



ASSESSMENT and  
QUALIFICATIONS  
ALLIANCE

# General Certificate of Education

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## General Studies 5761/6761 *Specification A* 2008

Material accompanying this Specification

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

# SPECIFICATION

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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 are modular. The AS comprises three teaching and learning modules and the A2 comprises a further three teaching and learning modules. Each teaching and learning module is normally 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.

2

# Specification at a Glance

## General Studies

AS Examination 5761	
<b>Unit 1</b>	
1¼ hours	33⅓% of the total AS mark 16⅔% of the total A Level mark
25 objective test questions + 1 set of written tasks AS Subject Content Module 1 Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities	
<b>Unit 2</b>	
1¼ hours	33⅓% of the total AS mark 16⅔% of the total A Level mark
2 sets of 25 objective test questions AS Subject Content Module 2 Science, Mathematics and Technology	
<b>EITHER</b>	<b>OR</b>
<b>Unit 3W</b>	<b>Unit 3C</b>
1¼ hours	33⅓% of the total AS mark 16⅔% of the total A Level mark
33⅓% of the total AS mark 16⅔% of the total A Level mark	33⅓% of the total AS mark 16⅔% of the total A Level mark
Questions based on source material AS Subject Content Module 3 Society, Politics and the Economy	1 Coursework assignment AS Subject Content Module 3 Society, Politics and the Economy

Advanced Subsidiary Award
5761



+

A2 Examination 6761	
<b>Unit 4</b>	
1½ hours	15% of the total A Level mark
<b>EITHER</b>	<b>OR</b>
20 objective test questions based on comprehension in a foreign language (French, German, Spanish) + 1 essay A2 Subject Content Module 4 Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities	30 objective test questions based on comprehension and knowledge of European Culture + 1 essay A2 Subject Content Module 4 Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities
<b>Unit 5</b>	
1½ hours	15% of the total A Level mark
20 objective test questions + 1 essay A2 Subject Content Module 5 Science, Mathematics and Technology	
<b>Unit 6</b>	
1½ hours	20% of the total A Level mark
Questions based on source material + 1 essay A2 Subject Content Module 6 Society, Politics and the Economy	

Advanced Award
6761



## 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	A Level
<b>January</b>	1, 2 and 3	4, 5 and 6	✓	✓
<b>June</b>	1, 2 and 3	4, 5 and 6	✓	✓

### 3.2 Sequencing of Units

Candidates are advised to follow the sequencing of units shown below:

AS

1 and 2 → 3W or 3C

A2

4 and 5 → 6

### 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 - GSA1	Unit 4 - GA4F/G/S/E
Unit 2 - GSA2	Unit 5 - GSA5
Unit 3W - GA3W	Unit 6 - GSA6
Unit 3C - GA3C	

The **Subject Code** for entry to the AS only award is 5761.

The **Subject Code** for entry to the Advanced Level award is 6761.

### 3.4 Classification Codes

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 7810.

### 3.5 Private Candidates

This specification is available to private candidates who wish to take the written unit option (AS Unit 3W). Entries for the coursework unit (AS Unit 3C) 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, AEA, VCE, GCSE, GNVQ, Entry Level & Key Skills*

This document can be viewed via the AQA web site ([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 the medium of English only.

# Scheme of Assessment

## 4

### Introduction

This GCE General Studies specification complies with:

- (a) the Subject Criteria for General Studies;
- (b) the GCSE, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA Code of Practice 2006/7;
- (c) the GCE Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level Qualifications-Specific Criteria;
- (d) the arrangements for the Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: Common Criteria.

This qualification is a recognised part of the National Qualifications framework. As such AS and A Level provide progression from Key Stage 4 through to post-16 studies and form the basis for entry to higher education or employment.

There are **two** AQA specifications in General Studies each offering a distinctive approach to the delivery and assessment of coherent and demanding courses of study and assessment in General Studies. A course in General Studies requires candidates to demonstrate a breadth, as well as depth of knowledge and make connections between, and integrate ideas across, subject disciplines. It also aims to maintain and develop the range of knowledge and skills acquired during the years of compulsory education, to include interests and ideas not necessarily covered in the study of conventionally formulated specialist subjects, and to complement and bring greater variety to candidates' courses of study, thereby enhancing and broadening their curriculum.

**Specification A** takes a multidisciplinary approach to General Studies, to provide opportunities for examining questions, evaluating evidence and making judgements from a broader standpoint than that of a single discipline. Content is organised into the three discrete areas of Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities; Science, Maths and Technology; Society, Politics and the Economy. These allow students to broaden their knowledge and understanding by means of reinforcing and enhancing the disciplines already being delivered through their main courses of study. The six-unit assessment structure of the specification corresponds to the content structure and provides a framework for the core knowledge and understanding defined in the Subject Criteria. Assessment will be through structured writing, objective test questions, source evaluation exercises, essays and optional coursework. Aspects of Application of Number will be covered in sections on Mathematical Reasoning and Spatial/Mechanical Relations. In addition, the specification

will assess competence in Modern Foreign Languages. Thinking and analytical skills will be demonstrated through the comprehension and interpretation of data (both written and numerical), the construction of arguments and drawing of conclusions, and their coherent presentation in a suitable format. Synoptic assessment is addressed through a case-study exercise involving pre-release material based upon an issue rooted in Society, Politics and the Economy but drawing upon knowledge, understanding and skills from the other two discrete content areas.

**Specification B** takes an interdisciplinary approach to General Studies, providing opportunities for examining questions, evaluating evidence, and making judgements from a broader standpoint than that of a single discipline. The interdisciplinary nature of this specification is expressed in its thematic structure. The broad Themes, and their interrelated areas of study, supply a framework for the core knowledge and understanding defined in the Subject Criteria. They call for the exercise of critical thinking and analytical skills in the interpretation of text, and of graphical data; in the solving of problems; and in the presentation of arguments and conclusions in a clear, coherent and appropriate form.

The emphasis throughout a course of study based on this specification should be on exploring the human condition in general; on evaluating relationships and moral responsibilities in society; and on a consideration of the cultural context in which beliefs and values evolve.

