

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

April 2016

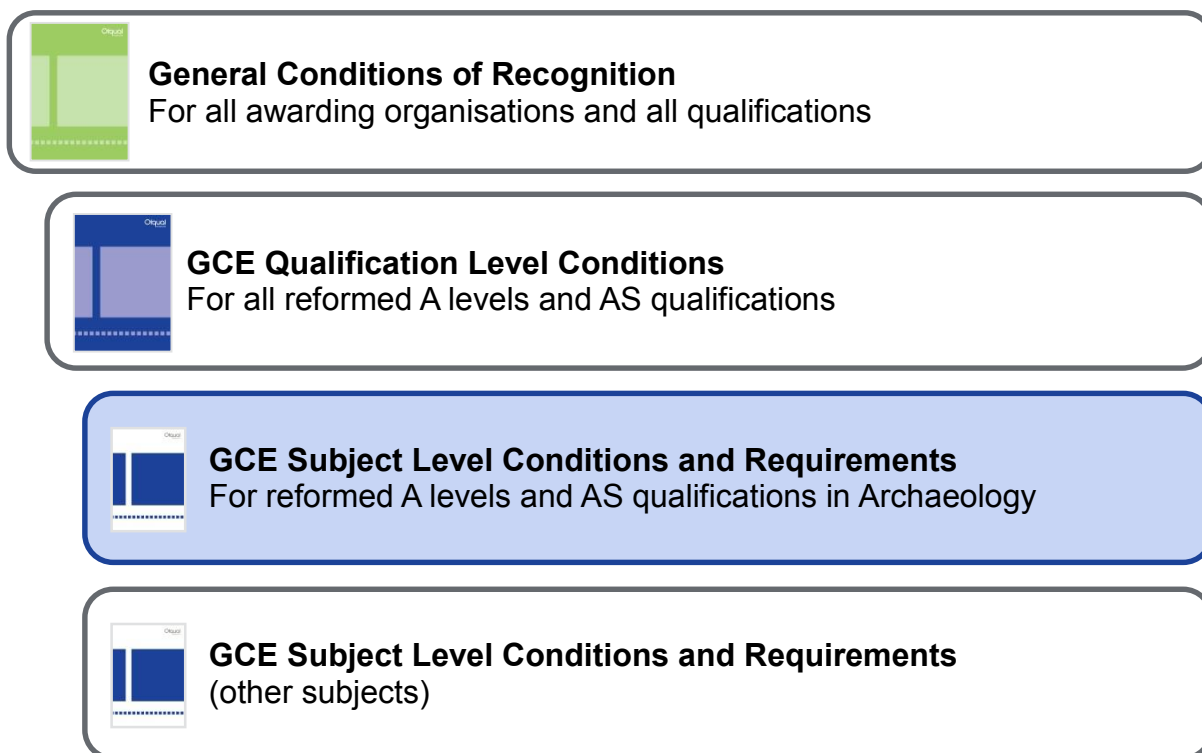
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# Introduction

## About this document

This document (highlighted in the figure below) is part of a suite of documents which sets out the regulatory requirements for awarding organisations offering reformed A levels and AS qualifications.



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"> <li>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;</li> <li>set out a robust and internationally comparable post-16 academic course of study to develop that knowledge, skills and understanding;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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;</li> <li>enable students to broaden the range of subjects they study.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ permit UK universities to accurately identify the level of attainment of students;</li><li>■ provide a basis for school and college accountability measures at age 18; and</li><li>■ provide a benchmark of academic ability for employers.</li></ul>	
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## Requirements set out in this document

This document sets out the GCE Subject Level Conditions for Archaeology. These conditions will come into effect at 5.01pm on Thursday 21 April 2016 for the following qualifications:

- all GCE A levels in Archaeology awarded on or after 1 April 2019; and
- all standalone GCE AS qualifications in Archaeology awarded on or after 1 April 2018.

It also sets out our requirements in relation to:

- assessment objectives – awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCE(Archaeology)1.2; and
- assessment – awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCE(Archaeology)2.3.

Appendix 1 reproduces the subject content requirements for Archaeology, as published by the Department for Education.<sup>1</sup> Awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCE(Archaeology)1.1.

