

GCE 2001
June Series



Report on the Examination

Sociology

■ Advanced Subsidiary

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Kathleen Tattersall, Director General

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Sociology

General

Overall, there is very much to celebrate in the performance of candidates at AS level in the first examination session that offered them the opportunity to sit all three AS Units, and congratulations are rightfully due to candidates and their teachers for their efforts and achievements during this first AS year.

Inevitably, however, there were a number of shortcomings to be found in candidates' work. Some candidates wrote far too much for the shorter parts of the questions, especially parts (b), (c) and (d), and a small number wrote more for parts (a) to (d) (worth a total of 20 marks) than they did for parts (e) and (f) combined (worth a total of 40 marks). Candidates need to pay close attention to the demands expressed in the wording of the questions. For example, a question asking candidates to 'suggest three reasons' does not require an account of a range of theories or studies together with criticisms of them. Not unconnected with this pattern, there was a tendency among a minority of candidates to run out of time on part (f). On parts (b) to (d), many candidates did not identify separately the individual points that they were asked to make, with a consequent loss of marks in many cases. However, others had the good sense to make their distinctions between points clear, for instance, by starting each point on a new line, using bullet points or 'firstly', 'secondly', etc.

In terms of the two assessment objectives, candidates generally performed better in showing their knowledge and understanding of sociological material than they did in interpreting, analysing or evaluating it. Insufficient evaluation was particularly noticeable in many answers to part (f) questions, which specifically call for candidates to 'assess' explanations, views, etc. Similarly, many candidates made at best cursory use of material from the Items, even when instructed to do so, as in part (f) questions. On some parts of questions, some candidates wrote catch-all, 'all I know about...' answers, presenting knowledge without regard to its relevance. It may be that a little more time spent reflecting on the question and planning the answer would help to overcome this problem.

Nevertheless, the above remarks should not detract from the fact that so many candidates have shown creditable performances after what, for the majority of them, was less than a year's study of the subject.

Unit 1 SCY1

Question 1: Families and Households

- (a) The great majority of candidates answered this correctly, in terms of the transmission of basic norms, values or skills, but a few weaker answers described where primary socialisation takes place rather than what it is.
- (b) This too was generally well answered, with popular reasons including small sample sizes or the datedness of the studies. However, some wrote generally about families changing without identifying two clear points.
- (c) Most candidates did well here. Functions identified included sexual, reproductive, economic, stabilisation of adult personalities, etc. However, some failed to read the question carefully and included functions referred to in the Item.
- (d) On the whole, candidates did less well on this part of the question. Good answers were well organised and clearly identified two distinct reasons, such as the introduction of compulsory schooling, the prohibition of child labour, the influence of the mass media, etc. The best answers went on to explain each reason clearly and accurately. Unfortunately, many answers fell short of this: candidates frequently did not distinguish their two reasons, and many were confined to a general (though sometimes lengthy) narrative about the position of children in the past, without addressing the question directly.
- (e) Most candidates showed a reasonable knowledge and understanding of some potentially relevant sociological material on family diversity. However, many answers were rather narrowly focused, especially in terms of their examination of the reasons for diversity, where discussion often centred on divorce to the virtual exclusion of other factors. Better answers covered a range of possible reasons, such as the role of legislation, the welfare state, growing individualism or consumerism, the impact of the women's and gay movements, immigration, economic change, etc. Some weaker candidates described changes in 'the' family (such as the transition from extended to nuclear), suggesting a weak understanding of the concept of diversity. Others wrote about family types in past times (sometimes unknowingly, as in numerous discussions of the Nayers as if this were a contemporary family type).
- (f) Answers here were generally of a lower standard. A great many candidates made use of the Item, but a significant proportion were unable to add much of substance from elsewhere. Others were able to elaborate successfully from their own knowledge of the studies referred to in the Item. The best answers showed a sound knowledge of a range of material dealing with a number of different aspects of the division of labour, such as paid employment, housework, childcare, emotional labour, etc. Issues such as dual career couples, male unemployment, the 'new man', etc were explored. These answers integrated empirical material from sources such as Gershuny, Ferri and Smith, Duncombe and Marsden, Boulton, etc with theoretical arguments (generally varieties of feminism).

