

version 1.0



# General Certificate of Education

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## Sociology 2007

This specification should be read in conjunction with:

Specimen and Past Papers and Mark Schemes  
Reports on the Examination  
Teachers' Guide

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# Background Information

## 1

# Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level Specifications

### 1.1 Advanced Subsidiary (AS)

Advanced Subsidiary courses were introduced in September 2000 for the award of the first qualification in August 2001. They may be used in one of two ways:

- as a final qualification, allowing candidates to broaden their studies and to defer decisions about specialism;
- as the first half (50%) of an Advanced Level qualification, which must be completed before an Advanced Level award can be made.

Advanced Subsidiary is designed to provide an appropriate assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills expected of candidates who have completed the first half of a full Advanced Level qualification. The level of demand of the AS examination is that expected of candidates half-way through a full A Level course of study.

### 1.2 Advanced Level (AS+A2)

The Advanced Level examination is in two parts:

- Advanced Subsidiary (AS) – 50% of the total award;
- a second examination, called A2 – 50% of the total award.

Most Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level courses will be modular. The AS will comprise three teaching and learning modules and the A2 will comprise a further three teaching and learning modules. Each teaching and learning module will normally be assessed through an associated assessment unit. The specification gives details of the relationship between the modules and assessment units.

With the two-part design of Advanced Level courses, centres may devise an assessment schedule to meet their own and candidates' needs. For example:

- assessment units may be taken at stages throughout the course, at the end of each year or at the end of the total course;
- AS may be completed at the end of one year and A2 by the end of the second year;
- AS and A2 may be completed at the end of the same year.

Details of the availability of the assessment units for each specification are provided in Section 3.1.

2

# Specification at a Glance

## Sociology

at Advanced Level

<b>AS Examination 5191</b>	
<b>Unit 1</b>	
1¼ hours	35% of the total AS marks <i>17½% of the total A Level marks</i>
One Data Response Question AS Module 1: Families and Households; Health; Mass Media	
<b>Unit 2</b>	
1¼ hours	35% of the total AS marks <i>17½% of the total A Level marks</i>
One Data Response Question AS Module 2: Education; Wealth, Poverty and Welfare; Work and Leisure	
EITHER	
<b>Unit 3W</b>	<b>Unit 3C</b>
1 hour	30% of the total AS marks <i>15% of the total A Level marks</i>
One Data Response Question AS Module 3: Sociological Methods	Coursework Task AS Module 3: Sociological Methods
OR	
<b>Unit 3C</b>	
1 hour	30% of the total AS marks <i>15% of the total A Level marks</i>
One Data Response Question AS Module 3: Sociological Methods	Coursework Task AS Module 3: Sociological Methods
+	
<b>A2 Examination 6191</b>	
<b>Unit 4</b>	
1½ hours	15% of the total A Level marks
One short Data Response Question and one Essay A2 Module 4: Power and Politics; Religion; World Sociology	
EITHER	
<b>Unit 5W</b>	<b>Unit 5C</b>
1½ hours	15% of the total A Level marks
One Compulsory Data Response Question and one Essay A2 Module 5: Theory and Methods	Coursework A2 Module 5: Theory and Methods
OR	
<b>Unit 6</b>	
1½ hours	20% of the total A Level marks
One three-part Synoptic Question A2 Module 6: Crime and Deviance; Stratification and Differentiation	

  

Advanced Subsidiary Award	←
5191	

  

Advanced Award	←
6191	

## 3

## Availability of Assessment Units and Entry Details

### 3.1 Availability of Assessment Units

Examinations based on this specification are available as follows:

	Availability of Units		Availability of Qualification	
	AS	A2	AS	Advanced
January	all	all	✓	✓
June	all	all	✓	✓

### 3.2 Sequencing of Units

Units may be taken in any order. However, it is suggested that they are taught in sequence. Unit 6 includes the synoptic assessment of the whole A Level course, testing candidates' understanding of connections between different elements of Sociology. Therefore, candidates are recommended to take this unit at the end of the course.

### 3.3 Entry Codes

Normal entry requirements apply, but the following information should be noted.

The following unit entry codes should be used:

AS	A2
Unit 1 - <i>SCY1</i>	Unit 4 - <i>SCY4</i>
Unit 2 - <i>SCY2</i>	Unit 5W - <i>SC5W</i>
Unit 3W - <i>SC3W</i>	Unit 5C - <i>SC5C</i>
Unit 3C - <i>SC3C</i>	Unit 6 - <i>SCY6</i>

The **Subject Code** for entry to the AS only award is *5191*.

The **Subject Code** for entry to the Advanced Level award is *6191*.

### 3.4 Prohibited Combinations

Candidates entering for this examination are prohibited from entering for any other GCE Sociology specification in the same examination series. This does not preclude candidates from taking AS and A2 units with AQA in the same examination series. Every specification is assigned to a national classification code indicating the subject area to which it belongs.

Centres should be aware that candidates who enter for more than one GCE qualification with the same classification code, will have only one grade (the highest) counted for the purpose of the School and College Performance Tables.

The classification code for this specification is 4890.

### 3.5 Private Candidates

This specification is available to private candidates who wish to take the written unit option. Entries for the coursework unit are not accepted from private candidates, but a previous result which has not been 'used up' in a subject award is still available to count towards an award.

Private candidates should write to AQA for a copy of '*Supplementary Guidance for Private Candidates*'.

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### 3.6 Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

AQA pays due regard to the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in its administration of this specification.

Arrangements may be made to enable candidates with disabilities or other difficulties to access the assessment. An example of an access arrangement is the production of a Braille paper for a candidate with a visual impairment. Special consideration may be requested for candidates whose work has been affected by illness or other exceptional circumstances.

Further details can be found in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document:

*Access Arrangements and Special Consideration*

*Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examination*

*GCE, VCE, GCSE, GNVQ, Entry Level & Key Skills*

This document can be viewed via the AQA Website ([www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk))

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

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### 3.7 Language of Examinations

All Assessment Units in this subject are provided in English only.

# Scheme of Assessment

## 4

## Introduction

This GCE Sociology specification complies with:

- The Subject Criteria for Sociology;
- The GCSE, GCSE in vocational subjects, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA Code of Practice 2004/5;
- The GCE Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level Qualification-Specific Criteria;
- The Arrangements for the Statutory Regulations of External Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; Common Criteria.

It 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 offers the choice of following a coursework or non-coursework route at A Level.

Prior level of attainment and recommended prior learning

The specification provides a smooth transition from GCSE Sociology, although this is not a pre-requisite for studying AS/A Level Sociology. Candidates who have a 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.

Rationale

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.

Support for Teachers

There is a high level of teacher support for this specification including:

- Specimen and past papers and mark schemes;
- Teachers' Guide;
- Access to a Coursework Adviser;
- Coursework Standardising Meetings.

## Aims

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

- a. acquire knowledge and a critical understanding of contemporary social processes and structures;
- b. appreciate the significance of theoretical and conceptual issues in sociological debate;
- c. understand sociological methodology and a range of research methods;
- d. reflect on their own experience of the social world in which they live;
- e. develop skills which enhance their ability to participate more effectively in adult life.

There should be a focus on contemporary society. Where appropriate, comparative and/or historical materials may be introduced.

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

demonstrate a deeper understanding of the connections between the nature of sociological thought, methods of sociological enquiry and substantive sociological topics.

## 6

## Assessment Objectives

The Assessment Objectives are common to both AS and A Level although their weighting differs. All candidates will be required to demonstrate the following Assessment Objectives in the context of the content and skills prescribed.