Assessment will be through a variety of tasks including data response, problem solving exercises, short answer responses and essay writing. Synoptic assessment is addressed in Unit 6 through questions on source material which draw together knowledge and skills developed throughout the course, as well as making connections between the Themes studied.

There are no prerequisites in terms of stipulated attainments in specific subjects.

Prior level of attainment  
and recommended prior  
learning

## 5

## Aims

This AS and A level specification should encourage candidates to:

- a. develop a greater awareness of human knowledge, understanding and behaviour;
- b. integrate knowledge from a range of disciplines in order to develop a synoptic view of how they relate to one another and how each may contribute to the understanding of issues being studied;
- c. appreciate that there are various ways of interpreting different types of information and assess the relative merits of evidence in order to understand such concepts as objectivity, neutrality and bias;
- d. think critically, logically and constructively about significant problems, acquire an appreciation of the strengths and limitations of different approaches and demonstrate an ability to justify their own;
- e. develop a critical awareness and understanding of perennial and contemporary issues and develop a greater awareness of their historical and contemporary contexts in order to enhance skills of evaluation;
- f. communicate with coherence and clarity in an appropriate format.

## 6

## Assessment Objectives

The assessment objectives for AS and A level are the same:

- A01** demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of issues, using skills from different disciplines
- A02** communicate clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and relevant way
- A03** marshal evidence and draw conclusions; select, interpret, evaluate and integrate information, data, concepts and opinions
- A04** demonstrate understanding of different types of knowledge and of the relationship between them, appreciating their limitations.

### 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 2.

# 7

## Scheme of Assessment – Advanced Subsidiary (AS)

The Scheme of Assessment has a modular structure. The Advanced Subsidiary (AS) award comprises two compulsory assessment units (1 and 2) and one optional unit from units 3W or 3C.

### 7.1 Assessment Units

<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>OTQ/Written Paper</b>	<b>1¼ hours</b>
<b>33⅓% of the total AS marks</b>	<b>50 marks</b>	

Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities

This unit assesses Module 1 of the AS Subject Content. It consists of an objective test component (Question 1) and a structured writing component (Question 2).

#### *Question 1*

- material for comprehension, analysis and evaluation in objective test format drawn from one or more of the topic areas in AS Module 1
- assessing candidates' ability to identify themes and arguments; to recognise and distinguish between explicit and implicit statements, inferences, assumptions and conclusions; perception of the nature and use of language, style, references, illustration and justification; grasp of interrelationships of ideas, organisational structure, overall meaning and validity of argument

#### *Question 2*

- structured questions requiring written responses and based on the subject matter of the Question 1 material
- assessing candidates' abilities to summarise and comment on ideas, arguments and issues, using their own words and presenting their own opinions and judgements.

<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>OTQ</b>	<b>1¼ hours</b>
<i>33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> % of the total AS marks</i>	<b>50 marks</b>	

Science, Mathematics and Technology

This unit assesses Module 2 of the AS Subject Content. It consists of two objective test components.

*Question 1*

- material for comprehension, analysis and evaluation in objective test format drawn from one or more of the topic areas in AS Module 2
- assessing candidates' ability to understand scientific principles and information, and grasp of ideas, implications and validity of argument

*Question 2*

- problems for solution in objective test format
- assessing candidates' ability to carry out multi-stage calculations to do with: (a) amounts and sizes, (b) scales and proportion, (c) handling statistics, (d) rearranging and using formulae (as specified in N3.2 of Part B of Key Skills: Application of Number Level 3)

**EITHER**

<b>Unit 3W</b>	<b>Written Paper</b>	<b>1¼ hours</b>
<i>33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> % of the total AS marks</i>	<b>50 marks</b>	

Society, Politics and the Economy

This unit assesses Module 3 of the AS Subject Content. It consists of a single structured writing component.

**Source Analysis**

- a collection of short extracts presented to candidates in the examination on a topic drawn from one of the topic areas in AS Module 3
- assessing candidates' abilities to compare and evaluate the nature and origins of the sources and the ideas and arguments contained within them, and to make judgements about their validity.

**OR**

<b>Unit 3C</b>	<b>Coursework</b>	
<i>33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> % of the total AS marks</i>	<b>50 marks</b>	

Society, Politics and the Economy

This unit assesses Module 3 of the AS Subject Content. Candidates will be required to submit one assignment of approximately **1500 words**, based on a topic area within AS Module 3 and targeting the same skills as Unit 3W, by means of selected documentary evidence.

**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	3W/3C	
AO1 demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of issues, using skills from different disciplines	11	15	9	35
AO2 communicate clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and relevant way	3		7	10
AO3 marshal evidence and draw conclusions, select interpret, evaluate and integrate information, data, concepts and opinions	13	13	9	35
AO4 demonstrate understanding of different types of knowledge and of the relationship between them, appreciating their limitations.	6	5	9	20
<b>Overall Weighting of Units (%)</b>	33	33	33	100

## 8

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

The Scheme of Assessment has a modular structure. The A Level award comprises two compulsory assessment units from the AS Scheme of Assessment (1 and 2); one optional AS unit from either Units 3W or 3C; two compulsory assessment units from the A2 Scheme of Assessment (5 and 6) and one optional A2 unit from either Unit 4 MFL or Unit 4 European Culture.

### 8.1 AS Assessment Units

Unit 1	OTQ/Written Paper	1¼ hours
16 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> % of the total A Level marks	50 marks	

Unit 2	OTQ	1¼ hours
16 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> % of the total A Level marks	50 marks	

Unit 3W	Written Paper	1¼ hours
16 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> % of the total A Level marks	50 marks	

Unit 3C	Coursework	
16 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> % of the total A Level marks	50 marks	

### 8.2 A2 Assessment Units

Unit 4 MFL	OTQ/Written Paper	1½ hours
15% of the total A Level marks	45 marks	

Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities

This unit assesses Module 4 of the A level Subject Content. It consists of objective test questions on foreign language material (Question 1) and an essay question (Question 2).

