

GCE

AS and A Level Specification

Sociology

AS exams 2009 onwards

A2 exams 2010 onwards



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1 Introduction

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1.1 Why choose AQA?

It's a fact that AQA is the UK's favourite exam board and more students receive their academic qualifications from AQA than from any other board. But why does AQA continue to be so popular?

- **Specifications**

Ours are designed to the highest standards, so teachers, students and their parents can be confident that an AQA award provides an accurate measure of a student's achievements. And the assessment structures have been designed to achieve a balance between rigour, reliability and demands on candidates.

- **Support**

AQA runs the most extensive programme of support meetings; free of charge in the first years of a new specification and at a very reasonable cost thereafter. These support meetings explain the specification and suggest practical teaching strategies and approaches that really work.

- **Service**

We are committed to providing an efficient and effective service and we are at the end of the phone when you need to speak to a person about an important issue. We will always try to resolve issues the first time you contact us but, should that not be possible, we will always come back to you (by telephone, email or letter) and keep working with you to find the solution.

- **Ethics**

AQA is a registered charity. We have no shareholders to pay. We exist solely for the good of education in the UK. Any surplus income is ploughed back into educational research and our service to you, our customers. We don't profit from education, you do.

If you are an existing customer then we thank you for your support. If you are thinking of moving to AQA then we look forward to welcoming you.

1.2 Why choose Sociology?

This GCE Sociology specification has been designed so that candidates will acquire the essential knowledge and understanding of central aspects of sociological thought and methods, together with the application of a range of skills. It has also been designed to allow the integration of sociological themes, such as socialisation, culture and identity, and social differentiation, power and stratification.

The specification provides a smooth transition from GCSE Sociology, although this is not a prerequisite for studying AS/A Level Sociology. Candidates who have Grade C in English Language or similar attainment at Key Stage 4 will find that those skills will suitably equip them for the study of this

specification. However, no prior learning is necessary for candidates to undertake a course of study based on this specification and those candidates returning to study, as part of their lifelong learning, will need no previous attainment in this subject.

The specification lays an appropriate foundation for further study of Sociology and related subjects in higher education. In addition, it provides a worthwhile course for candidates of various ages and from diverse backgrounds in terms of general education and lifelong learning. Equally, material studied would be useful for candidates intending to pursue careers in the field of Social Sciences.

1.3 How do I start using this specification?

Already using the existing AQA Sociology specification?

- Register to receive further information, such as mark schemes, past question papers, details of teacher support meetings, etc, at **<http://www.aqa.org.uk/rn/askaqa.php>**
Information will be available electronically or in print, for your convenience.
- Tell us that you intend to enter candidates. Then we can make sure that you receive all the material you need for the examinations. This is particularly important where examination material is issued before the final entry deadline. You can let us know by completing the appropriate Intention to Enter and Estimated Entry forms. We will send copies to your Exams Officer and they are also available on our website
http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_entries.html

Not using the AQA specification currently?

- Almost all centres in England and Wales use AQA or have used AQA in the past and are approved AQA centres. A small minority are not. If your centre is new to AQA, please contact our centre approval team at **centreapproval@aqa.org.uk**

1.4 How can I find out more?

Ask AQA

You have 24-hour access to useful information and answers to the most commonly asked questions at **<http://www.aqa.org.uk/rn/askaqa.php>**

If the answer to your question is not available, you can submit a query for our team. Our target response time is one day.

Teacher Support

Details of the full range of current Teacher Support meetings are available on our website at **<http://www.aqa.org.uk/support/teachers.html>**

There is also a link to our fast and convenient online booking system for Teacher Support meetings at **<http://events.aqa.org.uk/ebooking>**

If you need to contact the Teacher Support team, you can call us on 01483 477860 or email us at **teachersupport@aqa.org.uk**

2 Specification at a Glance

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AS Examinations

Unit 1 – SCLY1
Culture and Identity; Families and Households; Wealth, Poverty and Welfare
 40% of AS, 20% of A Level
 Written paper, 1 hour
 60 marks
 Candidates choose one topic from three and answer one question.
 Each question consists of five parts.
 Available January and June

Unit 2 – SCLY2
Education with Research Methods; Health with Research Methods
 60% of AS, 30% of A Level
 Written paper, 2 hours
 90 marks
 Candidates choose one topic (Education or Health) and answer one question on the chosen topic, one question on sociological research methods in context and one question on research methods.
 Available January and June