Question 2: Health

- (a) This was generally well answered, with most candidates conveying the idea that doctors have greater medical or scientific knowledge or skill than their patients.
- (b) Among the more popular responses here were the notions that doctors have to restrict access to the sick role in order to ensure that patients did not avoid work through malingering, and in order to protect scarce medical resources.
- (c) This was generally less well answered, with some candidates presenting ideas that supported rather than criticised Parsons' views. Others frequently wrote that doctors often make mistakes or that they have power over patients, neither of which constitute direct criticisms of Parsons' view of the roles of doctors or patients. Valid criticisms made included the idea that doctors are not impartial, but favour some social groups, or that they act in their own self-interest rather than that of their patients.
- (d) This was generally well answered, with a large proportion of candidates gaining full marks. Reasons such as that women's reproductive role requires more frequent consultations, or that they are more willing than men to discuss problems.
- (e) Answers here showed a wide range of levels of response, from very weak to excellent. Many weaker responses were thin and quasi-commonsensical accounts of how 'stress' induced by work, housing, etc led to mental illness. Somewhat better were those answers that identified a greater number of social factors or began to introduce concepts such as labelling. At the top of the mark range, candidates addressed class, gender and ethnicity in relation to mental illness, and considered structural and material factors such as housing, income, leisure opportunities etc, gender roles and patriarchy, racism and so on, as well as ways in which 'mental illness' is socially constructed. Sources such as Goffman, Laing, Oakley, Foucault and Littlewood and Lipsedge featured in such answers.
- (f) At the lower end of the range of responses, answers consisted of a few brief and fairly unsociological points and/or a lengthy prose summary of the figures in the Item without however adding much in the way of explanation or interpretation. Others scored somewhat higher marks for lists of social factors that cause differential rates of sickness between the social classes. Some candidates slipped into an account of gender inequalities in health. Although the Black Report figured in a large proportion of answers, accounts of the explanations that it contains were often thin, list-like and sometimes (especially in the case of the artefact explanation) inaccurate or confused. For most candidates, evaluation consisted largely of a mere juxtaposition of different explanations, without any debate (for example, between the cultural and material explanations). Relatively little recent material appeared in these answers.

Question 3: Mass Media

- (a) Most candidates answered this part correctly, with variants on the idea that the media are in fewer hands. A few gave an example but no clear and explicit explanation or definition, and so scored only one of the two available marks.
- (b) In general, this too was answered correctly. The most commonly identified feature was that the moral panics are often the result of media amplification. Other features identified included the creation of scapegoats and calls for a crackdown.
- (c) Very many candidates scored full marks here, but a significant number failed to score. The advertising of products, partisan support for pro-capitalist political parties or causes, and censorship of news unfavourable to the interests of capitalist media owners were all popular suggestions that gained marks. However, a significant number scored poorly if at all, often for some quite lengthy but tangential responses.
- (d) A minority of candidates misinterpreted the question and gave an account of the Marxist view of the mass media, but most were able to identify two criticisms of the Marxist view. These included the idea that there is a wide range of media, not all of which are pro-capitalist, the notion that the audience can ignore pro-capitalist media output, and the idea that there are legal restrictions on output that may prevent the media from serving capitalist interests and so on.
- (e) The weakest answers to this part were often little more than a commonsensical account of the processes of news-gathering ('the reporter must go and find out the facts...') devoid of sociological concepts. Better answers were able to identify a number of processes or aspects of news production, such as agenda-setting and news values, though sometimes these answers were rather list-like and lacked discussion. The best responses drew on a range of empirical and theoretical material and used relevant sociological concepts appropriately (such as hierarchies of credibility, gatekeepers, hegemony, ideology, etc). Some examined different kinds of news (strikes, crime, etc), and Marxist, pluralist and/or interactionist perspectives were used to give theoretical context to the account.
- (f) In general, answers to this part of the question showed a reasonable knowledge and understanding of some sociological material on media effects. In many cases, however, there was a tendency to list different approaches without explicit debate, discussion or evaluation of the positions presented, with the result that the answer lost focus on the specific issues of the 'direct' and 'immediate' influence of the media. Consideration of effects was often limited to the question of violence, especially with regard to children (where psychological approaches featured), though some better answers examined ideological or political effects (eg on voting, or attitudes to race), or effects on consumer behaviour or gender identity. Some useful evaluation flowed from the distinction between 'active' and 'passive' audiences.

