

**GCE Subject Level
Conditions and
Requirements for Sociology**

April 2014

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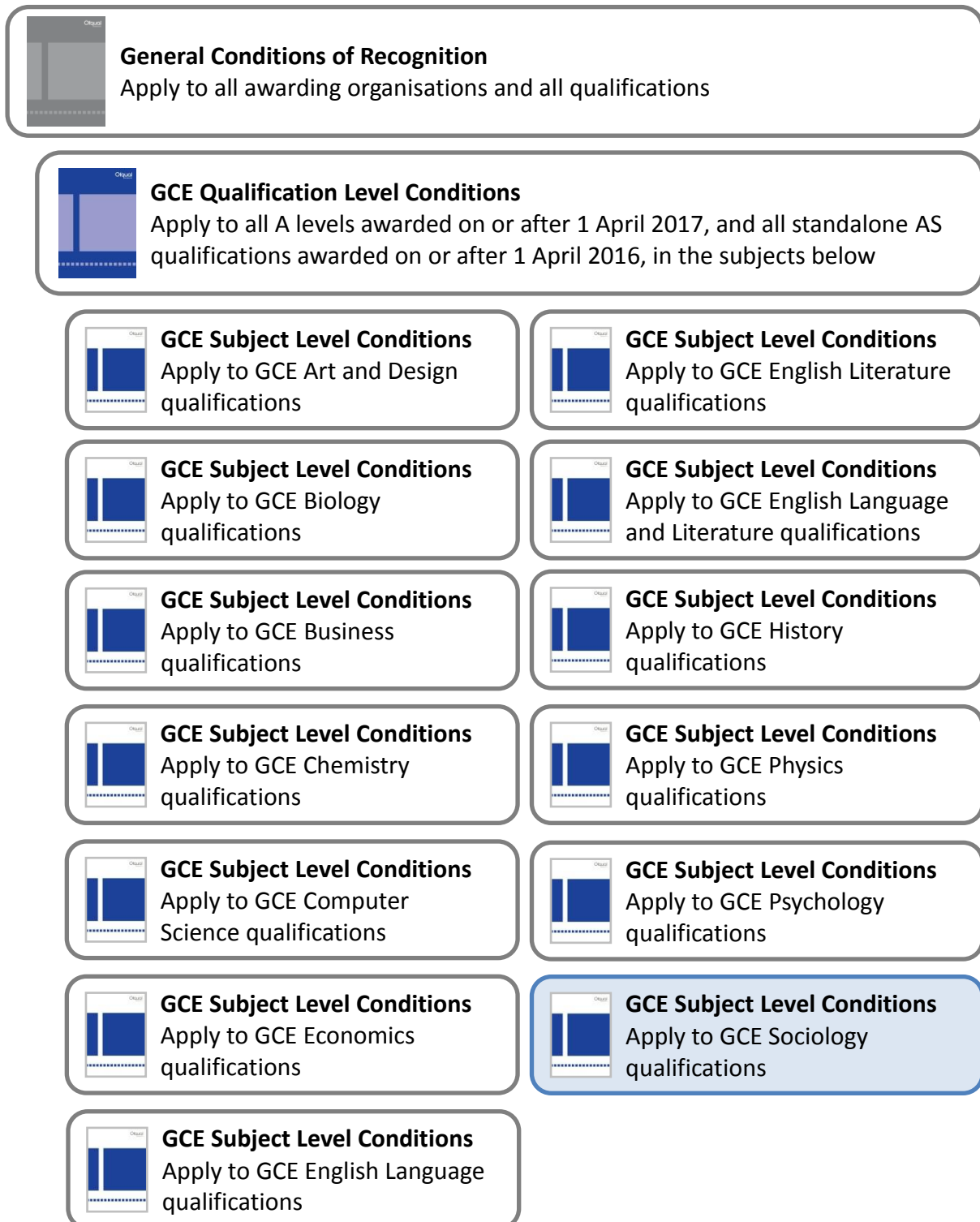
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Introduction

About this document

1. This document (highlighted in the figure below) is part of a suite of documents which sets out the regulatory requirements for awarding organisations offering GCE qualifications.



2. We have developed all our requirements for GCE qualifications with the intention that AS and A level qualifications should fulfil the purposes set out in the table below:

A levels	AS qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ define and assess achievement of the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be needed by students planning to progress to undergraduate study at a UK higher education establishment, particularly (although not only) in the same subject area; □ set out a robust and internationally comparable post-16 academic course of study to develop that knowledge, skills and understanding; □ permit UK universities to accurately identify the level of attainment of students; □ provide a basis for school and college accountability measures at age 18; and □ provide a benchmark of academic ability for employers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ provide evidence of students' achievements in a robust and internationally comparable post-16 course of study that is a sub-set of A level content; □ enable students to broaden the range of subjects they study.

Requirements set out in this document

3. This document sets out the GCE Subject Level Conditions for Sociology. These conditions will come into effect at 12.01am on Wednesday 9 April 2014 for the following qualifications:
- all GCE A levels in Sociology awarded on or after 1 April 2017; and
 - all standalone GCE AS qualifications in Sociology awarded on or after 1 April 2016.