AS
Award
1191

A2 Examinations

Unit 3 – SCLY3
Beliefs in Society; Global Development; Mass Media; Power and Politics
 20% of A Level
 Written paper, 1 hour 30 minutes
 60 marks
 Candidates choose one topic from four and answer one compulsory question and one question from a choice of two.
 Available January and June

Unit 4 – SCLY4
Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods; Stratification and Differentiation with Theory and Methods
 30% of A Level
 Written paper, 2 hours
 90 marks
 Candidates choose one topic and answer one question on the chosen topic, one question on sociological research methods in context and one question on theory and methods.
 Available January and June

A Level
Award
2191

AS + A2 = A Level

3 Subject Content

Integral elements

All the following should be an integral part of the study of each topic area:

- sociological theories, perspectives and methods
- the design of the research used to obtain the data under consideration, including its strengths and weaknesses.

Core themes

Candidates must study the following two core themes:

- socialisation, culture and identity
- social differentiation, power and stratification.

The themes should be understood and applied to particular substantive areas of sociology. However, these themes are to be interpreted broadly as threads running through many areas of social life and should not therefore be regarded as discrete topics.

3.1 Unit 1 SCLY1 Culture and Identity; Families and Households; Wealth, Poverty and Welfare

In their study of this unit, candidates should examine:

- topic areas in relation to the two core themes (socialisation, culture and identity; and social differentiation, power and stratification);
- both the evidence of and the sociological explanations for the content listed in the three topic areas below.

Attention should also be given to drawing out links with other topic areas studied.

Culture and Identity

- Different conceptions of culture, including subculture, mass culture, high and low culture, popular culture, global culture.
- The socialisation process and the role of the agencies of socialisation.
- Sources and different conceptions of the self, identity and difference.
- The relationship of identity to age, disability, ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexuality and social class in contemporary society.
- Leisure, consumption, and identity.

Families and Households

- The relationship of the family to the social structure and social change, with particular reference to the economy and to state policies.

- Changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation, separation, divorce, child-bearing and the life-course, and the diversity of contemporary family and household structures.
- The nature and extent of changes within the family, with reference to gender roles, domestic labour and power relationships.
- The nature of childhood, and changes in the status of children in the family and society.
- Demographic trends in the UK since 1900; reasons for changes in birth rates, death rates and family size.

Wealth, Poverty and Welfare

- Different definitions and ways of measuring poverty, wealth and income.
- The distribution of poverty, wealth and income between different social groups.
- The existence and persistence of poverty in contemporary society.
- Different responses to poverty, with particular reference to the role of social policy since the 1940s.
- The nature and role of public, private, voluntary and informal welfare provision in contemporary society.

3.2 Unit 2 SCLY2 Education with Research Methods; Health with Research Methods

In their study of this unit, candidates should examine:

- topic areas in relation to the two core themes (socialisation, culture and identity; and social differentiation, power and stratification);
- both the evidence of and the sociological explanations for the content listed in the three topic areas below.

Attention should be given to drawing out links with other topic areas studied.

Throughout this unit, candidates should be encouraged to use examples drawn from their own experience of small-scale social research.

Education

- The role and purpose of education, including vocational education and training, in contemporary society.
- Differential educational achievement of social groups by social class, gender and ethnicity in contemporary society.
- Relationships and processes within schools, with particular reference to teacher/pupil relationships, pupil subcultures, the hidden curriculum, and the organisation of teaching and learning.
- The significance of educational policies, including selection, comprehensivisation and marketisation, for an understanding of the structure, role, impact and experience of education.
- The application of sociological research methods to the study of education.

Health

- Health, illness, disability and the body as social and as biological constructs.
- The unequal social distribution of health and illness in the United Kingdom by social class, age, gender, ethnicity and region, and internationally.
- Inequalities in the provision of, and access to, health care in contemporary society.
- The sociological study of the nature and social distribution of mental illness.
- The role of medicine and the health professions.
- The application of sociological research methods to the study of health.

Sociological Methods

- Quantitative and qualitative methods of research; their strengths and limitations; research design.
- Sources of data, including questionnaires, interviews, participant and non-participant observation, experiments, documents, and official statistics; the strengths and limitations of these sources.
- The distinction between primary and secondary data, and between quantitative and qualitative data.
- The relationship between positivism, interpretivism and sociological methods; the nature of 'social facts'.
- The theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing choice of topic, choice of method(s) and the conduct of research.