Assessment Objectives		Weighting
A01	<p>Knowledge and understanding of the theories, methods, concepts and various forms of evidence outlined in paragraphs 6.1 a), b) and c) below, and of the links between them;</p> <p>Communication of knowledge and understanding in a clear and effective manner.</p>	45-55%
A02	<p>Acquisition and appropriate application of skills of identification, analysis, interpretation and evaluation as indicated in paragraphs 6.2 a), b) and c) below.</p>	45-55%

The assessment objectives apply to the whole specification.

### 6.1 Knowledge and Understanding (A01)

#### 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 changes;
- conflict and consensus;
- social structure and social action;
- macro and micro perspectives;
- the nature of social facts;
- the role of values;
- the relationship between Sociology and 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 be familiar with these methods and sources, and to understand the relationship between theory and methods, particularly the way sociologists deal with:

- the acquisition of primary and secondary data through observation, asking questions, and the use of documents;
- the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data using appropriate concepts;
- factors influencing the design and execution of sociological research;
- ethical 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.

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 necessarily be regarded as discrete topics.

*For example, the theme 'Socialisation, culture and identity' might be addressed through aspects of 'the family', but equally through aspects of 'the mass media' or 'youth culture'. Similarly, the theme of 'Social differentiation, power and stratification' might be addressed through aspects of 'social class' but equally through aspects of 'gender'.*

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6.2 Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation (A02)

The skills outlined in this section relate to the acquisition and production of evidence, the interpretation and evaluation of evidence, the presentation of evidence and its application to sociological debates. The term 'evidence' should be interpreted as including both primary and secondary sources as well as 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 6.1 a) to 6.1 c).

a. The analysis of research design

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

- identify facts, opinions and value judgements;
- analyse and evaluate the design of a range of investigations;
- analyse and evaluate the methods used to collect, select and record relevant evidence accurately.

b. The interpretation and evaluation of evidence

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

- select and apply a range of relevant concepts and theories;
- interpret qualitative and quantitative data;
- identify and evaluate significant social trends;
- evaluate different theories, arguments and evidence.

c. Presentation of evidence and the nature of sociological debates

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

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

### 6.3 Quality of Written Communication

The quality of written communication is assessed in all assessment units where candidates are required to produce extended written material. Candidates will be assessed according to their ability to:

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

The assessment of the quality of written communication is included in Assessment Objective 1.

In addition, A Level specifications should require candidates to study either the core themes (paragraph 6.1 c)) across a wider range of areas and/or theoretical issues, or consider additional themes. A Level specifications should also require candidates to:

- cover the issues in 6.1 a) at a depth that extends and enhances the coverage of AS Level;
- adopt a more critical, evaluative and interpretative approach to the range of methodological issues in 6.1 b);
- demonstrate more highly developed skills of critical appraisal and reflection on debates based on a broad and diverse range of sources;
- study the nature of sociological thought and methods of sociological enquiry in greater range and depth, and demonstrate more highly developed critical appraisal, evaluative and reflective skills.

## 7

## Scheme of Assessment - Advanced Subsidiary (AS)

The Scheme of Assessment has a modular structure. The Advanced Subsidiary (AS) award comprises three compulsory assessment units which assess the teaching and learning modules described in the Subject Content as shown below.

### 7.1 Assessment Units

Unit 1	Written Unit	1¼ hours
35 % of the total AS marks	60 marks	

This unit is divided into **three** Sections: Families and Households; Health; Mass Media. Each Section contains **one** data response question. Candidates must choose **one** Section and answer the question in it.

This unit assesses **Module 1** of the Subject Content.

Unit 2	Written Unit	1¼ hours
35 % of the total AS marks	60 marks	

This unit is divided into **three** Sections: Education; Wealth, Poverty and Welfare; Work and Leisure. Each Section contains **one** data response question. Candidates must choose **one** Section and answer the question in it.

This unit assesses **Module 2** of the Subject Content.

EITHER	Unit 3W	Written Unit	1 hour
	30 % of the total AS marks	60 marks	

This unit examines Sociological Methods. Candidates must answer the compulsory data response question.

This unit assesses **Module 3** of the Subject Content.

OR	Unit 3C	Centre-Assessed Unit	
	30 % of the total AS marks	60 marks	

Candidates are required to submit a Research Proposal organised under specific headings and no more than 1200 words in length. Further details are given in Sections 18-24.

This unit assesses **Module 3** of the Subject Content.

## 7.2 Weighting of Assessment Objectives for AS

The approximate relationship between the relative percentage weighting of the Assessment Objectives (AOs) and the overall Scheme of Assessment is shown in the following table.

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)			Overall Weighting of AOs (%)
	1	2	3	
Knowledge and Understanding (AO1)	17.5	17.5	15	50
Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation (AO2)	17.5	17.5	15	50
<b>Overall Weighting of Units (%)</b>	35	35	30	100

Candidates' marks for each assessment unit are scaled to achieve the correct weightings.

## 8

## Scheme of Assessment - Advanced Level (AS+A2)

The Scheme of Assessment has a modular structure. The A Level award comprises three compulsory assessment units from the AS Scheme of Assessment and three compulsory assessment units from the A2 Scheme of Assessment which assess the teaching and learning modules described in the Subject Content as shown below.

The details of the AS assessment units are given in Section 7 and comprise the following units:

8.1 AS Assessment Units	Unit 1 17½% of the total A Level marks	Written Unit 60 marks	1¼ hours
	Unit 2 17½% of the total A Level marks	Written Unit 60 marks	1¼ hours
	EITHER Unit 3W 15% of the total A Level marks	Written Unit 60 marks	1 hour
	OR Unit 3C 15% of the total A Level marks	Centre-Assessed Unit 60 marks	
8.2 A2 Assessment Units	Unit 4 15% of the total A Level marks	Written Unit 60 marks	1½ hours
	<p>This unit is divided into <b>three</b> Sections: Power and Politics; Religion; World Sociology. Candidates must choose <b>one</b> Section and answer the compulsory short data response question and <b>one</b> essay question from a choice of two within the chosen Section. This unit assesses <b>Module 4</b> of the Subject Content.</p>		
EITHER	Unit 5W 15% of the total A Level marks	Written Unit 60 marks	1½ hours
<p>This unit examines sociological Theory and Methods. Candidates must answer the compulsory data response question and <b>one</b> essay question from a choice of two. This unit assesses <b>Module 5</b> of the Subject Content.</p>			

OR

<b>Unit 5C</b> <i>15% of the total A Level marks</i>	<b>Centre-Assessed Unit</b> 60 marks
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Candidates are required to submit a sociological study before the final written examination. The study is an opportunity for candidates to carry out an analysis using primary and/or secondary data to investigate a subject of sociological interest. The study must be based on one or more topics from the specification and it is strongly recommended that it should **not** exceed 3500 words in length. It is assessed by the teacher(s) and moderated by AQA. Marks awarded by the teacher(s) must be submitted to AQA by the specified date in the year in which the full A Level qualification is to be awarded. Further details are given in Sections 18-24. This unit assesses **Module 5** of the Subject Content.

<b>Unit 6</b> <i>20% of the total A Level marks</i>	<b>Written Unit</b> 60 marks	<b>1½ hours</b>
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This unit is divided into **two** Sections: Crime and Deviance; Stratification and Differentiation. Candidates must choose **one** Section and answer the three-part Synoptic question. This unit assesses **Module 6** of the Subject Content.

### 8.3 Synoptic Assessment

The Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level Criteria state that A Level specifications must include synoptic assessment. The definition of synoptic assessment in the context of Sociology is as follows:

- the drawing together of knowledge, understanding and skills learned in different aspects of the course.

It involves the explicit assessment of understanding of the connections between one or more substantive areas of Sociology, and the nature of sociological thought and methods of sociological enquiry using the higher level skills identified in Section 6.2.

Synoptic assessment represents 20% of the total A Level marks, all of which are available in Unit 6.

### 8.4 Weighting of Assessment Objectives for A Level

The approximate relationship between the relative percentage weighting of the Assessment Objectives (AOs) and the overall Scheme of Assessment is shown in the following table.

