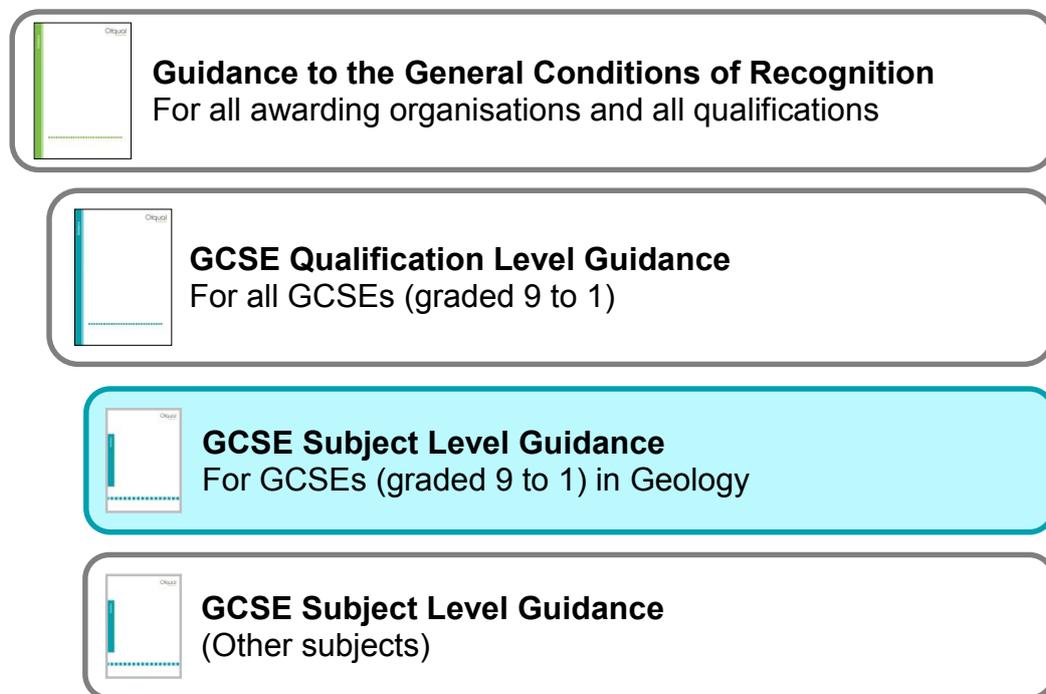
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## Introduction

This document (highlighted in the figure below) is part of a suite of documents which outlines our guidance for awarding organisations offering GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1).



This document sets out guidance which applies to all GCSE Qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in Geology. It supports the *GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Geology*.<sup>1</sup>

This document constitutes guidance for the purposes of section 153 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the '2009 Act') and Condition GCSE(Geology)1.

An awarding organisation has a legal obligation under the 2009 Act to have regard to this guidance, where relevant, in relation to each GCSE Qualification in Geology that it makes available or proposes to make available. Condition GCSE(Geology)1 imposes the same obligation in respect of the guidance below which is issued under that Condition.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-Geology](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-Geology)

An awarding organisation should use the guidance in this document to help it understand how to comply with the *GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Geology*.

## **Guidance set out in this document**

This document provides guidance on assessment objectives for GCSE Qualifications (graded 9 to 1) in Geology.
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## Guidance on assessment objectives for GCSE Qualifications in Geology

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

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

	Objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of geological ideas, skills and techniques	40%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of geological ideas, skills and techniques	40%
AO3	Analyse, interpret and evaluate geological ideas, information and evidence to make judgements and draw conclusions	20%