Unit 2 SCY2

Question 1: Education

- (a) Most candidates were able to explain the meaning of meritocracy, but some were insufficiently clear and explicit in their explanations. Very few had no idea at all as to the term's meaning.
- (b) Most candidates were able to suggest one or two ways. Among the most popular suggestions put forward were teachers' expectations or labels, and pupils' responses to these.
- (c) Most though not all candidates understood the meaning of 'policies', and most were able to suggest some policies that may have affected attainment, such as the introduction of coursework, GCSEs, AS, the literacy hour, etc. Some failed to read the question carefully and included policies referred to in the Item.
- (d) Most candidates successfully identified two reasons why 'league tables' may be an unsatisfactory measure of a school's worth or effectiveness, but many had difficulty in describing these in a manner that would have enabled the examiner to distinguish the two clearly. Most reasons centred on differences in the social profile of the pupils or school catchment area (or that league tables measure pupils' efforts or abilities not those of teachers or schools), and/or on the idea that there is more to a school than its pupils' examination performances (such as the moral education or general socialisation that it offers).
- (e) Most candidates showed at least a fair knowledge and understanding of some potentially relevant material on the role of home background factors in attainment. The typical answer focused on social class and included some or all of the following: cultural deprivation, material deprivation, differences in language or cultural capital. Some candidates also considered ethnicity; for example, differences in family structure or risk of poverty. A few referred to gender and considered the effects of socialisation within the family into different gender roles. The best answers covered both a wider range of issues and explanations, and showed a sound, conceptually detailed grasp of relevant sociological studies. Many weak answers tended towards a more commonsensical treatment of a narrow range of factors and were lacking in sociological concepts. Some candidates with a reasonably good knowledge and understanding of material on achievement offered catch-all answers that attempted to cover a wide range of studies, many of which had no direct connection with the question, and without using such material for instance to evaluate 'home background' explanations.
- (f) Here too, most candidates showed a knowledge and understanding of some potentially relevant material, and in general made at least some use of material from the Item in producing an account of aspects of the functionalist approach. Better accounts were able to distinguish a range of functions and contributions, and to interpret key functionalist concepts appropriately. Evaluation was generally quite limited and often relied exclusively on juxtaposing an account of Bowles and Gintis or similar material, with little or no explicit debate between the positions described. However, a limited number of very good answers went beyond this, using evidence and arguments from interactionist, Marxist, feminist or New Right standpoints to challenge functionalist views. Some used findings from studies of differential achievement to question the functionalist assumption of a meritocratic education system. At the other extreme, a few very weak answers offered little or nothing beyond the material in the Item and/or lapsed quickly into a weak 'underachievement' response at a tangent to the question.

Question 2: Wealth, Poverty and Welfare

- (a) Most candidates were aware of the meaning of the term, conveying the idea of a stock of resources, but some confused it with income. Some gave examples of types of wealth but no clear explanation or definition of the term.
- (b) Most candidates were able to suggest at least one relevant reason, though some were unable to think of a second one. Among the most popular suggestions were the inheritance of wealth and unequal incomes enabling some to accumulate more than others.
- (c) Popular suggestions here included taxing the rich and giving more to the poor, for instance via higher welfare benefits. Some had difficulty in suggesting three reasons, however.
- (a) Many identified the fact that the poor keep many of the non-poor in work, for example as social workers. Other functions included the idea that the fate of the poor serves as a warning to the rest of the population to conform, and that they provide a cheap labour force. Some candidates wrote on these or other points at excessive length; others were too brief to gain the additional marks for describing their points adequately.
- (b) The weakest answers were generally confined to definitions of one or two different types of poverty. Somewhat better answers were able to develop these further but tended to emphasise problems of definition while neglecting issues of measurement. Some tended to drift into accounts of the findings of various studies and lost focus on the issues raised by the question. The best answers examined a range of problems relating to both definition and measurement of poverty. The merits and drawbacks of absolute, relative or other definitions were considered. Measurement issues included the problems of operationalising concepts, of using survey methods or of measuring subjective aspects of poverty, and of imposing researchers' categories on respondents.
- (f) The best answers showed a sound knowledge of structural explanations of poverty, such as Marxist, Weberian and/or feminist approaches, with effective and appropriate use of appropriate concepts associated with such explanations, such as exploitation, discrimination, reserve army of labour, dual labour market, patriarchy and similar. These answers were able to evaluate successfully, for instance by drawing on New Right or culture of poverty approaches. Few answers developed such evaluation very far, however, but some fairly competent responses succeeded in outlining the findings of studies broadly supporting the view in the question. Some candidates opted to list the findings or views from a range of studies or theories of poverty, without indicating whether the material put forward either supported or refuted the view in the question. Many weaker answers listed a few possible causes of poverty, such as unemployment or low pay, but without locating these in a sociological context and sometimes in a very thin and commonsensical way.