#### A Level Assessment Units (AS + A2)

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)						Overall Weighting of AOs (%)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Knowledge and Understanding (AO1)	8.75	8.75	7.5	6	6	8	45
Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation (AO2)	8.75	8.75	7.5	9	9	12	55
<b>Overall Weighting of Units (%)</b>	17.5	17.5	15	15	15	20	100

Candidates' marks for each assessment unit are scaled to achieve the correct weightings.

# Subject Content

## 9

### Summary of Subject Content

#### 9.1 AS Modules

##### **MODULE 1 - Families and Households; Health; Mass Media**

Families and Households.  
Health.  
Mass Media.

##### **MODULE 2 - Education; Wealth, Poverty and Welfare; Work and Leisure**

Education.  
Wealth, Poverty and Welfare.  
Work and Leisure.

##### **MODULE 3 - Sociological Methods**

Sociological Methods - the main methods and sources used by sociologists, and their relationship to theory.

#### 9.2 A2 Modules

##### **MODULE 4 - Power and Politics; Religion; World Sociology**

Power and Politics.  
Religion.  
World Sociology.

##### **MODULE 5 - Theory and Methods**

As 'Sociological Methods' plus issues such as: sociology; science; values and objectivity; post-modernity.

##### **MODULE 6 - Crime and Deviance; Stratification and Differentiation**

Crime and Deviance.  
Stratification and Differentiation.  
(All of this module is synoptically assessed.)

### 9.3 Integral Elements

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

- the connections between the different substantive areas of Sociology, the nature of sociological thought and methods of enquiry;
- sociological theories, perspectives and methods;
- the design of the research used to obtain the data under consideration, including its strengths and weaknesses.

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### 9.4 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.

## AS Module 1

In their study of this module, candidates should examine topic areas in relation to the two core themes.

Attention should also be given to the need to draw out links with other topic areas studied, and with the synoptic topics of Crime and Deviance and/or Stratification and Differentiation.

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### 10.1 Families and Households

Candidates should examine:

- different conceptions of the relationships of the family to the social structure, with particular reference to the economy and to state policies;
  - changes in family and household structure and their relationship to industrialisation and urbanisation;
  - changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation, separation, divorce and child bearing and the diversity of contemporary family and household structure;
  - the nature and extent of changes within the family, with reference to gender roles, domestic labour and power relationships, and to changes in the status of children and childhood.
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### 10.2 Health

Candidates should examine:

- health, illness and disability as both social and biological constructs;
  - different explanations of the unequal social distribution of health and illness;
  - different explanations of inequalities in the provision of, and access to, health care;
  - different approaches to the study of mental health and illness;
  - different explanations of the role of medicine and the health professions.
- 

### 10.3 Mass Media

Candidates should examine:

- different explanations of the relationship between ownership and control of the mass media;
  - different explanations of the relationship between the mass media and ideology;
  - different explanations of the processes of selection and presentation of media content;
  - the role of the mass media in representations of age, social class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and disability;
  - different explanations of the relationship between the mass media and their audiences.
-

## AS Module 2

In their study of this module, candidates should examine topic areas in relation to the two core themes.

Attention should also be given to the need to draw out links with other topic areas studied, and with the synoptic topics of Crime and Deviance and/or Stratification and Differentiation.

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### 11.1 Education

Candidates should examine:

- different explanations of the role of the education system;
- different explanations of the different educational achievement of social groups by social class, gender and ethnicity;
- 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 state policies for an understanding of the role, impact and experience of education.

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### 11.2 Wealth, Poverty and Welfare

Candidates should examine:

- different definitions of poverty and wealth and income;
- different explanations of the distribution of poverty, wealth and income between different social groups;
- different explanations of the existence and persistence of poverty;
- different solutions to poverty, with particular reference to the role of social policy;
- the nature and role of public, private, voluntary and informal welfare provision.

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### 11.3 Work and Leisure

Candidates should examine:

- different theories of the management and organisation of work;
- different explanations of the nature and extent of work satisfaction, alienation and conflict at work;
- the implications of technological changes and their impact on individuals, organisations and society;
- explanations of the causes and social effects of unemployment and the problems of measuring it;
- explanations of leisure patterns, and the relationship between leisure, identity and consumption.

Attention should be given to the need to draw out links with other topic areas studied, and with the synoptic topics of Crime and Deviance and/or Stratification and Differentiation.

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### 12.1 Sociological Methods

Candidates should examine:

- the different quantitative and qualitative methods and sources of data, including questionnaires, interviews, observation techniques and experiments, and documents and official statistics;
- the distinctions between primary and secondary data, and between quantitative and qualitative data;
- the relationship between positivism, interpretivism and sociological methods;
- the theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing the choice of topic, choice of method(s) and the conduct of research;
- the nature of social facts and the strengths and limitations of different sources of data and methods of research.

## A2 Module 4

In their study of this module, candidates should examine topic areas in relation to the two core themes.

Attention should also be given to the need to draw out links with other topic areas studied, and with the synoptic topics of Crime and Deviance and/or Stratification and Differentiation.

### 13.1 Power and Politics

Candidates should examine:

- explanations of the nature and distribution of power;
- the role of the modern state;
- different political ideologies and their relationship to political parties;
- the nature of, and changes in, different forms of political participation, including voting behaviour;
- the role of political parties and movements, pressure/interest groups and the mass media in the political process.

### 13.2 Religion

Candidates should examine:

- different theories of religion;
- the role of religion as a conservative force and as an initiator of change;
- cults, sects, denominations and churches and their relationship to religious activity;
- explanations of the relationship between religious beliefs, religious organisations and social groups;
- different definitions and explanations of the nature and extent of secularisation.

### 13.3 World Sociology

Candidates should examine:

- different definitions and explanations of development and under-development;
- the cultural, political and economic inter-relationships between societies;
- the role of aid, trade, Trans-National Corporations and international agencies in different strategies for development;
- development in relation to urbanisation, industrialisation, and the environment;
- employment, education, health, demographic change and gender as aspects of development.

## A2 Module 5

Attention should be given to the need to draw out links with other topic areas studied, and with the synoptic topics of Crime and Deviance and/or Stratification and Differentiation.

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### 14.1 Theory and Methods

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

- the different quantitative and qualitative methods and sources of data, including questionnaires, interviews, observation techniques and experiments, and documents and official statistics;
- the distinctions between primary and secondary data and between quantitative and qualitative data;
- the relationship between positivism, interpretivism and sociological methods;
- the theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing the choice of topic, choice of method(s) and the conduct of research;
- the nature of social facts and the strengths and limitations of different sources of data and methods of research.

Candidates should:

- adopt a more critical, evaluative and interpretative approach to the range of methodological issues 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 critical appraisal, evaluative and reflective skills than at AS Level.

In addition, 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 may be regarded as scientific;
- the relationship between theory and methods;
- debates about subjectivity, objectivity and value freedom;
- the relationship between Sociology and social policy.

15

## A2 Module 6

In their study of this module, candidates should examine topic areas in relation to the two core themes.

All of this module is synoptically assessed.

It involves the explicit assessment of understanding of the connections between Crime and Deviance and/or Stratification and Differentiation and the following:

- one or more substantive areas of Sociology;
- the nature of sociological thought;
- methods of sociological enquiry.

### 15.1 Crime and Deviance

Candidates should examine:

- different explanations of crime, deviance, social order and social control;
- the relationship between deviance, power and social control;
- different explanations of the social distribution of crime and deviance by age, social class, ethnicity, gender and locality;
- the social construction of, and societal reactions to, crime and deviance, including the role of the mass media;
- the sociological issues arising from the study of suicide.

