

CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for History (2021)

November 2020

ofqual

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Introduction

About this document

This document is part of a suite of documents which sets out the regulatory requirements for awarding organisations offering GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in 2021.

We have developed these requirements with the intention that GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) should fulfil the following purposes:

- to provide evidence of students' achievements against demanding and fulfilling content;
- to provide a strong foundation for further academic and vocational study and for employment; and
- to provide (if required) a basis for schools and colleges to be held accountable for the performance of all of their students.

Requirements set out in this document

This document sets out the GCSE Subject Level Conditions for History. These conditions will come into effect at 09:30 on 5 November 2020 for all GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in History for Learners completing the qualification in 2021, except where the QCCov Framework applies.

It also sets out our requirements in relation to:

- interpretation of the content document - an awarding organisation must comply with these requirements under Condition GCSE (History)1.1(c);
- assessment objectives. Awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCSE (History)1.2.

Appendix 1 reproduces the requirements in relation to [subject content for GCSE History](#), as published by the Department for Education. Awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCSE (History)1.1.

With respect to GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in History in 2021, awarding organisations must also comply with:

- our [General Conditions of Recognition](#), which apply to all awarding organisations and qualifications;
- our [GCSE Qualification Level Conditions](#); and
- all [relevant Regulatory Documents](#).

With respect to GCSE qualifications in History taken by Learners completing the qualification in 2022 and after, an awarding organisation must continue to comply with the [GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for History](#).

Subject Level Conditions

GCSE Subject Level Conditions for History

Condition GCSE (History) 1: Compliance with content requirements

GCSE (History)1.1

In respect of each GCSE Qualification in History which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must -

- comply with the requirements relating to that qualification set out in the document published by the Secretary of State entitled '[History GCSE subject content](#)', document reference DFE-00346-2014,
- have regard to any recommendations or guidelines relating to that qualification set out in that document, and
- 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.

GCSE (History) 1.2

In respect of each GCSE Qualification in History 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.

Subject content requirements

Requirements in relation to subject content for GCSE Qualifications in History

The subject content for GCSE Qualifications (graded 9 to 1) in History is set out in the Department for Education's [History GCSE subject content](#), document reference DFE- 00346-2014 (the 'Content Document').

Condition GCSE (History)1.1(c) requires awarding organisations to interpret the Content Document in line with any requirements, and having regard to any guidance, published by Ofqual.

We set out our requirements for the purposes of Condition GCSE (History)1.1(c) below.

Breadth of assessment

Paragraphs 12 and 13 of the Content Document state that Learners will be assessed on five elements -

- (a) a British depth study,
- (b) a Non-British depth study,
- (c) a period study,
- (d) a thematic study, and
- (e) the study of a historic environment.

An awarding organisation must interpret the Content Document as if Learners must be assessed on -

- (a) one or more of those five elements as specified by the awarding organisation, and
- (b) sufficient of the remaining elements such that no Learner is assessed on all five elements. Where all five elements are assessed separately, then Learners must be assessed on four elements. Where two elements are combined and the structure of the assessment is in four parts, Learners must be assessed on three of those parts.

In respect of (a) above, an awarding organisation must ensure that the element it specifies is either a British depth study, a Non-British depth study, or a period study.

Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives - GCSE Qualifications in History

Condition GCSE (History) 1.2 allows us to specify requirements relating to the objectives to be met by any assessment for GCSE Qualifications in History.

The assessment objectives set out below constitute requirements for the purposes of Condition GCSE (History)1.2. Awarding organisations must comply with these requirements in relation to all GCSE Qualifications in History they make available or propose to make available.

	Objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied.	35%
AO2	Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order historical concepts.	35%
AO3	Analyse, evaluate and use sources (contemporary to the period) to make substantiated judgements, in the context of historical events studied.	15%
AO4	Analyse, evaluate and make substantiated judgements about interpretations (including how and why interpretations may differ) in the context of historical events studied.	15%

In respect of each GCSE Qualification in History which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must -

- (a) ensure that the total mark for the qualification consists of -
 - (i) marks allocated to assessment objectives AO1 to AO4 in line with the weightings outlined above (the 'subject marks'), and
 - (ii) marks used to credit the accuracy of Learners' spelling, punctuation and grammar and their use of specialist terminology,
- (b) take all reasonable steps to ensure that the number of marks available to credit the accuracy of Learners' spelling, punctuation and grammar and their use of specialist terminology is equal to 5 per cent of the subject marks.

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



Department
for Education

History

GCSE subject content

April 2014

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The content for history GCSEs

Introduction

1. The GCSE subject content sets out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all GCSE specifications in a given subject. Together with the assessment objectives it provides the framework within which awarding organisations create the detail of their specifications, so ensuring progression from key stage 3 national curriculum requirements and the possibilities for progression to A level.