Question 3: Work and Leisure

- (a) A significant number of candidates were unable to explain ‘informal work groups’, though most candidates recognised that they were groups of employees lying outside the organisation’s structure. Some candidates indicated that such groups may have goals at odds with those of their employers.
- (b) Few candidates had difficulty in suggesting two reasons why conflict occurs between workers and employers. Among the most popular were pay and conditions. Others included threats of redundancy, the speed of work, the availability of fringe benefits and breakdown of communication.
- (c) Most candidates were able to identify some relevant characteristics, such as de-skilling or low skill work, the division of labour, the repetitive nature of such work, and various aspects of alienation.
- (d) Most candidates were able to identify at least one criticism of the Scientific Management approach successfully. Most often cited was the idea that it ignores the importance of informal work groups. Other reasons put forward included Taylor’s assumption that workers were motivated only by economic reward, that it is a capitalist ideology rather than being scientific, and that it only works with unskilled labour.
- (e) With the exception of a minority of very weak and rather commonsensical responses, in general, answers showed a reasonable knowledge and understanding of sociological material on leisure. At the lower end of the range of performance, this was often confined to a summary of the work of Parker or similar material. Better answers were distinguished by a greater range of social groups (such as occupation, class, gender, age, ethnicity, family circumstances and so on). These answers considered a number of possible reasons for differences in leisure, including education, cultural capital, patriarchy, income, time available, work patterns (eg shifts), subculture, identity, etc. Sources included Deem, Parker, Bourdieu, Gans and Clarke and Critcher, drawing on Marxist, feminist, postmodernist and other approaches.
- (f) Some of the weakest answers did little more than recycle material from the Item, but with little evidence of sociological understanding, or offer one or two fragments of information, about de-skilling, for example. Such answers were fortunately rare. More typical were those that based their answers on an account of the work of Blauner, for instance. Some of these turned the answer into one on a more general question on work satisfaction, and many failed to make significant use of the Item, although this would have perhaps helped to give their answers a more up-to-date appearance. The best answers made effective use of material from the Item, for example to discuss the differences between Fordist and post-Fordist production systems and to consider their impact on productivity, product types, skill, control and surveillance, alienation and work satisfaction, job security, etc. Sources included Marx, Braverman, Blauner, Piore, Zuboff and Foucault.

Unit 3 SC3W

Question 1: Sociological Methods

- (a) Many candidates could offer a satisfactory definition of this term. Those that did not tended to identify “interview schedule” inaccurately in terms of some kind of sequencing/timetable of interviews.
- (b) Most candidates coped well with this question, many referring appropriately to problems of non-participation and non-reporting. A minority of candidates had little understanding of “representativeness”, confusing it with reliability or validity.
- (c) Most candidates could identify two or three problems with analysing data from lengthy unstructured interviews. Issues such as the length of time required, irrelevant content and quantification figured most often in good responses. Stronger candidates ordered their answer clearly and precisely. Others used a “catch-all” prose style that was at times unnecessarily long and not always clearly structured. Weaker candidates sometimes spent too much time considering the process of interviewing rather than focusing on the problems associated with analysing the resultant data.
- (d) Most candidates could identify two advantages and of these, the majority then went on to give satisfactory explanations of these advantages. Issues of rapport, flexibility and the opportunity to clarify questions figured most often. Some candidates found the “bullet point” approach helpful in ordering their ideas, others used a similarly appropriate style of organising their response with a clearly identified advantage followed by a brief explanation of why this was advantageous to the researcher. A minority of candidates presented an over-long “mini-essay” in response to this question which often lacked clarity of expression and which in some cases possibly led to time management problems later in the question.
- (e) Although in many answers there was a tendency to list mechanically the strengths and weaknesses of official statistics, some candidates produced sophisticated and well-developed answers to this question. Stronger answers dealt well with issues of reliability, representativeness and the social construction of official data. Better answers also appreciated that official statistics can be collected by different means or displayed an awareness of Marxist or feminist criticisms of official statistics. Quite a number of candidates made use of their awareness of the Census. Some such answers were more effective than others, with a minority of weaker responses being based almost entirely on the nature and role of the Census. Some candidates offered an examination of statistical data in general and whilst this gained some reward, the lack of a clear focus on official statistics limited the effectiveness of this kind of answer. Another weakness exhibited by some candidates was a tendency to move off into lengthy accounts of studies of suicide, beginning with, but rarely maintaining, a focus on the role of suicide statistics. Similarly, some responses drifted into examining the usefulness of official statistics for government and social policy use rather than for sociological purposes. It is evident that many candidates require further clarification as to what is meant by analysis. Although this skill was present in many answers, it was often limited and only “emergent” in others, resulting in “list-like” responses. Stronger candidates displayed a greater awareness of analytical skills by explaining apparent strengths and weaknesses, coherently linking issues or by linking claims to types of data or research issues.
- (f) Most candidates displayed at least a basic knowledge of participant observation. Weaker candidates were often confined to reproducing parts of the Item, to describing a couple of research studies or to presenting a limited range of advantages and disadvantages. Particularly disappointing were those answers that offered often fairly substantial and accurate descriptions of