### 15.2 Stratification and Differentiation

Candidates should examine:

- different ways of measuring social class, and the relationship between occupation and social class;
- different theories of stratification;
- differences in life-chances by social class, ethnicity, gender and age;
- different explanations of changes in the class structure, and the implications of these changes;
- the nature, extent and significance of patterns of mobility.

## Key Skills and Other Issues

16

### Key Skills – Teaching, Developing and Providing Opportunities for Generating Evidence

#### 16.1 Introduction

The Key Skills Qualification requires candidates to demonstrate levels of achievement in the Key Skills of *Application of Number*, *Communication* 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 web site ([www.qca.org.uk/keyskills](http://www.qca.org.uk/keyskills)).

The units for each Key Skill comprise three sections:

- A What you need to know.
- B What you must do.
- C 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;
- Application of Number;
- 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 below. More specific guidance on integrating the delivery of Key Skills in courses based upon this specification is given in the AQA Teachers’ Guide.

#### 16.2 Key Skills Opportunities in Sociology

The broad and multi-disciplinary nature of Sociology and its application to a wide range of current issues that call upon candidates’ abilities to demonstrate the transferability of their knowledge, understanding and skills, make it an ideal vehicle to assist candidates in developing their knowledge and understanding of the Key Skills and to produce evidence of their application.

The matrices below signpost the opportunities for the acquisition, development and production of evidence for Part B of the Key Skills units at Level 3, in the teaching and learning modules of this specification. The degree of opportunity in any one module will depend upon a number of centre-specific factors, including teaching strategies and level of resources.

### Communication

What you must do:	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Modules					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
C3.1a Contribute to discussions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C3.1b Make a presentation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C3.2 Read and synthesise information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C3.3 Write different types of documents	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

### Application of Number

What you must do:	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Modules					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
N3.1 Plan and interpret information from different sources					✓	
N3.2 Carry out multi-stage calculations					✓	
N3.3 Present findings, explain results and justify choice of methods					✓	

## Information Technology

What you must do:	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Modules					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
IT3.1 Plan and use different sources to search for and select information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IT3.2 Explore, develop and exchange information, and derive new information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IT3.3 Present information including text, numbers and images	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Working with Others

What you must do:	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Modules					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
WO3.1 Plan the activity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WO3.2 Work towards agreed objectives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WO3.3 Review the activity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Improving own Learning and Performance

What you must do:	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Modules					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
LP3.1 Agree and plan targets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LP3.2 Seek feedback and support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LP3.3 Review progress	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Problem Solving

What you must do:	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Modules					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
PS3.1 Recognise, explain and describe the problem	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PS3.2 Generate and compare different ways of solving problems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PS3.3 Plan and implement options	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PS3.4 Agree and review approaches to tackling problems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**NB.** The signposting in the six tables above represents opportunities to acquire and produce evidence of the Key Skills which are possible through the specification. There may be other opportunities to achieve these and other aspects of Key Skills via this specification, but such opportunities are dependent on the detailed course of study delivered within centres.

### 16.3 Key Skills in the Assessment of Sociology

The 'main' Key Skills (Communication, Application of Number and Information Technology) must contribute to the assessment of Sociology. Aspects of these are an intrinsic part of Assessment Objective 1 (Knowledge and Understanding) and Assessment Objective 2 (Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation) and hence will form part of the assessment requirements for Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

### 16.4 Further Guidance

More specific guidance and examples of tasks that can provide evidence of one or more Key Skills are given in the AQA Teachers' Guide.

# 17

## Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social, Cultural and Other Issues

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### 17.1 Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social and Cultural 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.

Module 1 (Mass Media) and Module 4 (Religion) would contribute to candidates' understanding of these issues.

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### 17.2 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.

The specification gives candidates the opportunity to improve their knowledge and understanding of the effects of the United Kingdom's membership on society. Module 4 (World Sociology) would contribute to candidates' understanding of these issues.

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### 17.3 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.

Module 2 (Work and Leisure) and Module 4 (World Sociology) would contribute to candidates' understanding of environmental issues.

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### 17.4 Avoidance of Bias

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

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# Centre-Assessed Units

18

## Nature of the Centre-Assessed Units

### 18.1 Unit 3 (AS)

Candidates are required to submit a Research Proposal, which should be no more than 1200 words. The Proposal should be organised under the following headings:

#### 1. Hypothesis/Aim

Candidates should choose one issue for research and develop from it a single hypothesis **or** aim which could form the basis of sociological research. The hypothesis/aim should be accompanied by a brief summary of the reasons for choosing that particular aspect to research.

(Maximum length: 100 words)

#### 2. Context and Concepts

Candidates should provide brief summaries of two relevant pieces of material which would provide a suitable context for the research. Sources might include research studies, historical documents, statistics, films, newspaper/magazine articles, etc. Candidates should also include in this section two or three major concepts which would inform the research study, accompanied by brief definitions and reasons for their inclusion.

(Maximum length: 400 words)

#### 3. Main Research Method and Reasons

Candidates should provide a brief description of the **main** research method they would employ, including details, *as appropriate*, of sample type and size, type of questionnaire/interview, type of statistics, method of entry to group, secondary sources to be used, etc. This outline should be accompanied by the reason(s) for choosing this method.

(Maximum length: 400 words)

#### 4. Potential Problems

Candidates should provide brief details of the potential problems likely to be met in carrying out the research, and why these might prove problematic. Potential problems might include sampling, access to groups or to appropriate secondary data, cost, time and ethical issues.

(Maximum length: 300 words)

Studies will be marked internally by teachers and a sample moderated by AQA.

As the weighting for this unit is equivalent to the externally assessed alternative, the teaching and candidate preparation time should be equal too.

18.2 Unit 5 (A2)

Candidates are required to submit a sociological study, which provides an opportunity to carry out an analysis using primary and/or secondary data to investigate a subject of sociological interest. Only **one** research method should be used when carrying out the research. The study must be based on one or more topics from the specification and it is strongly recommended that it should **not exceed 3500 words in length**. Studies will be marked internally by teachers and a sample moderated by AQA. Please see Section 20.2 for guidance on the required structure of the study for this unit.

As the weighting for this unit is equivalent to the externally assessed alternative, the teaching and candidate preparation time should be equal too.

## General Guidance

### 19.1 Unit 3 (AS)

Candidates should formulate a hypothesis or aim from any one of the topic areas in Modules 1-6. However, candidates who have not studied Modules 4-6 would be well advised to restrict their selection to one of the 6 topic areas in AS (Modules 1 and 2). As the candidates are not required actually to carry out any research, their Proposal does not have to be restricted to something capable of being undertaken by a 17-year old candidate at school or college. However, if candidates are considering taking the A2 coursework option, they may wish to use the AS Coursework Task as a preparatory exercise, though there is no requirement for them to do so.

Some suggested issues for research from which candidates could produce a hypothesis or aim are produced below. Further assistance can be found in the Teachers' Guide.

- The impact on family life of women's paid employment.
- Unequal access to health care.
- Media representations of age.
- The impact of the National Curriculum.
- The role of voluntary organisations in the provision of welfare.
- Unemployment among young people.

### 19.2 Unit 5 (A2)

The initiative for choosing a study should rest with the candidates who should be encouraged to choose a subject of interest and relevance to them. Many will need guidance in selecting their research assignment and all will benefit from continuing advice and supervision. Candidates should be encouraged to keep a diary during the course of their study. In the diary candidates should note ideas for developing their research as they think of them, problems with the research process as they experience them and possible solutions if and when they emerge. The completed diary should prove useful for candidates when drafting their evaluation section. Candidates should be introduced to a variety of primary and secondary sources of data and helped to choose the one most appropriate to their topic. Advice should be given on how to collect the data (eg reading, observation, investigation) and on the clear presentation, logical structuring, analysis and evaluation of the material. Candidates may be given guidance during the course of the study on any problems encountered, and also to ensure that work is kept within reasonable bounds of relevance to the subject, and to the recommended 3500 word limit.