3.3 Unit 3 SCLY3 Beliefs in Society; Global Development; Mass Media; Power and Politics

The study of this unit should engage candidates in theoretical debate while encouraging an active involvement with the research process.

The study of this unit should foster a critical awareness of contemporary social processes and change, and draw together the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in different aspects of the course.

The examination will explicitly assess candidates' understanding of the connections between the topic(s) studied in this unit and the nature of sociological thought, methods of sociological enquiry, and the core themes (socialisation, culture and identity; and social differentiation, power and stratification).

In their study of this unit, candidates should examine both the evidence of and the sociological explanations for the content listed in the four topic areas below.

Beliefs in Society

- Different theories of ideology, science and religion, including both Christian and non-Christian religious traditions.
- The relationship between religious beliefs and social change and stability.
- Religious organisations, including cults, sects, denominations, churches and New Age movements, and their relationship to religious and spiritual belief and practice.
- The relationship between different social groups and religious/spiritual organisations and movements, beliefs and practices.
- The significance of religion and religiosity in the contemporary world, including the nature and extent of secularisation in a global context.

Global Development

- Different theories of development, underdevelopment and global inequality.
- Globalisation, aid and trade, and their influence on the cultural, political and economic relationships between societies.

- The role of transnational corporations, non-governmental organisations and international agencies in local and global strategies for development.
- Development in relation to industrialisation, urbanisation, the environment, war and conflict.
- Employment, education, health, demographic change and gender as aspects of development.

Mass Media

- The relationship between ownership and control of the mass media.
- The mass media, globalisation and popular culture.
- The processes of selection and presentation of the content of the news.
- Media representations of age, social class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and disability.
- The relationship between the mass media, media content and presentation, and audiences.
- The new media and their significance for an understanding of the role of the media in contemporary society.

Power and Politics

- Different theories of the nature and distribution of power.
- The role of the contemporary state.
- The nature of, and changes in, different forms of political participation, including voting behaviour, political action and protest, and membership of political organisations and movements.
- The role of political parties, pressure/interest groups, new social movements and the mass media in the political process.
- The significance of globalisation for an understanding of power and politics in the contemporary world.

3.4 Unit 4 SCLY4 Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods; Stratification and Differentiation with Theory and Methods

The study of this unit should engage candidates in theoretical debate while encouraging an active involvement with the research process. Throughout this unit, candidates should be encouraged to use examples drawn from their own experience of small-scale social research.

The study of this unit should foster a critical awareness of contemporary social processes and change, and draw together the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in different aspects of the course.

The examination will explicitly assess candidates' understanding of the connections between the topic(s) studied in this unit and the nature of sociological thought, methods of sociological enquiry, and the core themes (socialisation, culture and identity; and social differentiation, power and stratification).

In their study of this unit, candidates should examine both the evidence of and the sociological explanations for the content listed in the two topic areas below.

Crime and Deviance

- Different theories of crime, deviance, social order and social control.
- The social distribution of crime and deviance by age, ethnicity, gender, locality and social class, including recent patterns and trends in crime.
- Globalisation and crime in contemporary society; the mass media and crime; green crime; human rights and state crimes.
- Crime control, prevention and punishment, victims, and the role of the criminal justice system and other agencies.
- The sociological study of suicide and its theoretical and methodological implications.
- The connections between sociological theory and methods and the study of crime and deviance.

Stratification and Differentiation

- Different theories of stratification, including stratification by social class, gender, ethnicity and age.
- Dimensions of inequality: class, status and power; differences in life-chances by social class, gender, ethnicity, age and disability.
- The problems of defining and measuring social class; occupation, gender, and social class.

- Changes in structures of inequality, and the implications of these changes.
- The nature, extent and significance of patterns of social mobility.
- The connections between sociological theory and methods and the study of stratification and differentiation.

Theory and Methods

Candidates should examine the following areas, which are also studied at AS Level:

- Quantitative and qualitative methods of research; their strengths and limitations; research design.
- Sources of data, including questionnaires, interviews, observation (participant and non-participant), experiments, documents, and official statistics; the strengths and limitations of these sources.
- The distinction between primary and secondary data, and between quantitative and qualitative data.
- The relationship between positivism, interpretivism and sociological methods; the nature of 'social facts'.
- The theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing choice of topic, choice of method(s) and the conduct of research.