studies based on participant observation but which failed to develop much explicit analysis or evaluation. Such candidates clearly had some appropriate knowledge but failed to use this in the most effective manner. Other candidates made more use of media and cinematic versions of participant observation ('Donnie Brasco', MacIntyre, etc) and whilst the sociology behind these could be rewarded, there are many other clearly sociological examples that could have been used instead. A further weakness for some candidates was an inability to distinguish between validity and reliability. Even so, the majority of candidates were able to distinguish between covert and overt forms of this technique, although responses tended to put more emphasis on coverage of the former. Most candidates made reference to appropriate studies and particular use was made of Humphreys, Patrick and Barker. Occasionally, candidates seemed unsure as to which were covert, which overt and how far they involved participation. Stronger candidates displayed good evaluation skills in a variety of ways. Many made good use of important concepts such as validity, reliability and representativeness or located their answer within an overall theoretical framework. Others drew explicit comparisons with other research techniques or used the covert-overt dimension as the basis for a discussion of participant observation's strengths and weaknesses.

Unit 3 Coursework SC3C

General Comments

The entry for AS coursework was surprisingly large, with over half the total Unit 3 entry opting to present a coursework proposal instead of the written alternative. The quality of work varied significantly with some excellent pieces which consistently related to the hypothesis/aim in a precise and relevant manner. An encouraging number of centres had clearly prepared candidates well, and marking reflected this. There were, however, some coursework proposals which digressed considerably from what was often a confusing aim or hypothesis, and failed to present the qualities required to reach the top bands. Some candidates paid no attention to the mark scheme and inevitably failed to demonstrate the qualities which attracted marks. Some centres appeared not to have standardised their work via internal moderation and were often placing sections of coursework a band or even two bands higher than the work warranted. In some centres all candidates achieved very high marks. Such marking did not differentiate between candidates and the mark scheme had not been appropriately or consistently applied. A few centres were consistently harsh in their marking. A minority of candidates ignored the structure laid down in the specification and some presented the sections in the wrong sequence. All centres whose marking has been adjusted would benefit from attending AQA's Inset on coursework. Details of venues and dates are available from AQA.

Length of Coursework

In most cases candidates produced a coursework proposal which was between 1100–1300 words in length. The exceptions mostly occurred in the second section where candidates included lengthy contextual pieces. A few candidates did not provide a word count for each section or a total word count. Some candidates clearly exceeded the recommended word length for each section but gave a total, which met the requirements! The majority of coursework was word processed and secured with treasury tags. Some centres encouraged all candidates to put their work in plastic wallets or/and folders. This is not required and places an additional and unnecessary burden on the moderator. Some candidates included the articles used and a bibliography, neither is required for AS coursework.

Ethical Issues

The only issues that arose were possible cases of plagiarism where the two contexts were lifted directly from textbooks or where candidates selected identical sources and appeared to write them in close collaboration with each other. There was also the issue of whether candidates should be selecting, even for an AS proposal, an aim that is likely to place participants in a vulnerable position and breach BSA guidelines.

Administration

Most centres correctly interpreted the new administrative procedures. Some centres did not provide comments to explain marks. There were incorrect additions in a small number of centres. Some teachers wrote detailed comments throughout the coursework, which distracted rather than aided the moderator. Centres are reminded of the need to follow AQA's requirements and write their comments in the box provided on the Candidate Record Form.