It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that candidates choose an appropriate subject for their study in terms of the specification subject content and mark scheme. Only **one** research method should be used when carrying out the research.

Please see Section 20.2 for guidance on the required structure of the study for this unit.

A list of possible coursework titles is available in the Teachers' Guide. Teachers should note that these examples are suggestions and should not be regarded either as prescriptive or exhaustive.

Some topics chosen by candidates will be more suitable for broad rather than in-depth treatment and some trade-off between depth and breadth is possible. However, an unfocused study which starts with an over-ambitious aim or one which is only marginally sociological is unlikely to score well and teachers will need to guide candidates into areas which lend themselves to sociological analysis and where interesting and useful results are likely to be achieved.

## Assessment Criteria

### 20.1 AS (Unit 3)

#### Centre-Assessed Unit 3 - Mark Scheme

Candidates should be advised of the requirement to use the designated structure and layout. The work must be an original version and not a photocopied version. Candidates should be reminded of the need to adhere to the 1200 word limit, as one of the skills they are being tested on is the ability to capture the most important points in a concise way.

<b>1. Hypothesis/Aim</b>	
<b>0</b>	No relevant skills displayed.
<b>1 - 2</b>	The candidate demonstrates a limited ability to identify and develop a sociological focus for the proposed research. A weak and/or impractical hypothesis or aim is offered. The reasons given may be inappropriate.
<b>3 - 5</b>	The candidate demonstrates a reasonable ability to identify and define a relevant sociological focus for the proposed research. An appropriate and practical hypothesis or aim, which in part would enable the research issue to be progressed, is offered. Some appropriate reasons are given.
<b>6 - 8</b>	The candidate demonstrates a very good ability to identify and define a relevant sociological focus. A clear, precise and appropriate hypothesis or aim that enables the research issue to be successfully progressed is offered. All reasons given are appropriate.
<b>2. Context and Concepts</b>	
<b>0</b>	No relevant skills displayed.
<b>1 - 4</b>	The candidate demonstrates a basic knowledge and understanding of some appropriate material. There is at best a weak attempt to present material which offers a context for the proposed hypothesis or aim. The candidate has a limited knowledge and understanding of the stated concepts, and their relevance may be largely or wholly implicit.
<b>5 - 9</b>	The candidate demonstrates a reasonable knowledge and understanding of some appropriate material. There is a partially successful attempt to use the material to provide a context for the proposed research hypothesis or aim. At least one of the concepts identified is relevant, defined and developed, albeit in a limited way.
<b>10 - 15</b>	The candidate demonstrates a good knowledge and understanding of two pieces of appropriate material. These are accurately presented and provide a clear context for the proposed research aim or hypothesis. Two or three relevant concepts are identified, defined and appropriately developed.
<b>16 - 20</b>	The candidate demonstrates a very good knowledge and understanding of appropriate material. Two relevant pieces of material are accurately and concisely presented, providing a clear context for the proposed research hypothesis or aim. The two or three concepts identified are pertinent, precisely defined and appropriately developed.

<b>3. Main Research Method and Reasons</b>	
<b>0</b>	No relevant skills displayed.
<b>1 - 4</b>	The candidate demonstrates a basic knowledge and understanding of their chosen method. One or two relevant reasons for the choice of method are offered. These lack detail, clarity and may contain some inaccuracies. There is a limited attempt to provide details on the implementation of the chosen method. The link between the chosen method and the hypothesis or aim may be weak.
<b>5 - 9</b>	The candidate demonstrates a reasonable knowledge and understanding of their chosen method. Some relevant reasons for the choice of method are offered and partially developed. Details on the implementation of the proposed method are appropriate and mostly accurate. The chosen method has some relevance to the hypothesis or aim.
<b>10 - 15</b>	The candidate demonstrates a good knowledge and understanding of their chosen method. Most of the reasons for the choice of method are relevant and developed. Most details on the implementation of the proposed method are appropriate, clear and accurately presented. The chosen method is appropriate to the hypothesis or aim.
<b>16 - 20</b>	The candidate demonstrates a very good knowledge and understanding of the chosen method. All reasons for the choice of method are relevant and developed. All details on the implementation of the proposed method are appropriate, clear, accurate and succinctly presented. The chosen method is appropriate to the hypothesis or aim.
<b>4. Potential Problems</b>	
<b>0</b>	No relevant skills displayed.
<b>1 - 3</b>	The candidate demonstrates a limited ability to identify potential problems in carrying out the proposed research. One or two reasons may be offered with little or no explanation. Links between the identified problems and the hypothesis or aim are likely to be either non-existent or implicit. The candidate demonstrates limited sociological insight.
<b>4 - 6</b>	The candidate demonstrates a reasonable ability to identify potential problems in carrying out the proposed research. Some of the reasons offered are appropriate and explained but others are inappropriate and/or inadequately explained. There is some link between the identified problems and the research hypothesis or aim. The candidate demonstrates some sociological insight.
<b>7 - 9</b>	The candidate demonstrates a good ability to identify potential problems in carrying out the proposed research. Most of the reasons offered are appropriate and accurately explained. There is a clear link between the identified problems and the research hypothesis or aim. The candidate demonstrates good sociological insight.
<b>10 - 12</b>	The candidate demonstrates a very good ability to identify potential problems in carrying out the proposed research. Appropriate, accurate and succinct reasons are offered and explained. There are clear links between the identified problems and the research hypothesis or aim. The candidate demonstrates very good sociological insight.

**Number of Marks and Word Length**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Number of marks</b>	<b>Number of words</b>
Hypothesis/Aim	8	100
Context and Concepts	20	400
Main Research Method and Reasons	20	400
Potential Problems	12	300
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1200</b>

## 20.2 A2 (Unit 5)

Candidates should be advised of the need for clear layout. Supporting material may be included in tape or video format but assessment must be of the candidate's written work. The work must be an original version and not a photocopied version, though photocopied inserts may be included. The project must be **page numbered** and **secured together**.

An index must be included in the study and the candidate's name, number and centre number must be clearly displayed on the front of the work and on the Candidate Record Form. Candidates should also include on the front page of their work, the total number of words used.

Teachers should advise candidates that their study should contain the following sections, clearly labelled and indexed:

## Rationale

- a reason for choosing the subject of the study;
- a hypothesis, aim or aims;
- objectives when and as appropriate;

## Context

- an outline of sociological sources (theoretical, empirical or both) and relevant sociological concepts which form the context of the candidate's study;

## Methodology

- primary-based research: an account of the method chosen including reasons for choice and a recognition of associated problems;
- secondary-based research: an account of the method used by the author(s) of the data, reasons for that choice and a recognition of associated problems;

## Evidence

- application, presentation, analysis and interpretation of the evidence and/or arguments;

## Evaluation

- an evaluation of the methodology (either that of the candidate and/or the author(s) of relevant secondary data), conclusions and recommendations for further research;

## Bibliography

- a list of all the sources used;

## Diary

- a photocopied extract of one page of the research diary showing research in progress.