A2 candidates should also:

- Demonstrate a wider range and greater depth of knowledge and understanding than at AS Level.
- Study the nature of sociological thought and methods of sociological enquiry in greater range and depth, and demonstrate more highly developed skills of application, analysis, interpretation and evaluation than at AS Level.

In addition, A2 candidates should examine:

- Consensus, conflict, structural and social action theories.
- The concepts of modernity and post-modernity in relation to sociological theory.
- The nature of science and the extent to which sociology can be regarded as scientific.
- The relationship between theory and methods.
- Debates about subjectivity, objectivity and value freedom.
- The relationship between sociology and social policy.

4 Scheme of Assessment

4.1 Aims

AS and A Level courses based on this specification should encourage candidates to:

- acquire knowledge and a critical understanding of contemporary social processes and social changes
- appreciate the significance of theoretical and conceptual issues in sociological debate
- understand and evaluate sociological methodology and a range of research methods through active involvement in the research process
- develop skills that enable individuals to focus on their personal identity, roles and responsibilities within society
- develop a lifelong interest in social issues.

There should be a focus on contemporary society.

Studying sociology should:

- foster the development of critical and reflective thinking with a respect for social diversity
- provide an awareness of the importance of social structure and social action in explaining social issues
- provide candidates with an awareness of social structure and social action which emphasises different interpretations of social experiences.

Where appropriate, comparative and/or historical materials may be introduced. Students should be encouraged to develop their own sociological awareness through active engagement with the contemporary social world.

In addition, A Level specifications in Sociology should enable candidates to demonstrate:

- a wider range and greater depth of knowledge and understanding than at AS
- more highly developed skills of application, analysis, interpretation and evaluation than at AS.

4.2 Assessment Objectives (AOs)

The Assessment Objectives are common to AS and A Level. The assessment units will assess the following Assessment Objectives in the context of the content and skills set out in Section 3 (Subject Content).

Assessment Objectives		Weighting
AO1	Knowledge and understanding of the theories, methods, concepts and various forms of evidence outlined in paragraphs 4.2.1 (a), (b) and (c) below, and of the links between them; Communication of knowledge and understanding in a clear and effective manner.	45-55%
AO2	Demonstration of the skills of application, analysis, interpretation and evaluation as indicated in paragraphs 4.2.2 (a), (b) and (c) below.	45-55%

The Assessment Objectives apply to the whole specification, although their weighting differs between the two levels. Assessment Objective 2 has a higher weighting at A Level than at AS Level.

4.2.1 Knowledge and Understanding (AO1)

a) The nature of sociological thought

AS and A Level candidates are required to study the following concepts and theoretical issues:

- social order, social control
- social change
- conflict and consensus
- social structure and social action
- the role of values
- the relationship between sociology and contemporary social policy.

b) Methods of sociological enquiry

Sociological research involves the use of a range of methods and sources of data. All AS and A Level candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of these methods and sources, and to understand the relationship between theory and methods, particularly in the way sociologists deal with:

- the collection of primary and secondary data
- the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data using appropriate concepts
- factors influencing the design and conduct of sociological research
- practical, ethical and theoretical issues arising in sociological research.

c) Themes

AS and A Level candidates are required to study two themes:

- socialisation, culture and identity
- social differentiation, power and stratification.

These themes should be understood and applied to a range of particular substantive areas of sociology, in a global context where appropriate. However, these themes are to be interpreted broadly as threads running through many areas of social life and should not therefore necessarily be regarded as discrete topics.

For example, the theme 'Socialisation, culture and identity' might be addressed through aspects of 'Families and Households' but equally through aspects of 'Mass Media' or 'Beliefs in Society'. Similarly the theme of 'Social differentiation, power and stratification' might be addressed through aspects of 'Education' but equally through aspects of 'Global Development'.

4.2.2 Application, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation (AO2)

The skills outlined in this section relate to the acquisition and production of evidence, the interpretation and evaluation of evidence and arguments, the presentation of evidence and arguments and their application to sociological debates. The term 'evidence' should be understood to include both primary and secondary sources, as well as both quantitative and qualitative data. In order to demonstrate a firm grasp of the skills, candidates should relate them to their sociological knowledge and understanding, including that specified in sections 4.2.1 (a), (b) and (c).

a) Collection and recording of evidence

AS and A Level candidates are required to demonstrate their ability to:

- analyse and evaluate the design of sociological investigations
- analyse and evaluate the method(s) used in these investigations to collect and record evidence.