Assessment Criteria

Hypothesis or Aim

Most proposals were related to the Family or Education, as expected. The majority of candidates were able to score in the 3-5 band by giving some reasons for their choice and limited relevant background information. However, they were not able to identify one appropriate and practical aim or hypothesis. The better candidates who did move into the 6-8 band offered a relevant sociological focus and aim and were able to directly relate to it throughout the rest of the proposal. Good candidates had a very tight focus whereas the weaker ones often had a rather loose one or sometimes several, including both a hypothesis and sometimes several aims.

Context and Concepts

Most candidates identified two appropriate sources and overtly identified and defined the concepts whilst weaving them into the context. Weaker candidates often used sources in a tangential and/or superficial way. In such work concepts were often not explicitly identified, defined or developed and were at times irrelevant to the aim/hypothesis. In some cases candidates included a number of sources and neither developed or related any of them. Some candidates demonstrated a very limited knowledge and understanding of their chosen concepts. In some cases a number of concepts were listed with lengthy, dictionary type definitions but never developed. Some candidates copied extracts from textbooks, which were not made relevant to their aim/hypothesis. Others provided lengthy and unnecessary quotations from research.

Main Research Method and Reasons

Many candidates did not follow the requirements for this section and used several rather than one method. This used most of the words allocated for this section and often resulted in generalised rather than focused discussion, which was tightly linked to their research proposal. Where they did use one method, it was more likely to relate directly to the sociological focus and aim. In many cases, however, candidates offered a list of advantages taken directly from a textbook, many of which were not pertinent to their proposal. This approach resulted in generalised rather than specific reasons for the method adopted and for some this section became a mini essay on methodology. Higher scoring candidates demonstrated sensitivity and applied their chosen method explicitly to their proposed study and focused on how appropriate the method really was. Many candidates needed to provide more detail on operationalising the method (eg piloting, sampling) to increase marks. Some candidates offered lengthy solutions to methodological problems, but this is not required.

Potential Problems

In a large number of cases candidates regurgitated a list of generalised disadvantages for their method and failed to make any specific reference to either their aim or the sociological focus. Candidates would benefit from consideration of practical, ethical and if relevant theoretical issues in relation to their method. In some cases candidates gave a range of alternative methods that were excellent solutions but not required or rewarded in the mark scheme. Practical problems were generally offered, though weak candidates confined themselves to these and only addressed time and money. Some candidates showed sensitivity to ethical concerns - often centre specific. For many candidates this section was free standing and did not relate to their aim/hypothesis and the focus of their research. High scoring candidates were able to present problems which considered areas with specific links to their own research, and were therefore able to develop a critical framework around more than just issues of practicality.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Unit/Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
Unit 1 (SCY1)	60	60	31.7	9.0
Unit 2 (SCY2)	60	60	31.4	9.3
Unit 3 (SC3W)	60	60	35.4	7.8
Unit 3 (SC3C)	60	60	34.6	9.1

Unit SCY1/Families and Households; Health; Mass Media

(26716 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	40	36	32	28	25
Uniform Boundary Mark	105	84	74	63	53	42

Unit SCY2/Education; Wealth, Poverty and Welfare; Work and Leisure (28705 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	40	36	32	28	25
Uniform Boundary Mark	105	84	74	63	53	42

Unit SC3W/Sociological Methods (13161 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	42	38	34	30	27
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit SC3C/Coursework (16021 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	42	37	32	28	24
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Advanced Subsidiary award

Provisional statistics for the specification as a whole (24073 candidates)

	A	B	C	D	E
Cumulative %	14.7	31.8	52.4	70.7	85.4

Definitions

Boundary Mark: the minimum (scaled) mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

Mean Mark: is the sum of all candidates' marks divided by the number of candidates. In order to compare mean marks for different components, the mean mark (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Standard Deviation: a measure of the spread of candidates' marks. In most components, approximately two-thirds of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus one standard deviation from the mean, and approximately 95% of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus two standard deviations from the mean. In order to compare the standard deviations for different components, the standard deviation (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Uniform Mark: a score on a standard scale which indicates a candidate's performance. The lowest uniform mark for grade A is always 80% of the maximum uniform mark for the unit, similarly grade B is 70%, grade C is 60%, grade D is 50% and grade E is 40%. A candidate's scaled mark for each unit is converted to a uniform mark and the uniform marks for the units which count towards the AS or A-level qualification are added in order to determine the candidate's overall grade.