<p><b>20.3 Key Skills</b></p> <p>Information Technology</p> <p>Application of Number</p> <p>Improving own Learning and Performance</p> <p>Working with Others</p> <p>Problem Solving</p>	<p>Coursework provides the opportunity for candidates to develop and generate evidence for assessing the key skills listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• via use of word processor, spreadsheets, database, CD-ROM, software, Internet, Intranet;</li> <li>• collecting, presenting and analysing data;</li> <li>• via research study;</li> <li>• peers, organisations, participants in research, etc;</li> <li>• hypothesis testing, carrying out research focus, choosing methodology and making informed conclusions, etc.</li> </ul>				
<p><b>20.4 Evidence to Support the Award of Marks</b></p>	<p>The maximum mark for the coursework is 60 marks and the coursework should be marked using <b>either</b> the primary data <b>or</b> secondary data mark scheme, depending upon which source of data has been used in the study.</p>				
<p>Using the Mark Scheme</p>	<p>Each mark scheme is divided into two Assessment Objectives and the marks accorded to these are shown below.</p>				
	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Knowledge and Understanding</td> <td style="text-align: right;">24 marks</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation</td> <td style="text-align: right;">36 marks</td> </tr> </table>	Knowledge and Understanding	24 marks	Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation	36 marks
Knowledge and Understanding	24 marks				
Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation	36 marks				
<p>The Primary Data Mark Scheme</p>	<p>The elements to be assessed under each of the Assessment Objectives are given below.</p>				
<p>Assessment Objective 1 (A01)</p>	<p>Knowledge and Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Context (maximum 12 marks)</li> <li>• Methodology (maximum 12 marks)</li> </ul>				
<p>Assessment Objective 2 (A02)</p>	<p>Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application, Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis of Method and Data (maximum 18 marks)</li> <li>• Rationale, Evaluation and Conclusions (maximum 18 marks)</li> </ul> <p>Both elements <b>must</b> be assessed separately.</p>				
<p>The Secondary Data Mark Scheme</p>	<p>The elements to be assessed under each of the Assessment Objectives are given below.</p>				
<p>Assessment Objective 1 (A01)</p>	<p>Knowledge and Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Context (maximum 12 marks)</li> <li>• Methodology (maximum 12 marks)</li> </ul>				
<p>Assessment Objective 2 (A02)</p>	<p>Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application, Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis of Secondary Data (maximum 18 marks)</li> <li>• Rationale, Evaluation and Conclusions (maximum 18 marks)</li> </ul>				

**Centre-Assessed Unit Mark Scheme (Primary Data)**  
**AO1 - Knowledge and Understanding**

Marks	Context	Methodology
<b>0</b>	No knowledge or understanding displayed.	No knowledge or understanding displayed.
<b>1 - 3</b>	There is some attempt to locate the chosen sources within a broader sociological context. Links between the sources and the study are likely to be implicit. Little use of sociological concepts.	A limited and possibly flawed knowledge of the chosen method. Few reasons are offered for choice of method. These are generally appropriate. There are significant errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
	There will be little or no evidence of an understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.	
<b>4 - 6</b>	A greater attempt to locate the chosen sources within a broader sociological context. Some explicit links are made between the sources and the study. Some relevant sociological concepts and ideas are used, but these in the main will be descriptive and undeveloped.	Some knowledge and understanding of the chosen method. Appropriate reasons for the choice of method are offered but they are undeveloped and may lack clarity. A reasonable understanding of theory and some recognition of practical problems. There are noticeable errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
	There will be some limited evidence of an understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.	
<b>7 - 9</b>	A good knowledge and clear understanding of the broader sociological context. There are some explicit connections between the sources and the study. Some relevant sociological concepts and ideas are explored and developed but others are simply presented.	A good knowledge and understanding of the chosen method. A reasonably full discussion of the reasons underlying the choice of method. A good knowledge and understanding of theoretical, practical and ethical considerations. There are some errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
	There will be some evidence of an accurate but undeveloped understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.	
<b>10 - 12</b>	A very good knowledge and clear understanding of the broader sociological context. The chosen sources are highly appropriate, used well and explicitly linked to the study. Key sociological concepts and ideas are explored and developed.	A very good knowledge and understanding of the chosen method. A full and coherent discussion of reasons for the choice of method. A very good knowledge and understanding of theoretical, practical and ethical considerations. There are few, if any, errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
	There will be clear evidence of a detailed understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.	

**Centre-Assessed Unit Mark Scheme (Primary Data)**  
**AO2 - Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation**

Marks	Application, Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis of Method and Data	Rationale, Evaluation and Conclusions
0	No relevant skills displayed.	No relevant skills displayed.
1 - 3	<p>Some data collected, but presentation is generally poor.</p> <p>Some findings are presented, but with limited, possibly flawed, analysis and interpretation.</p> <p>There are few, if any, links to the hypothesis/aims/objectives of the research.</p>	<p>Rationale is very limited and referred to only occasionally/implicitly throughout the study. Evaluation is minimal. Simplistic conclusions are drawn but their relevance to the study is not always clear.</p> <p>Some of the recommendations for further research may be flawed and/or inappropriate.</p> <p>Throughout the study there is limited evidence of the ability to organise information appropriately.</p>
	There will be little or no evidence of an understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.	
4 - 6	<p>Appropriate method has been used to collect data.</p> <p>Some findings are presented, but with limited analysis and interpretation and possibly a lack of clarity.</p> <p>There are some links to the hypothesis/aims/objectives of the research.</p>	<p>Rationale is limited and reference to it throughout is generally implicit with the occasional explicit link to the study. There are some evaluative points. Some appropriate conclusions are drawn.</p> <p>Recommendations for further research, though viable, may be basic and incomplete.</p> <p>Throughout the study, there is some evidence of the ability to organise information appropriately.</p>
	There will be some limited evidence of an understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.	
7 - 10	<p>Appropriate method has been used and applied with some sensitivity to collect relevant data.</p> <p>Findings are reasonably presented with some analysis and interpretation and there are explicit links to the hypothesis/aims/objectives of the research.</p>	<p>An appropriate rationale is offered, with some clear and explicit links to the study. There is a clear and good attempt to evaluate the method used. Relevant conclusions are drawn.</p> <p>Some appropriate recommendations for further research are offered, but these are not always developed.</p> <p>Throughout the study there is some attempt to organise information in a structured and appropriate way.</p>
	There will be some evidence of an understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.	

<b>11 - 14</b>	<p>Appropriate method has been chosen and applied with sensitivity to collect relevant and accurate data.</p> <p>Findings are clearly presented, analysed and interpreted with good sociological insight, and explicitly linked to the hypothesis/ aims/objectives of the research.</p>	<p>A good rationale is offered, with relevant and explicit links throughout the study. There is a very good attempt to evaluate the method used. Appropriate and logical conclusions are drawn.</p> <p>There are viable and detailed recommendations for further research which emerge from the study and acknowledge the strengths and limitations of the method used.</p> <p>Throughout the study information is organised and presented in a structured and appropriate way.</p>
	<p>There will be evidence of an accurate understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.</p>	
<b>15 - 18</b>	<p>Appropriate method has been chosen and applied with rigour and sensitivity to collect relevant and accurate data.</p> <p>Presentation of data is excellent and findings are analysed and interpreted, demonstrating very good sociological insight. There are clear and explicit links to the hypothesis/ aims/ objectives of the research.</p>	<p>A very good and comprehensive rationale is offered, with detailed and accurate explicit links throughout the study. There is a full, accurate and excellent evaluation of the method used. Appropriate and logical conclusions are drawn.</p> <p>There are viable and detailed recommendations for further research which are informed by a very good grasp of the strengths and limitations of the study.</p> <p>Throughout the study, ideas and arguments are well-organised and coherent.</p>
	<p>There will be clear evidence of a detailed understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.</p>	