This could be achieved by candidates designing and conducting a sociological investigation.

b) Interpretation and evaluation of evidence

AS and A Level candidates are required to demonstrate their ability to:

- distinguish between facts, opinions and value judgements
- select and apply a range of relevant concepts and theories
- interpret qualitative and quantitative data
- identify and evaluate significant social trends shown in evidence
- evaluate theories, arguments and evidence.

c) Presentation of evidence and argument

AS and A Level candidates are required to demonstrate their ability to:

- organise evidence and communicate arguments in a coherent manner
- demonstrate an awareness and understanding of theoretical debates in sociology
- use evidence to support and sustain arguments and conclusions.

In addition, GCE A Level will require candidates to demonstrate:

- a wider range and greater depth of knowledge and understanding than at AS
- more highly developed skills of application, analysis, interpretation and evaluation than at AS.

Quality of Written Communication (QWC)

In GCE specifications which require candidates to produce written material in English, candidates must:

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear
- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and to complex subject matter
- organise information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate.

In this specification QWC will be assessed in all units where extended writing is required. Marks for QWC will be awarded as part of the total mark for each question, as part of Assessment Objective 1.

Weighting of Assessment Objectives for AS

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Assessment Objectives in the AS units.

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)		Overall Weighting of AOs (%)
	Unit 1	Unit 2	
Knowledge and Understanding (AO1)	50	48	49
Application, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation (AO2)	50	52	51
Overall weighting of units (%)	40	60	100

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Weighting of Assessment Objectives for A Level

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Assessment Objectives in the AS and A2 units.

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)				Overall Weighting of AOs (%)
	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	
Knowledge and Understanding (AO1)	50	48	40	43	45
Application, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation (AO2)	50	52	60	57	55
Overall weighting of units (%)	20	30	20	30	100

4.3 National Criteria

This specification complies with the following.

- The Subject Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Sociology
- The Code of Practice for GCE
- The GCE AS and A Level Qualification Criteria
- The Arrangements for the Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: Common Criteria

4.4 Prior Learning

We recommend that candidates should have acquired the skills and knowledge associated with a GCSE English Language course or equivalent.

4.5 Synoptic Assessment and Stretch and Challenge

Synoptic assessment in GCE Sociology is assessed in the A2 units by requiring candidates to demonstrate that they have developed holistic understanding of the subject. In order to demonstrate the level of expertise required, candidates are expected to be able to interrelate areas of content and address the requirements at A2 using appropriate concepts, knowledge and skills developed throughout the course.

GCE Sociology, as a subject, is inherently synoptic. There is a natural progression from AS to A2 and, at A2, the sociological concepts, theories and methods of enquiry studied in the AS course are revisited and applied to new contexts, requiring a higher degree of selectivity in their application, analysis, interpretation and evaluation.

In both A2 units there are questions that are particularly synoptic, requiring candidates to draw together and synthesise the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in different aspects of the course. Furthermore, in Unit 4 there are questions that require candidates to create hypotheses/solutions, etc to problems that go beyond the strict limits of the knowledge, skills and understanding studied within the unit.

These questions provide greater stretch and challenge for all candidates and will enable the performance of the most able candidates to be identified through the award of an A* (see para 5.7).

4.6 Access to Assessment for Disabled Students

AS/A Levels often require assessment of a broader range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications and, as such, prepare candidates for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

The revised AS/A Level qualification and subject criteria were reviewed to identify whether any of the competences required by the subject presented a potential barrier to any disabled candidates. If this was the case, the situation was reviewed again to ensure that such competences were included only where essential to the subject. The findings of this process were discussed with disability groups and with disabled people.

Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled candidates in order to enable them to access the assessments. For this reason, very few candidates will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

Candidates who are still unable to access a significant part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may still be able to receive an award. They would be given a grade on the parts of the assessment they have taken and there would be an indication on their certificate that not all the competences had been addressed. This will be kept under review and may be amended in the future.