*Question 1*

#### Foreign language

- Material for comprehension in a foreign language drawn from authentic sources in **French, German and Spanish** and relating to contemporary topic areas; questions are in objective test format.
- Candidates will be required to select **one** of these three foreign language alternatives.
- The subject content used as the basis for the selection of extracts will be drawn from the five Areas of Experience and Topics common to all GCSE Modern Foreign Language syllabuses:

*Everyday activities*  
*Personal and social life*  
*The world around us*  
*The world of work*  
*The international world.*

There will not necessarily be a uniform coverage of the topic areas across all three foreign language alternatives.

- All questions will be in English and a list translating difficult vocabulary which is needed will be appended to the extracts used. Such lists will **not** include: (i) any word from the AQA GCSE modern foreign language specified vocabulary lists for the language concerned; (ii) any word given in English in one of the questions; (iii) any obvious cognates; (iv) any word not directly needed for answering a question.

*Question 2*

**Essay**

- Candidates will be required to answer **one** question from a choice of six drawn from each of the main themes and topics indicated in A2 Module 4. The response should be written in English.
- Candidates will be assessed on their abilities to analyse the question, conduct arguments and justify opinions with appropriate knowledge and illustrations, synthesise and communicate ideas, make overall judgements and draw valid conclusions.

OR

Unit 4 European Culture

15% of the total A Level marks

OTQ/Written Paper 1½ hours

55 marks

Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities

This unit assesses Module 4 of the A level Subject Content. It consists of objective test questions on Themes in European Culture (Question 1) and an essay question (Question 2).

*Question 1*

**European Culture**

- Three passages based on themes in European Culture to test ability to marshal evidence, draw conclusions, select, interpret, evaluate and integrate information, data concepts and opinions (AO3)

plus

wider knowledge and understanding of the *Themes in European Culture* subject content (AO1).

All questions are in objective test format.

- Each passage will focus on issues related to at least one of the themes indicated in the subject content.
- Passages and AO3 questions may refer to any country in Europe (for the purposes of this specification Russia is included in Europe)
- AO1 questions will be restricted to testing knowledge and

understanding of the subject content as evidenced in the United Kingdom, France, Germany or Spain.

The marks for this section will be scaled to ensure that the contribution of Question 1 to the unit 4 total is identical to the unit 4 MFL alternatives.

### *Question 2*

#### **Essay**

- Candidates will be required to answer **one** question from a choice of six drawn from each of the main themes and topics indicated in A2 Module 4, Question 2. The essay questions will be identical to those set for the MFL alternatives.
- Candidates will be assessed on their abilities to analyse the question, conduct arguments and justify opinions with appropriate knowledge and illustrations, synthesise and communicate ideas, make overall judgements and draw valid conclusions.

Unit 5	OTQ/Written Paper	1½ hours
15% of the total A Level marks	45 marks	

#### Science, Mathematics and Technology

This unit assesses Module 5 of the A level Subject Content. It consists of material requiring appreciation of spatial relations and mechanical relations assessed by objective test questions (Question 1), and an essay question (Question 2).

### *Question 1*

#### **Spatial and mechanical relations**

- Separate spatial relations **and** mechanical relations exercises will be included in each test in objective test format.
- Examples of this type of material used as a basis for questions in the recent past include:
  - spatial*      reflex camera, aeroplane flight, printing press, Wainwright Lake District field sketches;
  - mechanical*   sewing machine, canals, house plans, juke box.
- Extracts and diagrams are provided in the examination for comprehension and reference; detailed prior knowledge of particular instances and examples is not required.

### *Question 2*

#### **Science and technology essay**

- Candidates will be required to answer **one** question from a choice of six drawn from each of the main themes and topics indicated in A2 Module 5.
- Candidates will be assessed on their abilities to analyse the question, conduct arguments and justify opinions with appropriate scientific knowledge and illustrations, synthesise and communicate ideas, make overall judgements and draw valid

conclusions.

Unit 6 <i>20% of the total A Level marks</i>	Written Paper 60 marks	1½ hours
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Society, Politics and the Economy

This unit assesses Module 6 of the A level Subject Content. It consists of a case study exercise with structured questions requiring extended writing, followed by an essay question.

**Case Study**

- A collection of wide-ranging stimulus material on a major issue drawn from one of the subject areas in A2 Module 6, but also including links with issues and considerations common to the other two Subject Content areas (A2 Modules 4 and 5), including data and statistics. The material will be provided in advance of the examination for study and analysis in preparation for both short and extended written responses to questions in the examination.
- Candidates will be required to show their understanding of the detail of the material and be able to summarise the points and arguments contained within the extracts; to recognise the connections between the different elements of the subject concerned; and to exercise their own judgements on the nature of the problems presented. Questions relating to the statistical data within the material will assess candidates' ability to handle statistics and appreciate their use in the context of a broader issue

**Essay question.**

- Candidates will be required to answer **one** question from a choice of four drawn from the main themes and topics indicated in A2 Module 6.

Candidates will be assessed on their abilities to analyse the question, conduct arguments and justify opinions with appropriate knowledge and illustrations, synthesise and communicate ideas, make overall judgements and draw valid conclusions.

**8.3 Synoptic Assessment**

The Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level Criteria state that A Level specifications must include synoptic assessment representing 20% of the total A Level marks.

Unit 6 assesses candidates' ability to integrate skills and knowledge from the viewpoint of a range of disciplines.