**Centre-Assessed Unit Mark Scheme (Secondary Data)**  
**AO1 - Knowledge and Understanding**

Marks	Context	Methodology
<b>0</b>	No knowledge or understanding displayed.	No knowledge or understanding displayed.
<b>1 - 3</b>	<p>There is some attempt to locate the secondary data within a broader sociological context.</p> <p>Little use of sociological concepts and generally these are stated rather than explored.</p>	<p>A limited and possibly flawed knowledge and understanding of the method, showing minimal or only implicit links to the secondary data.</p> <p>Little, if any, discussion of the reasons underlying the choice of method.</p> <p>There are significant errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling throughout.</p>
	There will be little or no evidence of an understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.	
<b>4 - 6</b>	<p>Some attempt to locate the secondary data within a broader sociological context.</p> <p>Some sociological concepts and ideas are used, but these may be descriptive and undeveloped.</p>	<p>Some knowledge and understanding of the method, with some attempt to show links to the secondary sources.</p> <p>Some discussion of the reasons underlying the choice of method, though at a basic and fairly simplistic level. There are noticeable errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling throughout.</p>
	There will be some limited evidence of an understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.	
<b>7 - 9</b>	<p>A good attempt to locate the secondary data within a broader sociological context. Some sociological concepts and ideas are explored and developed whilst others are descriptive and undeveloped.</p>	<p>A good knowledge and understanding of the method with several links to the secondary sources. An accurate and full discussion of the reasons underlying the choice of method showing a reasonable level of understanding. There are some errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling throughout.</p>
	There will be some evidence of an accurate but undeveloped understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.	
<b>10 - 12</b>	<p>A very good attempt to locate the secondary data within a broader sociological context.</p> <p>Relevant sociological concepts and ideas are explored and developed.</p>	<p>A very good knowledge and understanding of the chosen method, explicitly linked to the secondary sources. A full and coherent discussion of reasons underlying the choice of method, showing a clear understanding. There are few, if any, errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling throughout.</p>
	There will be clear evidence of a detailed understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.	

**Centre-Assessed Unit Mark Scheme (Secondary Data)**  
**AO2 - Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation**

Marks	Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis of Secondary Data	Rationale, Evaluation and Conclusions
0	No relevant skills displayed.	No relevant skills displayed.
1 - 3	Some material based on the secondary data, probably heavily reliant on direct quotations and with little or no discussion. Limited analysis and interpretation which is undeveloped. Organisation and presentation of material is generally poor.	Rationale is very limited and referred to only occasionally/implicitly throughout the study. Evaluation of the method is minimal or non-existent. Simplistic conclusions are drawn regarding the strengths and limitations of the secondary data. Inappropriate or limited recommendations are made for further research.
	There will be little or no evidence of an understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.	
4 - 6	A limited presentation and discussion of the secondary data. Some analysis and interpretation is offered but this is undeveloped. There are some, possibly implicit, links to the aims/objectives of the research. Organisation and presentation of material lacks clarity.	Rationale is limited. Reference throughout is generally implicit with the occasional explicit link to the study. There are some evaluative points regarding the method used. Some appropriate conclusions are drawn regarding the strengths and limitations of the secondary data.  Basic and viable recommendations for further research are made.
	There will be some limited evidence of an understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.	
7 - 10	A reasonably clear and accurate presentation and discussion of the secondary data. Analysis and interpretation is clear and explicit and shows some sociological insight. There are some explicit links to the aims/objectives of the research. Organisation and presentation of material is reasonable.	An appropriate rationale is offered, with some clear and explicit links to the study. There is a clear attempt to evaluate the method used. Relevant conclusions are drawn regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the secondary data.  Some appropriate recommendations for further research are made.
	There will be some evidence of an understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.	
11 - 14	A clear and accurate presentation and discussion of the secondary data. Analysis and interpretation is clear, explicit and shows good sociological insight. There are several explicit and clear links to the aims/objectives of the research. Organisation and presentation of material is very good.	A good rationale is offered, with relevant and explicit links throughout the study. There is a very good and largely successful attempt to evaluate the method used. Appropriate and logical conclusions are drawn regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the secondary data.  Some good and viable recommendations for further research are made.
	There will be evidence of an accurate understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.	

<p><b>15 - 18</b></p>	<p>A full, clear and accurate presentation and discussion of the secondary data.</p> <p>Analysis and interpretation is clear, explicit and reveals very good sociological insight. There are clear and explicit links to the aims/objectives of the research.</p> <p>Organisation and presentation of material is excellent.</p>	<p>A very good and comprehensive rationale is offered, with detailed and accurate explicit links throughout the study. There is a full and accurate evaluation of the method used. A range of appropriate and logical conclusions are drawn regarding the strengths and limitations of the secondary data.</p> <p>Very good recommendations for further research are offered.</p>
	<p>There will be clear evidence of a detailed understanding of the connections between the topic area, sociological thought and research method.</p>	

## 21

## Supervision and Authentication

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- 21.1 Supervision of Candidates' Work** Candidates' work for assessment must be undertaken under conditions which allow the teacher to supervise the work and enable the work to be authenticated. If it is necessary for some assessed work to be done outside the centre, sufficient work must take place under direct supervision to allow the teacher to authenticate each candidate's whole work with confidence.
- 
- 21.2 Guidance by the Teacher** The work assessed must be solely that of the candidate concerned. Any assistance given to an individual candidate which is beyond that given to the group as a whole must be recorded on the Candidate Record Form.
- Candidates are assessed on their written study, which should result from their own independent effort. Candidates should not be rewarded for reproducing the suggestions of teachers passively and uncritically.
- 
- 21.3 Ethical Issues** Teachers should familiarise themselves with the British Sociological Association's Statement of Ethical Practice (please refer to the Teachers' Guide) and ensure that candidates' work falls within these guidelines. Failure to do this could result in action being taken by AQA.
- 
- 21.4 Unfair Practice** At the start of the course, the supervising teacher is responsible for informing candidates of the AQA Regulations concerning malpractice. Candidates must not take part in any unfair practice in the preparation of coursework to be submitted for assessment, and must understand that to present material copied directly from books or other sources without acknowledgement will be regarded as deliberate deception. Centres must report suspected malpractice to AQA. The penalties for malpractice are set out in the AQA Regulations.
- 
- 21.5 Authentication of Candidates' Work** Both the candidate and the teacher are required to sign declarations on the Candidate Record Form, confirming that the work submitted for assessment is the candidate's own. The teacher is required to declare that the work was conducted under the specified conditions and to record details of any additional assistance.
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### 22.1 Standardising Meetings

Annual standardising meetings will usually be held in the autumn term. Centres entering candidates for the first time must send a representative to the meetings. Attendance is also mandatory in the following cases:

- where there has been a serious misinterpretation of the specification requirements;
- where the nature of coursework tasks set by a centre has been inappropriate;
- where a significant adjustment has been made to a centre's marks in the previous year's examination.

Otherwise attendance is at the discretion of centres. At these meetings support will be provided for centres in the development of appropriate coursework tasks and assessment procedures.

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### 22.2 Internal Standardisation of Marking

The centre is required to standardise the assessments across different teachers and teaching groups to ensure that all candidates at the centre have been judged against the same standards. If two or more teachers are involved in marking a component, one teacher must be designated as responsible for internal standardisation. Common pieces of work must be marked on a trial basis and differences between assessments discussed at a training session in which all teachers involved must participate. The teacher responsible for standardising the marking must ensure that the training includes the use of reference and archive materials such as work from a previous year or examples provided by AQA. The centre is required to send to the moderator a signed Centre Declaration Sheet confirming that the marking of centre-assessed work at the centre has been standardised. If only one teacher has undertaken the marking, that person must sign this form.