Subject aims and learning outcomes

2. GCSE specifications in history should support students in learning more about the history of Britain and that of the wider world. The study of history at GCSE should inspire students to deepen their understanding of the people, periods and events studied and enable them to think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, make informed decisions and develop perspective and judgement. This, in turn, will prepare them for a role as informed, thoughtful and active citizens. The discipline of history and a knowledge and understanding of the past will also help them to understand their own identity and significant aspects of the world in which they live, and provide them with the basis for further wider learning and study.

3. GCSE specifications in history should enable students to:

- develop and extend their knowledge and understanding of specified key events, periods and societies in local, British, and wider world history; and of the wide diversity of human experience
- engage in historical enquiry to develop as independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers
- develop the ability to ask relevant questions about the past, to investigate issues critically and to make valid historical claims by using a range of sources in their historical context
- develop an awareness of why people, events and developments have been accorded historical significance and how and why different interpretations have been constructed about them
- organise and communicate their historical knowledge and understanding in different ways and reach substantiated conclusions

Subject content

4. GCSE specifications in history must reflect the aims and learning outcomes. GCSE specifications in history should build on the national curriculum programmes of study for history at key stage 3.

5. This content sets out the full range of content for GCSE specifications in history. Awarding organisations may, however, use any flexibility to increase depth, breadth or context within the specified topics or to consolidate teaching of the subject content.

Scope of study

6. GCSE specifications should include history:

- from three eras: Medieval (500-1500), Early Modern (1450-1750) and Modern (1700-present day)
- on three time scales: short (depth study), medium (period study) and long (thematic study)
- on three geographical contexts: a locality (the historic environment); British; and European and / or wider world settings

British history¹ must form a minimum of 40% of the assessed content over the full course.

7. Depth studies should focus on a substantial and coherent short time span and require students to understand the complexity of a society or historical situation and the interplay of different aspects within it. Depending on the particular society or historical situation selected for study, these aspects may include (but are not restricted to) social, economic, political, religious, technological and military factors. For European or wider world depth studies the complexity may stem from the number and diverse interests of the different nation states involved.

8. Period studies should focus on a substantial and coherent medium time span of at least 50 years and require students to understand the unfolding narrative of substantial developments and issues associated with the period.

9. Thematic studies should require students to understand change and continuity across a long sweep of history, including the most significant characteristics of different ages. They should reveal wider changes in aspects of society over the centuries and allow comparisons to be made between different periods of history. These aspects should include (but are not restricted to) some or all of the following: culture, economics, politics, religion, science, technology and war.

¹ Reference to British history here and elsewhere in the document means British history and/ or the history of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland as appropriate to the historical context and focus of the study.

10. The study of the historic environment should focus on one particular site in its historical context. The study should examine the relationship between a place and historical events and developments. The focus of study may range in scale from, for example, a particular building or part of a building to a city or rural landscape/ setting. There is no requirement that students visit the site. This study may be linked to any other part of the course or may stand alone.

11. The course and each element within it must form a coherent and substantial study of history in which the elements are reasonably balanced across the full range of assessed content.

12. GCSE specifications in history should require students to study:

- at least one British depth study chosen from the historical eras defined above
- at least one European or wider world depth study chosen from the historical eras defined above. This should focus on the history of a nation or group of peoples or on international relations between several nations. It must not merely study British overseas involvements

13. British and wider world depth studies may not be taken from the same era of history or from the same overlapping fifty-year period.

- a period study into British, European or wider world history from any one of the historical eras defined above. One depth study may be from the same era as the period study
- the historic environment through the study of a particular site in its historical context
- one thematic study involving the study of people, events and developments drawn from all three eras defined above. Where appropriate, it may also draw on earlier times

14. While some overlap is likely, the thematic study must differ significantly in focus from the people, issues and events covered in the depth and period studies.

Historical knowledge, understanding and method

15. GCSE specifications should, through these studies, require students to develop and demonstrate:

- knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied: the chronology, individuals, events, developments and issues in the specified content
- understanding and appropriate use in context of historical terms including first order historical concepts such as 'constitution', 'nation', 'revolution', 'society'
- the ability to create their own structured accounts, selecting organising and communicating their knowledge and understanding in written narratives, descriptions and analyses, reaching substantiated conclusions when appropriate
- understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied in relation to second order historical concepts of continuity, change, cause, consequence, significance and similarity and difference within situations
- understanding of the relationships between different aspects within the periods studied, making connections, drawing contrasts and analysing trends. Examples of the related aspects include all or some of the following examples: between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, social, political, religious and military history; and between short and long term timescales
- the ability to understand and use critically and constructively a range of contemporary source material appropriate to the period (including written historical sources whose precise provenance is given) to frame their own valid historical questions and make their own valid historical claims
- understanding of how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, discerning how and why different interpretations of the past have been constructed



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