#### 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.

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)						Overall Weighting of AOs (%)
	1	2	3W/3C	4MFL/EC	5	6	
AO1	5	8	4	5	4	3	29
AO2	2		3	2	2	4	12
AO3	7	7	4	6	8	6	36
AO4	3	2	5	2	2	8	23
<b>Overall Weighting of Units (%)</b>	16.6	16.6	16.6	15	15	20	<b>100</b>

## Subject Content

### 9

## Summary of Subject Content

#### 9.1 All Modules

#### Thinking and Analytical Skills

Understanding the nature of knowledge, truth and belief and the distinctions between them

Appreciating the similarities and differences between different kinds of knowledge

Analysis of information, data, ideas, opinions and arguments

Evaluation and use of the above to examine questions, make judgements, form values and present arguments

Use of language, logic and argument

#### 9.2 AS Modules

#### MODULE 1 - Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities

Beliefs, values and moral reasoning

Religious belief and experience, and connections between them

Understanding and appreciation of the nature and importance of culture

Creativity and innovation

Aesthetic evaluation

Media and communication

## MODULE 2 - Science, Mathematics and Technology

Characteristics of the sciences (physical, life and earth)

Nature of scientific objectivity and the question of progress

Understanding of scientific methods, principles, criteria and their application

Moral responsibility: the social, ethical and environmental implications of scientific discoveries and technological development

Relationship between technology, science, culture (past and/or present) and ideology

Mathematical reasoning and its application

## MODULE 3 - Society, Politics and the Economy

Examination and appreciation of ideologies and values in society

Political processes and goals

Nature of objectivity in social sciences: explanation and evaluation of human behaviour

Relationship between law, culture and ethics

Social and economic trends and constraints

### 9.3 A2 Modules

## MODULE 4 - Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities

Beliefs, values and moral reasoning

Religious belief and experience, and connections between them

Understanding and appreciation of the nature and importance of culture

Creativity and innovation

Aesthetic evaluation

Media and communication

Plus either Foreign language comprehension

or Themes in European Culture

## MODULE 5 - Science, Mathematics and Technology

Characteristics of the sciences (physical, life and earth)

Nature of scientific objectivity and the question of progress

Understanding of scientific methods, principles, criteria and their application

Moral responsibility: the social, ethical and environmental implications of scientific discoveries and technological development

Relationship between technology, science, culture (past and/or present) and ideology

Spatial and mechanical relations

**MODULE 6 - Society, Politics and the Economy**

Examination and appreciation of ideologies and values in society

Political processes and goals

Nature of objectivity in social sciences: explanation and evaluation of human behaviour

Relationship between law, culture and ethics

Social and economic trends and constraints

**9.4 Rationale**

The following Subject Content Sections, 10 – 13 for AS General Studies and 14 – 18 for A2 General Studies, are based on the national Subject Criteria for General Studies agreed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and Unitary Awarding Bodies, and are designed to develop core knowledge, understanding, and thinking and analytical skills in a broad range of contexts.

At AS level the topics selected are intended to represent a broad spectrum of the generally accepted issues and developments of major interest and concern to contemporary society and the processes by which such issues may be better understood and addressed.

At A level the range and depth of the topics have been increased to present a greater challenge to candidates through the greater variety of contexts and issues encountered, the wider range of links and connections that can be made, and the increased complexity of the concepts dealt with.

Further amplification of the topics is contained in the Support Material including additional guidance on the detailed contents and on teaching/resourcing identified parts of the specification, as well as appropriate study resources/reading lists for each of the main subject areas. This also includes further guidance on opportunities to develop and demonstrate achievement in Key Skills in the teaching of the specification.

10

## All AS Modules

### *Thinking and Analytical Skills*

---

- |      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| 10.1 | Understanding the nature of knowledge, truth and belief and the distinctions between them                | Examination of the way concepts such as knowledge, truth and belief are used, and the development of the ability to draw distinctions between them. Understanding what constitutes ‘proof’.  |
| 10.2 | Appreciating the similarities and differences between different kinds of knowledge                       | Examination of the similarities and differences between the arts, sciences and social sciences and the understanding gained from these; methods and processes of study of different disciplines.   |
| 10.3 | Analysis of information, data, ideas, opinions and arguments   | Exploration of sources of knowledge and information, methods of research, how information is collected and analysed; the differences between facts and opinions.   |
| 10.4 | Evaluation and use of the above to examine questions, make judgements, form values and present arguments | Development of the ability to assess the validity and reliability of data and information; to appreciate the nature of objectivity and subjectivity, to recognise bias; to understand arguments, draw conclusions and to present a case. |
| 10.5 | Use of language, logic and argument  | Development of the ability to distinguish between deductive and inductive reasoning, and arguments based on cause, authority and analogy; to recognise fallacy and unsound arguments; and understanding the use of syllogisms.           |

# AS Module 1

## *Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities*

11.1 Beliefs, values and moral reasoning	Role and importance of religious and value systems; features and tenets of the major world religions.
Religious belief and experience and connections between them	Differences of opinion about beliefs and values; tolerance; the place of religious and moral education.  Viewpoints on moral issues; bases for moral and value judgements; religious and secular sides of moral arguments.
11.2 Understanding and appreciation of the nature and importance of culture	Cultural values and the differences and similarities between people and cultures; nature and use of language.
Creativity and innovation	The role of artists, their contribution to society and interaction with their audiences; benefits of participation in the arts; the place and value of the arts in education.  Art works and important practitioners of the major artistic movements; major examples of artistic achievement.
11.3 Aesthetic evaluation	Personal response to the arts and appreciation of a variety of forms using appropriate critical language; criteria for judging live or recorded performances.
Media and communication	Processes and effects of the media and communication industries; similarities and differences between various media and between popular culture and 'high' art in entertainment; control and censorship.

12

## AS Module 2

### *Science, Mathematics and Technology*

- 
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 12.1 Characteristics of the sciences (physical, life and earth) | An outline of the nature, and ideas on the origins, of the universe, space and matter; natural forces and sources and forms of energy; the earth's resources.<br><br>The concept of life; factors that have shaped human progress; the influence of scientific applications on the quality of human life. |
|---|---|
- 
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 12.2 Nature of scientific objectivity and the question of progress              | The history and development of important aspects of science; the ideas of eminent scientists; recent developments in communications technology and transport systems. |
| Understanding of scientific methods, principles, criteria and their application | The nature of scientific investigation; design and analysis of scientific investigations; design, manufacture and use of commonplace equipment.                       |
- 
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 12.3 Moral responsibility: the social, ethical and environmental implications of scientific discoveries and technological development | The moral responsibilities of scientists, technologists, industrialists and others; evaluating the implications of new inventions, developments and techniques, and decisions to put them into practice; ethical considerations. |
|---|--|
- 
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 12.4 Relationship between technology, science, culture (past and/or present) and ideology | The contributions of science and technology to civilised societies; effects of industry on ecological systems; consumption of the earth's resources; pollution and methods of waste disposal; the protection and conservation of the environment. |
|---|---|
- 
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 12.5 Mathematical reasoning and its application | Simple functions and their graphs. Exponential growth and decay. Pythagoras' theorem and trigonometry. Perimeter, area and volume. Algebraic expressions, formulae and solutions of equations. Describe patterns and make deductions.<br>Number, common measures and conversions.<br>Statistical measures and diagrams, probability, networks. |
|---|--|
-