## 23

## Administrative Procedures

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- 23.1 Recording Assessments** The candidates' work must be marked according to the assessment criteria set out in Section 20. Teachers should keep records of their assessments during the course in a form which facilitates the complete and accurate submission of the final overall assessments at the end of the course.
- 
- 23.2 Submitting Marks and Sample Work for Moderation** The total component mark for each candidate must be submitted to AQA on the mark sheets provided or by Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) by the specified date. Centres will be informed which candidates' work is required in the samples to be submitted to the moderator.
- 
- 23.3 Factors Affecting Individual Candidates** Teachers should be able to accommodate the occasional absence of candidates by ensuring that the opportunity is given for them to make up missed assessments.
- Special consideration should be requested for candidates whose work has been affected by illness or other exceptional circumstances. Information about the procedure is issued separately.
- If work is lost, AQA should be notified immediately of the date of the loss, how it occurred, and who was responsible for the loss. AQA will advise on the procedures to be followed in such cases.
- Where special help which goes beyond normal learning support is given, AQA must be informed so that such help can be taken into account when assessment and moderation take place.
- Candidates who move from one centre to another during the course sometimes present a problem for a scheme of internal assessment. Possible courses of action depend on the stage at which the move takes place. If the move occurs early in the course the new centre should take responsibility for assessment. If it occurs late in the course it may be possible to accept the assessments made at the previous centre. Centres should contact AQA at the earliest possible stage for advice about appropriate arrangements in individual cases.
- 
- 23.4 Retaining Evidence and Re-Using Marks** The centre must retain the work of all candidates, with Candidate Record Forms attached, under secure conditions, from the time it is assessed, to allow for the possibility of enquiries about results. The work may be returned to candidates after the issue of results provided that no enquiries about results are to be made which will include re-moderation of the coursework component. If enquiries about results are to be made, the work must remain under secure conditions until requested by AQA.
-

### 24.1 Moderation Procedures

Moderation of the coursework is by inspection of a sample of candidates' work, sent by post from the centre to a moderator appointed by AQA. The centre marks must be submitted to AQA and the sample of work must reach the moderator by a specified date in the year in which the qualification is to be awarded.

Following the re-marking of the sample work, the moderator's marks are compared with the centre marks to determine whether any adjustment is needed in order to bring the centre's assessments into line with standards generally. In some cases it may be necessary for the moderator to call for the work of other candidates. In order to meet this possible request, centres must have available the coursework and Candidate Record Form of every candidate entered for the examination and be prepared to submit it on demand. Mark adjustments will normally preserve the centre's order of merit, but where major discrepancies are found, AQA reserves the right to alter the order of merit.

### 24.2 Post-Moderation Procedures

On publication of the GCE results, the centre is supplied with details of the final marks for the coursework component.

The candidates' work is returned to the centre after the examination with a report form from the moderator giving feedback to the centre on the appropriateness of the tasks set, the accuracy of the assessments made, and the reasons for any adjustments to the marks.

Some candidates' work may be retained by AQA for archive purposes.

# Awarding and Reporting

## 25

## Grading, Shelf-Life and Re-Sits

25.1 Qualification Titles	<p>The qualifications based on these specifications have the following titles:</p> <p>AQA Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Sociology; AQA Advanced Level GCE in Sociology.</p>
25.2 Grading System	<p>Both the AS and the full A Level qualifications will be graded on a five-grade scale: A, B, C, D and E. Candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.</p> <p>Individual assessment unit results will be certificated.</p>
25.3 Shelf-Life of Unit Results	<p>The shelf-life of individual unit results, prior to the award of the qualification, is limited only by the shelf-life of the specification.</p>
25.4 Assessment Unit Re-Sits	<p>Each assessment unit may be re-taken an unlimited number of times within the shelf-life of the specification. The best result will count towards the final award. However, marks for individual units may be counted once only towards an AS and/or A Level award. Candidates who repeat an award and who do not decline their previous grade must re-take all units.</p> <p>Candidates re-taking a unit containing coursework (SC3C or SC5C) may carry forward their moderated coursework marks. These marks have a shelf-life which is limited only by the shelf-life of the specification, and may be carried forward an unlimited number of times within this shelf-life.</p>
25.5 Minimum Requirements	<p>Candidates will be graded on the basis of work submitted for the award of the qualification.</p>
25.6 Awarding and Reporting	<p>This specification complies with the grading, awarding and certification requirements of the current <i>GCSE</i>, <i>GCSE in vocational subjects</i>, <i>GCE</i>, <i>VCE</i>, <i>GNVQ</i> and <i>AEA Code of Practice 2004/5</i>, and will be revised in the light of any subsequent changes for future years.</p>

## Appendices

### A

## Grade Descriptions

The following grade descriptions indicate the level of attainment characteristic of the given grade at A Level. They give a general indication of the required learning outcomes at each specific grade. 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 (as in Section 6) overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the examination may be balanced by better performances in others.

- Grade A** Candidates display a detailed knowledge and understanding of a range of sociological theories, concepts and methods, and of the links between them. They demonstrate a well-developed ability to select and interpret different types of evidence from a range of sources, and make detailed and valid evaluations of evidence and arguments from a variety of contexts. They show a well-developed and refined ability to organise material from diverse sources, where appropriate, and use it to present and sustain sociological arguments of some complexity.
- Grade C** Candidates display a good knowledge and understanding of some sociological theories, concepts and methods, and some recognition of the links between them. They demonstrate the ability to select and interpret different types of evidence from a range of sources, and are able to show some evaluation of evidence and arguments from different contexts. They show some ability to organise material from diverse sources and use it to present a sociological argument.
- Grade E** Candidates display an outline knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, concepts and methods and the links between them. They demonstrate a basic ability to select and interpret evidence presented in different formats, and they are able to make a partial evaluation of evidence and arguments. They show an ability to organise material and present a basic sociological argument.

The Candidate Record Form has been deleted from this specification because of changed requirements. The latest version of the form is on the [Coursework Administration](#) pages of the Website.

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# Centre-assessed work Centre Declaration Sheet

Qualification: ✓	ELC	<input type="checkbox"/>	GCSE	<input type="checkbox"/>	GCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	GNVQ	<input type="checkbox"/>	VCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	FSMQ	<input type="checkbox"/>	Key Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Specification title: ..... Unit code(s): .....

Centre name: ..... Centre no: 

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### Authentication of candidates' work

This is to certify that marks/assessments have been given in accordance with the requirements of the specification and that every reasonable step has been taken to ensure that the work presented is that of the candidates named. Any assistance given to candidates beyond that given to the class as a whole and beyond that described in the specification has been recorded on the Candidate Record Form(s) and has been taken into account. The marks/assessments given reflect accurately the unaided achievement of the candidates.

*Signature(s) of teacher(s) responsible for assessment*

Teacher 1: ..... Teacher 4: .....  
 Teacher 2: ..... Teacher 5: .....  
 Teacher 3: ..... Teacher 6: .....

*(continue overleaf if necessary)*

### Internal standardisation of marking

Each centre must standardise assessment across different teachers/assessors and teaching groups to ensure that all candidates at the centre have been judged against the same standards.

If two or more teachers/assessors are involved in marking/assessing, one of them must be designated as responsible for standardising the assessments of all teachers/assessors at the centre.

I confirm that *[tick either (a) or (b)]*

- (a) the procedure described in the specification has been followed at this centre to ensure that the assessments are of the same standard for all candidates; *or*
- (b) I have marked the work of all candidates.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Signature of Head of Centre: ..... Date: .....

*This form should be completed and sent or given to the moderator with the sample of centre-assessed work.*

## C

# Overlaps with other qualifications

### GCE Psychology

The specification shows clear overlaps with AQA GCE Psychology. In AS there is much familiarity with the Sociology specification in terms of the research methods employed by both disciplines. The skills required in the sociological methods section rely on the understanding of 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 Sociology is considered to be complementary, it is not a prohibited combination.

### GNVQ

The specification shows some overlap with GNVQ Health and Social Care. For example Module 1 (Health) contains some overlap of content with Unit 1 (Equal Opportunities and Clients' Rights) in relation to inequality of health care provision. Similarly Module 2 (Wealth, Poverty and Welfare) contains some overlap in content with Unit 5 (Health, Social Care and Early Years Services [Advanced]) in relation to welfare provision, eg public, private, voluntary and informal.

Because the overlap with GNVQ Health and Social Care is considered to be complementary, it is not a prohibited combination.