5 Administration

5.1 Availability of Assessment Units and Certification

Examinations and certification for this specification are available as follows:

	Availability of units		Availability of certification	
	AS	A2	AS	A Level
January 2009	✓			
June 2009	✓		✓	
January 2010	✓	✓	✓	
June 2010	✓	✓	✓	✓
January 2011 onwards	✓	✓	✓	✓
June 2011 onwards	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.2 Entries

Please refer to the current version of *Entry Procedures and Codes* for up to date entry procedures. You should use the following entry codes for the units and for certification.

Unit 1 - SCLY1
 Unit 2 - SCLY2
 Unit 3 - SCLY3
 Unit 4 - SCLY4

AS certification - 1191
 A Level certification - 2191

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5.3 Private Candidates

This specification is available to private candidates. Private candidates should write to AQA for a copy of *Supplementary Guidance for Private Candidates*.

5.4 Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

We have taken note of equality and discrimination legislation and the interests of minority groups in developing and administering this specification.

We follow the guidelines in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document: *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration: General and Vocational Qualifications*. This is published on the JCQ website (<http://www.jcq.org.uk>) or you can follow the link from our website (<http://www.aqa.org.uk>).

Access Arrangements

We can make arrangements so that candidates with disabilities can access the assessment. These arrangements must be made **before** the examination. For example, we can produce a Braille paper for a candidate with a visual impairment.

Special Consideration

We can give special consideration to candidates who have had a temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of the examination. Where we do this, it is given **after** the examination.

Applications for access arrangements and special consideration should be submitted to AQA by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

5.5 Language of Examinations

We will provide units in English only.

5.6 Qualification Titles

Qualifications based on this specification are:

- AQA Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Sociology, and
- AQA Advanced Level GCE in Sociology.

5.7 Awarding Grades and Reporting Results

The AS qualification will be graded on a five-point scale: A, B, C, D and E. The full A Level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A*, A, B, C, D and E. To be awarded an A*, candidates will need to achieve a grade A on the full A Level qualification and an A* on the aggregate of the A2 units.

For AS and A Level, candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate. Individual assessment unit results will be certificated.

5.8 Re-sits and Shelf-life of Unit Results

Unit results remain available to count towards certification, whether or not they have already been used, as long as the specification is still valid.

Candidates may re-sit a unit any number of times within the shelf-life of the specification. The best result for each unit will count towards the final qualification. Candidates who wish to repeat a

qualification may do so by re-taking one or more units. The appropriate subject award entry, as well as the unit entry/entries, must be submitted in order to be awarded a new subject grade.

Candidates will be graded on the basis of the work submitted for assessment.

Appendices

A Performance Descriptions

Introduction

These performance descriptions show the level of attainment characteristic of the grade boundaries at A Level. They give a general indication of the required learning outcomes at the A/B and E/U boundaries at AS and A2. The descriptions should be interpreted in relation to the content outlined in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.

The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the Assessment Objectives (see Section 4) overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the examination may be balanced by better performances in others.

AS Performance Descriptions

	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2
Assessment Objectives	<p>Knowledge and understanding of the theories, methods, concepts and various forms of evidence outlined in paragraphs 3.2 a), b) and c) of the subject criteria, and of the links between them.</p> <p>Communication of knowledge and understanding in a clear and effective manner.</p>	<p>Demonstration of skills of application, analysis, interpretation and evaluation as indicated in paragraphs 3.3 a), b) and c) of the subject criteria.</p>
A/B boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) demonstrate accurate knowledge and understanding of a range of sociological theories, methods and concepts, supported by evidence</p> <p>b) present appropriate material in a logical, accurate and coherent manner, with few errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) demonstrate an ability to select, apply and interpret, accurately and appropriately, different types of sociological evidence from a range of sources</p> <p>b) make some analysis and evaluation of evidence and arguments that have relevance to the question paper.</p>
E/U boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, methods and concepts with limited evidence</p> <p>b) present some sociological material with limited coherence and some errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) demonstrate a limited ability to select, apply and interpret different types of sociological evidence</p> <p>b) make a limited analysis and evaluation of evidence and arguments relevant to the question paper.</p>