13

## AS Module 3

### *Society, Politics and the Economy*

13.1 Examination and appreciation of ideologies and values in society	Factors which affect the interaction of individuals with society as a whole: freedoms and restrictions; rights and responsibilities; equality of opportunity; the law and judiciary.
13.2 Political processes and goals	Political systems: constitutional government in the UK; the monarchy. Processes and powers of local, regional, national and supranational government systems and electoral procedures (from local politics through to the EU); main policies of the major UK political parties; citizenship and rights and responsibilities of the individual within a political context.  Key historical events and figures and their relationship to current issues.
13.3 The nature of objectivity in social sciences: explanation and evaluation of human behaviour	Characteristics of human and social behaviour and approaches to social studies: issues such as crime and punishment and its political context; the changing role of the family; the provision of social welfare and health services; class, gender, race and disability; education.
13.4 Relationship between law, culture and ethics	Aspects of social interaction at personal, local, national and international levels; values and ethical issues in such areas as politics, business and medicine; international relations; standards in public life, environmental concerns, genetic engineering, medical advances.
13.5 Social and economic trends and constraints	Economic issues on a national and international scale; the workings of business, commerce and industry; impact of economic issues on society and the environment; employment and poverty.  Different stages of economic development: other countries and their geography, resources, populations, systems of government, cultures, technologies and industry.

14

## All A2 Modules

### *Thinking and Analytical Skills*

- 
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 14.1 Understanding the nature of knowledge, truth and belief and the distinctions between them                | Examination of the way concepts such as knowledge, truth and belief are used, and the development of the ability to draw distinctions between them. Understanding what constitutes ‘proof’. <i>Appreciating the kinds of knowledge possible and their limitations.</i>   |
| <hr/>   |  |
| 14.2 Appreciating the similarities and differences between different kinds of knowledge                       | Examination of the similarities and differences between the arts, sciences and social sciences and the understanding gained from these; methods and processes of study of different disciplines. <i>Understanding that one mode of analysis or branch of knowledge may provide an incomplete picture of a problem.</i> |
| <hr/>   |  |
| 14.3 Analysis of information, data, ideas, opinions and arguments   | Exploration of sources of knowledge and information, methods of research, how information is collected and analysed; the differences between facts and opinions. <i>Appreciating the differences between quantitative and qualitative data.</i>  |
| <hr/>   |  |
| 14.4 Evaluation and use of the above to examine questions, make judgements, form values and present arguments | Development of the ability to assess the validity and reliability of data and information; to appreciate the nature of objectivity and subjectivity, to recognise bias; to understand arguments, draw conclusions and to present a case. <i>Appreciating how values can influence judgements.</i>                      |
| <hr/>   |  |
| 14.5 Use of language, logic and argument  | Development of the ability to distinguish between deductive and inductive reasoning, and arguments based on cause, authority and analogy; to recognise fallacy and unsound arguments; and understanding the use of syllogisms. <i>Appreciating how use of language affects meaning.</i>                                |
- 

NB Statements in italics indicate extensions for A2 beyond AS

15

## A2 Module 4 Question 1

### *Themes in European Culture*

The following themes should be studied in the context of the period 1900 to the present day.

#### 15.1 The changing face of Europe

##### a. **The emergence of a European identity.**

The emergence and effect of totalitarianism after World War I, the impact and decline of communism, and the creation and expansion of the European Union. Candidates should have an understanding of the ideas behind these developments and their cultural implications for Europe.

##### b. **The influence of other cultures on Europe**

The changing nature of European culture. Candidates should have an understanding of the impact on European culture of the USA and globalisation, and the effects of immigration from other parts of the world.

#### 15.2 The changing influence of religion

##### a. **The changing role of religion in defining European values and standards**

The growth of secularism and the changing role of established religion. Candidates should have an understanding of the role of Christianity in forming the traditional cultural and legal frameworks of European countries, and how its influence has diminished in recent years.

##### b. **Moral and ethical issues arising from conflict between religious belief, secular authority and contemporary mores**

Contemporary moral and ethical issues are subject to a wide variety of opinion. The focus of debate should be on the conflicting views expressed by different political, religious and social groups on contemporary issues, for example, abortion, euthanasia, sexual and public mores.

#### 15.3 Aspects of artistic innovation

##### a. **The move to abstraction**

Candidates should be aware of major European artistic developments of the early part of the twentieth century, concentrating on the following areas

- Expressionism
- Cubism
- Surrealism

and developments in abstract art in general.

15.4 The arts and the transmission of ideas

**b. The avant-garde**

The changing nature of art in the period since the 1960s. Candidates should have an understanding of the expanding boundaries of art and an appreciation of the criteria by which art can be evaluated, including some knowledge of the British avant-garde and its major exponents.

**a. The use of the arts in advertising and propaganda**

Candidates should have an understanding of the power of art, film and music to convey a message and an awareness of the use of propaganda in European totalitarian regimes and in Britain during the two World Wars.

**b. Control and censorship of the arts and media**

The importance of freedom of expression and the tensions that can exist between such freedom and the concerns of others, such as issues of national security, privacy, good taste and religious sensibilities.

16

## A2 Module 4 Question 2

### Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities

#### 16.1 Beliefs, values and moral reasoning

Religious belief and experience and connections between them

Role and importance of religious and value systems; features and tenets of the major world religions; *spiritual experience and religious belief manifest through works of art.*

Differences of opinion about beliefs and values; *the dilemmas and complexity of a multi-faith and pluralist society*; tolerance; *the process and problems of changing and developing morality*; *the relationship between religion and the state*; the place of religious and moral education.