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

- the discrete ‘elements’ within each assessment objective that 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 elements within each assessment objective and how those 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 GCSE(Geology)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 geological ideas, skills and techniques			40%
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
n/a	1a – Demonstrate knowledge of geological ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Full coverage in each set of assessments<sup>2</sup> (but not in every assessment).</li> <li>■ A maximum of 15% of the total marks for the qualification should reward demonstrating knowledge in isolation.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Ideas</b> are aspects of subject content outlined in Paragraph 6 of the document published by the Secretary of State entitled ‘Geology GCSE subject content’, document reference DFE-00211-2015 (the ‘Content Document’).</li> <li>■ <b>Skills and techniques</b> are aspects of subject content and are related to the skills and techniques outlined in Paragraphs 7 to 9 of the Content Document and the mathematical skills requirement set out in Paragraph 11 of the Content Document.</li> <li>■ The emphasis in this assessment objective should be on the demonstration of knowledge and understanding of geological ideas.</li> </ul>
	1b – Demonstrate knowledge of geological skills and techniques		
	1c – Demonstrate understanding of geological ideas		
	1d – Demonstrate understanding of geological skills and techniques		

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this guidance, a ‘set of assessments’ means the assessments to be taken by a particular Learner for a GCSE Qualification in Geology. For clarity, the assessments taken by Learners may vary, depending on any possible routes through the qualification.

<sup>3</sup> Marks which ‘reward demonstrating knowledge in isolation’ means any mark awarded solely for recalling facts or other knowledge. It does not include marks awarded for selecting appropriate knowledge (for example, to evidence an argument), or for applying knowledge to a particular context.

AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of geological ideas, skills and techniques			40%
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
n/a	1a – Apply knowledge and understanding of geological ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).</li> <li>■ A reasonable balance of the elements in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).</li> <li>■ Awarding organisations should justify the balance between elements 1a and 1b in their assessment strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Ideas</b> are aspects of subject content outlined in Paragraph 6 of the Content Document.</li> <li>■ <b>Skills and techniques</b> are aspects of subject content and are related to the skills and techniques outlined in Paragraphs 7 to 9 of the Content Document and the mathematical skills requirement set out in Paragraph 11 of the Content Document.</li> <li>■ Learners should be expected to apply their knowledge and understanding to stimulus and source material to provide meaning and explanations in particular contexts. This application should relate principally to developing further material that is covered in the specification by – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ exploring contexts and situations that are not explicitly indicated in the specification;</li> <li>□ making links between types of material which are not explicitly indicated in the specification.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	1b – Apply knowledge and understanding of geological skills and techniques		

AO3: Analyse, interpret and evaluate geological ideas, information and evidence to make judgements and draw conclusions			20%
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
n/a	1a – Analyse geological ideas, information and evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).</li> <li>■ A reasonable balance of the elements in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).</li> <li>■ Awarding organisations should justify the balance between elements 1a to 1e in their assessment strategies.</li> <li>■ Elements 1d and 1e may be assessed separately or together, but each should be assessed in combination with one or more of elements 1a – 1c.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Ideas, information and evidence</b> are aspects of subject content. Awarding organisations should explain their approach to targeting them in their assessment strategy. Information and evidence includes sources covering the skills and techniques outlined in Paragraphs 7 to 9 of the Content Document. It should include: information and evidence from practical work and from fieldwork; both qualitative and quantitative approaches.</li> <li>■ <b>Interpret</b> means describing and ascribing meaning</li> <li>■ <b>Analyse</b> means deconstructing ideas and/or information and/or evidence to find connections and provide logical chains of reasoning.</li> <li>■ <b>Evaluate</b> means appraising and/or ascribing value with respect to information and/or issues. This could, but need not, lead to synthesising ideas and/or information and/or evidence.</li> <li>■ <b>Make judgements</b> means coming to decisions, including in relation to information and evidence.</li> <li>■ <b>Drawing conclusions</b> means providing a final view or outcome through a process of reasoning, including in relation to the use and summary of information and evidence.</li> </ul>
	1b – Interpret geological ideas, information and evidence		
	1c – Evaluate geological ideas, information and evidence		
	1d – Make judgements		
	1e – Draw conclusions		

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