A2 Performance Descriptions

	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2
Assessment objective	<p>Knowledge and understanding of the theories, methods, concepts and various forms of evidence outlined in paragraphs 3.2 a), b) and c) of the subject criteria, and of the links between them.</p> <p>Communication of knowledge and understanding in a clear and effective manner.</p>	<p>Demonstration of skills of application, analysis, interpretation and evaluation as indicated in paragraphs 3.3 a), b) and c) of the subject criteria.</p>
A/B boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstrate full, detailed, accurate and wide-ranging knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, methods and concepts and the connections between them, citing wide-ranging evidence b) present sociological material in a logical and coherent manner, where spelling, grammar and punctuation are largely accurate. 	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstrate an ability to select, apply and interpret, accurately and appropriately, different types of sociological evidence from a wide range of diverse sources b) make detailed and accurate analysis and evaluation of sociological evidence and arguments on a variety of issues that are highly relevant to the question paper.
E/U boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, methods and concepts, with some limited evidence of understanding of the connections between them, supported by some evidence b) present some sociological material that displays a basic structure with limited coherence and some errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling. 	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstrate a basic ability to select, apply and interpret different types of sociological evidence from a limited range of sources b) make basic analysis and evaluation of evidence and arguments that have some relevance to the question paper.

B Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social and other Issues

The study of sociology provides many opportunities to develop candidates' understanding of spiritual, moral and cultural issues. Candidates should be aware that society is made up of a range of different groups from varied social, cultural and religious backgrounds.

Candidates should be encouraged to develop an understanding that differing values and attitudes exist, and to reflect on these and their own beliefs within a sociological framework.

European Dimension

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community in preparing this specification and associated specimen units.

Environmental Education

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community and the Report "Environmental Responsibility: An Agenda for Further and Higher Education" 1993 in preparing this specification and associated specimen units.

Avoidance of Bias

AQA has taken great care in the preparation of this specification and specimen units to avoid bias of any kind.

C Overlaps with other Qualifications

The specification shows clear overlaps with AQA GCE Psychology. In AS Psychology there is some overlap with the Sociology specification in terms of the research methods employed by both disciplines. The skills required in the sociological methods section rely on understanding and analysing the nature of scientific method, objectivity and the relative values of quantitative and qualitative methods. The overlap

in subject content is limited, with links only between mental health and illness, life events and the cultural role of the media in relationships.

Because the overlap with GCE Psychology is considered to be complementary, it is not prohibited in combination.

D Key Skills - Teaching, Developing and Providing Opportunities for Generating Evidence

Introduction

The Key Skills Qualification requires candidates to demonstrate levels of achievement in the Key Skills of Communication, Application of Number and Information Technology.

The units for the 'wider' Key Skills of Improving own Learning and Performance, Working with Others and Problem Solving are also available. The acquisition and demonstration of ability in these 'wider' Key Skills is deemed highly desirable for all candidates, but they do not form part of the Key Skills Qualification.

Copies of the Key Skills Units may be downloaded from QCA's website:

www.qca.org.uk/qca_6455.aspx

The units for each Key Skill comprise three sections:

- What you need to know.
- What you must do.
- Guidance.

Candidates following a course of study based on this specification for Sociology can be offered opportunities to develop and generate evidence of attainment in aspects of the Key Skills of:

- Communication
- Information Technology
- Working with Others
- Improving own Learning and Performance
- Problem Solving

Areas of study and learning that can be used to encourage the acquisition and use of Key Skills, and to provide opportunities to generate evidence for Part B of the units, are signposted on the next page.

Key Skills Opportunities in Sociology

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Communication				
C3.1a	✓	✓	✓	✓
C3.1b	✓	✓	✓	✓
C3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
C3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Application of Number				
N3.1				
N3.2				
N3.3				
Information Technology				
ICT3.1	✓	✓	✓	✓
ICT3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
ICT3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Working With Others				
WO3.1	✓	✓	✓	✓
WO3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
WO3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improving Own Learning and Performance				
LP3.1	✓	✓	✓	✓
LP3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
LP3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓
Problem Solving				
PS3.1	✓	✓	✓	✓
PS3.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
PS3.3	✓	✓	✓	✓



GCE Sociology (2190) 2009 onwards

Qualification Accreditation Number: AS 500/2263/5 - A Level 500/2203/9

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www.aqa.org.uk/ask-aqa/register

Free launch meetings are available in 2007/8 followed by further support meetings through the life of the specification. Further information is available at:

<http://events.aqa.org.uk/ebooking>

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Dr Michael Cresswell, Director General.



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