Viewpoints on moral issues; bases for moral and value judgements; religious and secular sides of moral arguments; *philosophical, moral and ethical problems faced by society and individuals.*

#### 16.2 Understanding and appreciation of the nature and importance of culture

Creativity and innovation

Cultural values and the differences and similarities between people and cultures; nature and use of *English and a foreign language.*

*Human creative impulse and its processes*; *the role of art and design in society, the structure of art forms and genres and how their meanings are communicated*; benefits of participation in the arts; the place and value of the arts in education.

The role of artists, their contribution to society and interaction with their audiences; *the role and responsibility of critics, patrons, sponsors and governments*; *issues of taste, judgement, morality and the law in the evaluation of art and protection of the public.*

Art works and important practitioners of the major artistic movements; *the development of artistic styles and movements within and across art forms*; major examples of artistic achievement *from a range of cultures and times, including modern movements.*

#### 16.3 Aesthetic evaluation

Media and communication

Personal response to the arts and appreciation of a variety of forms using appropriate critical language; *the intentions of artists and their success in communicating these*; *the arts as a means of personal expression and the benefits and problems of participation in artistic endeavour*; criteria for judging live or recorded performances. *Art works in the context of the period in which they were created and the criteria by which art can be evaluated.*

Similarities and differences between various media and between popular culture and ‘high’ art in entertainment.

Processes and effects of the media and communication industries; *how information is presented and the power of language and images to transmit, persuade or distort*; *control and censorship*; *the creation of wealth and exercise of power in the media and communication industries.*

## A2 Module 5

### Science, Mathematics and Technology

17.1 Characteristics of the sciences (physical, life and earth)

*The scientific cycle and the nature of hypothesis, theory and law.*

An outline of the nature, and ideas on the origins, of the universe, space and matter; natural forces and sources and forms of energy; *the origin, extraction, processing, storage and distribution of the earth's resources.*

The concept of life; factors that have shaped human progress; the influence of scientific applications on the quality of human life: *developments in genetics and biotechnology, agriculture, food production and conservation; health, fitness, and balanced diets; hygiene, disease and everyday medical matters; birth control; the use and abuse of drugs, including alcohol.*

17.2 Nature of scientific objectivity and the question of progress

The history and development of important aspects of science; the ideas of eminent scientists; recent developments in *information and communications technology and transport systems set in a relevant context.*

Understanding of scientific methods, principles, criteria and their application

The nature of scientific investigation; design and analysis of scientific investigations; design, manufacture and use of commonplace equipment *and explanation of underlying scientific principles.*

17.3 Moral responsibility: the social, ethical and environmental implications of scientific discoveries and technological development

The moral responsibilities of scientists, technologists, industrialists and others; evaluating the implications of new inventions, developments and techniques, and decisions to put them into practice; ethical considerations.

17.4 Relationships between technology, science, culture (past and/or present) and ideology

The contributions of science to civilised societies; effects of industry on ecological systems; consumption of the earth's resources; pollution and methods of waste disposal; the protection and conservation of the environment.

*Correlations and conflicts between science and religion.*

17.5 Spatial and mechanical relations

*Two-and-three dimensional visualisations and moving between them (e.g. maps, weather charts, geometrical drawings, plans and elevations, perspective views and photographs).*

*Relationships between moving parts in mechanical and electrical devices (e.g. levers, gears, pulleys and simple machines); practical problem solving.*

## A2 Module 6

### *Society, Politics and the Economy – Synoptic Module*

- 
- 18.1 Examination and appreciation of ideologies and values in society
- Factors which affect the interaction of individuals with society as a whole: freedoms and restrictions; rights and responsibilities; equality of opportunity; the law and judiciary; *the relationship between civil law and religious belief.*
- 
- 18.2 Political processes and goals
- Political systems and *philosophies: the nature, processes, problems and responsibilities of a democracy*; constitutional government in Britain and other countries; the monarchy. Processes and powers of local, regional, national and supranational government systems and electoral procedures (from local politics through to the EU); main policies of the major UK political parties; citizenship and rights and responsibilities of the individual within a political context.
- Key historical events and figures and their relationship to current issues; *nature, power and political role of the news media.*
- 
- 18.3 The nature of objectivity in social sciences: explanation and evaluation of human behaviour
- Characteristics of human and social behaviour; *how we understand and evaluate people and problems. Social studies and sociological methods*: issues such as crime and punishment and its political context; the changing role of the family; the provision of social welfare and health services; *changing attitudes towards benefit systems; the treatment of disadvantaged groups*; class, gender, race and disability; education.
- 
- 18.4 Relationship between law, culture and ethics
- Aspects of social interaction at personal, local, national and international levels; values and ethical issues in such areas as politics, business and medicine: international relations; standards in public life, environmental concerns, genetic engineering, medical advances.
- 
- 18.5 Social and economic trends and constraints
- Economic issues on a national and international scale; the workings of business, commerce and industry; impact of economic issues on society and the environment; *the creation and distribution of wealth; protection and free trade*; employment and poverty.
- Different stages of economic development: other countries and their geography, resources, populations, systems of government, cultures, technologies and industry. *Nature, effects of, and approaches to, solving world problems and trouble spots; co-operation and intervention; international agencies.*
-

## Key Skills and Other Issues

19

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

## 19.1 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 can be downloaded from the QCA Website ([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 General Studies A can be offered opportunities to develop and generate evidence of attainment in aspects of all of the Key Skills. 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 specification support material.

## 19.2 Key Skills Opportunities in General Studies A

The broad and multi-disciplinary nature of General Studies A, that calls upon candidates’ abilities to demonstrate the transferability of their knowledge, understanding and skills, make it an ideal vehicle to assist candidates to develop 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	3W	3C	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	3W	3C	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	3W	3C	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	3W	3C	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	3W	3C	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	3W	3C	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 this specification. There may be other opportunities to achieve these and other aspects of Key Skills, but these are dependent on the detailed course of study delivered within centres.

**19.3 Key Skills in the Assessment of General Studies A**

The ‘main’ Key Skills of *Communication* and *Application of Number* must contribute to the assessment of General Studies A. Aspects of *Communication* are an intrinsic part of Assessment Objective 2 and hence will form part of the assessment requirements for Units 1, 3W, 3C, 4, 5 and 6. Aspects of *Application of Number* will form an intrinsic part of the assessment requirements for Modules 2, 5 and 6.