4. It also sets out the assessment objectives for GCE Sociology. Awarding organisations must comply with these assessment objectives under Condition GCE(Sociology)1.2.
5. Appendix 1 reproduces the subject content requirements for Sociology, as published by the Department for Education. Awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCE(Sociology)1.1.
6. With respect to the qualifications listed in paragraph 3, awarding organisations must also comply with:
 - our *General Conditions of Recognition*,¹ which apply to all awarding organisations and qualifications; and
 - our *GCE Qualification Level Conditions*;² and
 - all relevant Regulatory Documents.
7. With respect to all other GCE qualifications in Sociology, awarding organisations must continue to comply with the General Conditions of Recognition, the *General Conditions of Recognition in respect of GCE Qualifications*,³ and the relevant Regulatory Documents.⁴

Summary of requirements

Subject Level Conditions	
GCE(Sociology)1	Compliance with content requirements

Assessment objectives
Assessment objectives – GCE AS and A level qualifications in Sociology

¹ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/general-conditions-of-recognition

² www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/gce-qualification-level-conditions

³ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/general-conditions-of-recognition-in-respect-of-gce-qualifications

⁴ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/list-of-additional-regulatory-documents

Appendix 1 – Subject content (published by Department for Education)

[GCE AS and A level Subject Content for Sociology](#)

Subject Level Conditions

GCE Subject Level Conditions for Sociology

Condition GCE(Sociology)1

Compliance with content requirements

- GCE(Sociology)1.1 In respect of each GCE Qualification in Sociology which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must –
- (a) comply with the requirements relating to that qualification set out in the document published by the Secretary of State entitled ‘GCE AS and A level subject content for sociology’, DFE-00365-2014,
 - (b) have regard to any recommendations or guidelines relating to that qualification set out in that document, and
 - (c) interpret that document in accordance with any requirements, and having regard to any guidance, which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.
- GCE(Sociology)1.2 In respect of each GCE Qualification in Sociology which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must comply with any requirements, and have regard to any guidance, relating to the objectives to be met by any assessment for that qualification which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.

Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives – GCE AS and A level qualifications in Sociology

Condition GCE(Sociology)1.2 allows us to specify requirements relating to the objectives to be met by any assessment for GCE qualifications in Sociology.

The assessment objectives set out below constitute requirements for the purposes of Condition GCE(Sociology)1.2. Awarding organisations must comply with these requirements in relation to all GCE AS and A level qualifications in Sociology they make available.

		<i>A level</i>	<i>AS</i>
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ sociological theories, concepts and evidence ■ sociological research methods 	35-45%	40-50%
AO2	Apply sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods to a range of issues	30-40%	30-35%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ present arguments ■ make judgements ■ draw conclusions 	20-30%	20-25%

Subject content (published by Department for Education)



GCE AS and A level subject content for sociology

Introduction

1. AS and A level subject content sets out the knowledge, understanding and skills common to all AS and A level specifications in sociology.

Aims and objectives

2. The study of A level sociology must focus on contemporary society. Studying sociology must foster the development of critical and reflective thinking with a respect for social diversity. It must provide an awareness of the importance of social structure and social action in explaining social issues. Students must be encouraged to develop their own sociological awareness through active engagement with the contemporary social world.

3. AS and A level specifications in sociology must encourage students to:

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

Subject content

4. AS and A level specifications in sociology must provide students with an awareness of social structure and social action which emphasises different interpretations of social experiences. The specifications must build on skills established at GCSE but must not exclude students studying sociology for the first time.

Knowledge and understanding

The nature of sociological thought

5. AS and A level specifications will require students to study the following concepts and theoretical issues:

- social order, social control

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

Methods of sociological enquiry

6. AS and A level specifications will require students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of methods and sources of data and to understand the relationship between theory and methods, particularly the way sociologists deal with:

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

Themes

7. AS and A level specifications will require students to study two themes:

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

8. The themes must be understood and applied to a range of particular substantive areas of sociology, in a global context where appropriate. However, these themes are to be interpreted broadly as threads running through many areas of social life and should not therefore necessarily be regarded as discrete topics. For example, the theme of 'socialisation, culture and identity' might be addressed through aspects of 'families' but equally through aspects of the 'the media' or 'youth culture'. Similarly, the theme of 'social differentiation, power and stratification' might be addressed through aspects of 'social class' but equally through aspects of 'gender'.

Skills

9. In order to demonstrate the skills outlined in this section, students must relate them to their sociological knowledge and understanding, as specified in sections 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Collection and recording of evidence*

10. AS and A level specifications will require students to demonstrate their ability to:

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

11. This could be achieved by students designing and conducting sociological investigation.

Interpretation and evaluation of evidence*

12. AS and A level specifications will require students to demonstrate their ability to:

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

Presentation of evidence* and argument

13. AS and A level specifications will require students to demonstrate their ability to:

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

Additional requirements

14. In addition, A level specifications will require students to demonstrate:

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

* The term evidence should be understood to include both primary and secondary sources, as well as both quantitative and qualitative data.

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