**19.4 Further Guidance**

More specific guidance and examples of tasks that can provide evidence of single Key Skills or composite tasks that can provide evidence of more than one Key Skill are given in the AQA specification support material.

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

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

A General Studies course can contribute to a candidate's understanding of this wide range of issues, within which there are necessarily many connections. It is the essence of General Studies to illuminate these connections between what in other contexts might be seen as discrete areas of subject content and sets of considerations. Opportunities to explore these issues occur particularly in:

- AS Module 1 - sections 11.1, 11.2
- AS Module 2 - sections 12.3, 12.4
- AS Module 3 - sections 13.1, 13.4
- A2 Module 4 - sections 15.1-15.4, 16.1, 16.2
- A2 Module 5 - sections 16.3, 16.4
- A2 Module 6 - sections 17.1, 17.4

### 20.2 European Dimension

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community in preparing this specification and associated specimen papers. Candidates will need to be aware of a European dimension in studying within modules concerning (i) Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities and (ii) Society, Politics and the Economy. They will need to focus specifically on a European context in preparing for the authentic source material used in the modern foreign language component in A2 Module 4.

### 20.3 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 papers. Candidates will need to consider environmental issues in preparing for AS Module 2 and A2 Module 5. Environmental considerations may also be integral to the material for examination in AS Module 3 and in A2 Module 6, and hence to candidates' preparation for these units.

### 20.4 Avoidance of Bias

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

## Centre-Assessed Component

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### Nature of Centre-Assessed Component

One assignment of approximately **1500 words**, based within one of the subject content areas in AS Module 3 – Society, Politics and the Economy, assessing candidates' ability to analyse a group of sources relating to the specific topic selected. As AS Unit 3C is available as an alternative to AS Unit 3W (and will assess the same skills – see para 22.1), the Unit 3C assignment should incorporate some element of comparability of selected source material, evaluation of the nature and origins of such material and of the ideas and arguments contained within them. Candidates should be encouraged to make judgements about the relative validity of their sources.

Coursework Advisers are available to assist centres with matters relating to coursework. Details will be provided once AQA has provisional information as to which centres are following this specification.

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### Guidance for Setting Centre-Assessed Component

The coverage of the coursework assignment should be determined in discussion between the teacher and the candidate, so as to meet the specification requirements regarding content and assessment objectives.

The specific title for the assignments should be framed within one of the following broadly defined topic areas, in relation to an aspect of the subject content of AS Module 3.

- Aspects of Freedom
- Town and Country
- The Changing Face of the World
- Problems and Solutions
- Quality of Life

## Assessment Criteria

### 23.1 Introduction

Assessment of the assignment in AS Unit 3C needs to target the identical range and weighting of Assessment Objectives as the examination for AS Unit 3W.

### 23.2 Criteria

Application :  
Basic 0-4

- Candidate demonstrates a basic awareness of the subject matter and some initiative in its collection.
- Candidate shows some awareness of relevant terminology and issues, demonstrating some ability to identify, select and organise relevant material.
- The work contained some inaccuracies and irrelevance which result in a less than adequate treatment of the topic.
- There is a tendency for the candidate to concentrate on a relatively limited field and not to introduce or develop potentially worthwhile aspects of the topic which could be interrelated from other subject disciplines.

Application :  
Substantial 5-9

- The candidate displays a good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter relevant to the assignment.
- The candidate selected relevant information with little difficulty although some sources remained unexplored.
- The work gives a clear elaboration of the topic but is marred by minor inaccuracies.
- The depth and breadth with which the topic is covered is variable.
- The candidate used appropriate terminology and the overall design is clear.

Application :  
Extensive 10-13

- There is clear demonstration of planning and organisation throughout.
- The structure of the work demonstrates clearly the ability to select and organise relevant material capable of sustaining evaluations and conclusions relevant to the study.
- The research was executed thoroughly with a clear display of initiative.
- The information was generated from a variety of sources
- The work contains information which is accurate, relevant and extensive.

Communication :  
Basic 0-3

- Use of language including spelling, punctuation and grammar is reasonably accurate.
- The material is not presented in an entirely clear manner and the most appropriate form of presentation may not have been selected.
- Conclusions are not always supported by the evidence presented and arguments are not always presented with clarity and coherence.

Communication :  
Substantial 4-7

- Use of language including spelling, punctuation and grammar is accurate and has sufficient fluency to convey ideas with clarity.
- The material is presented in a clear manner but the most appropriate form of presentation may not have been selected.
- The candidate demonstrates some ability to construct arguments with clarity and coherence.

Communication :  
Extensive 8-10

- Language including spelling, punctuation and grammar is accurate and used with facility enhancing the communication of ideas.
- The material is presented in a clear manner and the most appropriate form of presentation has been selected.
- The candidate clearly demonstrates the ability to construct arguments with clarity and coherence leading to reasoned conclusions.

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Interpretation and  
Evaluation :  
Basic 0-4

- There is little attempt at systematic presentation of the material in a manner that facilitates analysis and drawing of conclusions.
- The candidate shows some understanding of the subject matter selected and categories used for presenting the material show a basic knowledge and understanding of appropriate concepts.
- The work is largely one-dimensional with little or no account taken of relevant factors from other disciplines.

Interpretation and  
Evaluation :  
Substantial 5-9

- The candidate attempted to use ideas and concepts as a guide in selecting and using information but some possible avenues of investigation were missed.
- The candidate is familiar with aspects of the topic and the material is presented with a clear focus.
- The candidate demonstrates the ability to analyse and evaluate events, ideas and issues competently, but analysis is intermittent.
- The use of concepts is generally competent and an attempt is made to relate these to the evidence and the conclusions.
- The candidate demonstrates the ability to construct arguments with relevance, clarity and coherence leading to reasoned, if somewhat limited, conclusions.

Interpretation and  
Evaluation :  
Extensive 10-13

- Concepts and theories were used effectively as a framework within which the selection and use of information took place.
- The candidate covers the various aspects of the topic and provides a treatment which genuinely interrelates germane issues from other subject disciplines.
- The candidate demonstrates a full capacity to comprehend, synthesise and evaluate the relevance and accuracy of information in various forms and from various sources.
- The conclusions reached follow from the information presented and are fully justified by the evidence.

Discrimination and  
Discernment :  
Basic 0-4

- Some knowledge of concepts relevant to the topic is displayed.
- Little scope is demonstrated for discrimination between, and verification of, the information selected.
- Some attempt is made to relate the arguments to the evidence provided but there is little depth to the analysis and conclusions are superficial and unconvincing.
- Some basic comparisons and contrasts presented.

Discrimination and  
Discernment :  
Substantial 5-10

- The use of concepts is generally competent and an attempt is made to relate arguments and conclusions to the evidence presented.
- There is some awareness of the significance of interrelationships between aspects of the subject matter.
- The candidate separates evidence from opinion but only intermittently provides analogies, comparisons or contrasts drawing from other disciplines.

Discrimination and  
Discernment :  
Extensive 11-14

- The candidate demonstrates a sound appreciation of the importance of distinguishing evidence from opinion.
- Concepts are used to develop and evaluate arguments, draw conclusions and offer contrasting explanations or analyses.
- The candidate shows a capacity to evaluate events, ideas and issues and sees the significance of interrelationships in the context concerned.
- Relative merits of different categories of information are appreciated, a sense of perspective introduced and conclusions are fully reasoned.

23.3 Evidence to Support the Award of Marks

Teachers should keep records of their assessments during the course, in a form which facilitates the complete and accurate submission of the final assessments at the end of the course.

When the assessments are complete, the final marks awarded under each of the assessment criteria must be entered on the Candidate Record Form, with supporting information given in the spaces provided. A specimen Candidate Record Form appears as Appendix B.

The Candidate Record Form must be attached to the candidate's work.

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## 24

## Supervision and Authentication

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24.1 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.

24.2 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.

24.3 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.

24.4 Authentication of Candidates' Work

Both the candidate and the teacher are required to sign declarations confirming that the work submitted for assessment is the candidate's own. The teacher declares that the work was conducted under the specified conditions, and records details of any additional assistance.

## 25

## Standardisation

### 25.1 Standardisation 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.

### 25.2 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 the Centre Declaration Sheet, duly signed, to confirm 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.

## 26

## Administrative Procedures

### 26.1 Recording Assessments

The candidates' work must be marked according to the assessment criteria set out in Section 22.2. The marks and supporting information must be recorded in accordance with the instructions in Section 22.3. The completed Candidate Record Form from each candidate must be attached to the work and made available to AQA on request.

### 26.2 Submitting Marks and Sample Work for Moderation

The total component mark for each candidate must be submitted to AQA (by 15 May – June Series, 10 January – January series), as specified on the mark sheets provided by AQA or via Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). Centres will be informed which candidates' work is required in the samples to be submitted to the moderator.

### 26.3 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 stages of the assessments which have been missed.

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 by AQA and centres should ask for a copy of *Regulations and Guidance relating to Candidates with Particular Requirements*.

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.

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### 26.4 Retaining Evidence and Re—Using Marks

The centre must retain the work of all candidates, Candidate Record Forms attached, under secure conditions, from the time it is assessed, to allow for the possibility of an enquiry on a result. The work may be returned to candidates after the issue of results provided that no enquiry upon result is to be made which will include re-moderation of the coursework component. If an enquiry on a result is to be made, the work must remain under secure conditions until requested by AQA.

## Moderation

### 27.1 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 the specified date (15 May – June Series, 10 January – January series) in the year in which the qualification is 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.

### 27.2 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. The centre receives a report 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

### 28

## Grading, Shelf-Life and Re-Sits

### 28.1 Qualification Titles

The qualifications based on these specifications have the following titles:

AQA Advanced Subsidiary GCE in General Studies A;

AQA Advanced GCE in General Studies A.

### 28.2 Grading System

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.

Individual assessment unit results will be certificated.

### 28.3 Shelf-Life of Unit Results

The shelf-life of individual unit results, prior to the award of the qualification, is limited only by the shelf-life of the specification.

### 28.4 Assessment Unit Re-Sits

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. Candidates who wish to repeat an award must enter for at least one of the contributing units and also enter for certification (cash-in). There is no facility to decline an award once it has been issued.

### 28.5 Minimum Requirements

Candidates will be graded on the basis of work submitted for the award of the qualification. Zero marks rather than absent will be recorded where no mark for a component has been submitted.

### 28.6 Awarding and Reporting

This specification complies with the grading, awarding and certification requirements of the current GCSE, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA Code of Practice 2006/7 and will be revised in the light of any subsequent changes for future years.

# 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 demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a wide range of issues, drawing on different disciplines. There is evidence of a clear ability to inter-relate these issues in different contexts. They use their knowledge and understanding to interpret and evaluate information, communicating clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and relevant way. They are clearly able to reason, demonstrating skills of analysis, interpretation, evaluation and synthesis. They are able to appreciate different types of knowledge, the relationship between its different forms and their limitations.
- Grade C** Candidates demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of issues, drawing on different disciplines. There is a clear attempt to inter-relate these in different contexts. They use their knowledge and understanding to interpret and evaluate information, communicating clearly. They use skills of reasoning to analyse, interpret, evaluate and synthesise. They recognise that there are different types of knowledge, clearly distinguishing between examples of fact and opinion.
- Grade E** Candidates demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of issues, drawing on different disciplines. They use this knowledge and understanding to begin to interpret and evaluate information. They will distinguish between some examples of fact and opinion. They demonstrate some skills in organising and presenting information.

The Candidate Record Forms have been deleted from this specification because of changed requirements. The latest version of the forms are on the [Coursework Administration](#) pages of the Website.

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**C**

## Overlaps with other Qualifications

There are no explicit overlaps between General Studies A and other qualifications. By its very multi-disciplinary nature, however, a course in General Studies will involve candidates drawing from their experience of other qualifications and subjects, in particular in the areas mentioned in the General Studies Subject Criteria: Culture, Morality, Arts and Humanities; Science, Mathematics and Technology and Society, Politics and the Economy.