With respect to the qualifications listed above, awarding organisations must also comply with:

- our *General Conditions of Recognition*,<sup>2</sup> which apply to all awarding organisations and qualifications;

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<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-archaeology](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-archaeology)

<sup>2</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-conditions-of-recognition](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-conditions-of-recognition)

- our *GCE Qualification Level Conditions and Requirements*;<sup>3</sup> and
- All relevant Regulatory Documents.<sup>4</sup>

With respect to all other GCE qualifications in Archaeology, awarding organisations must continue to comply with the General Conditions of Recognition, the *GCE Qualification Level Conditions*,<sup>5</sup> and the relevant Regulatory Documents.

## Summary of requirements

Subject Level Conditions	
<a href="#">GCE(Archaeology)1</a>	<a href="#">Compliance with content requirements</a>
<a href="#">GCE(Archaeology)2</a>	<a href="#">Assessment</a>

Assessment objectives
<a href="#">Assessment objectives – GCE Qualifications in Archaeology</a>

Assessment requirements
<a href="#">Assessment requirements – GCE Qualifications in Archaeology</a>

Appendix 1 – Subject content (published by Department for Education)
<a href="#">GCE AS and A level Subject Content for Archaeology</a>

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<sup>3</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-and-requirements](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-and-requirements)

<sup>4</sup> [www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-document-list](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-document-list)

<sup>5</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-for-pre-reform-qualifications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-for-pre-reform-qualifications)

# Subject Level Conditions

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## GCE Subject Level Conditions for Archaeology

### Condition

### Compliance with content requirements

#### GCE(Archaeology)1

GCE(Archaeology)1.1 In respect of each GCE Qualification in Archaeology 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 'Archaeology AS and A level subject content',<sup>6</sup> document reference DFE-00035-2016,
- (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(Archaeology)1.2 In respect of each GCE Qualification in Archaeology 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.

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<sup>6</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-archaeology](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-archaeology)

**Condition**                      **Assessment**  
**GCE(Archaeology)2**

GCE(Archaeology)2.1 Condition GCE4.1 does not apply to any GCE A level qualification in Archaeology which an awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available.

GCE(Archaeology)2.2 In respect of the total marks available for a GCE A level qualification in Archaeology which it makes available, an awarding organisation must ensure that –

(a) 80 per cent of those marks are made available through Assessments by Examination, and

(b) 20 per cent of those marks are made available through assessments that are not Assessments by Examination.

GCE(Archaeology)2.3 An awarding organisation must ensure that in respect of each assessment for a GCE A level qualification in Archaeology which it makes available it complies with any requirements, and has regard to any guidance, which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.



# Assessment objectives

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## Assessment objectives – GCE Qualifications in Archaeology

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

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

	Objective	Weighting (A level)	Weighting (AS)
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of archaeological skills, methods, themes, issues and contexts.	25-35%	35-45%
AO2 (A level)	Apply archaeological skills and methods, using archaeological terminology and conventions, to – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ interpret primary archaeological material and data</li> </ul> interpret secondary archaeological material and data	30-40%	n/a
AO2 (AS)	Apply archaeological skills and methods using archaeological terminology and conventions, to interpret secondary archaeological material and data.	n/a	30-40%
AO3 (A level)	Analyse and evaluate – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ primary archaeological material and data</li> <li>■ secondary archaeological material and data</li> <li>■ archaeological interpretations</li> <li>■ archaeological themes, issues and contexts</li> </ul>	35-45%	n/a
AO3 (AS)	Analyse and evaluate – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ secondary archaeological material and data</li> <li>■ archaeological interpretations</li> <li>■ archaeological themes, issues and contexts</li> </ul>	n/a	25-35%

# Assessment requirements

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## Assessment requirements – GCE Qualifications in Archaeology

Condition GCE(Archaeology)2.3 allows us to specify requirements in relation to assessments for GCE A level qualifications in Archaeology.

We set out below our requirements for the purposes of Condition GCE(Archaeology)2.3. Awarding organisations must comply with these requirements in relation to all GCE A level qualifications in Archaeology they make available.

### Non-examination assessment

Condition GCE(Archaeology)2.2(b) states that an awarding organisation must ensure that, of the total marks available for a GCE A level qualification in Archaeology, 20 per cent of those marks shall be made available through assessments which are not Assessments by Examination.

In respect of that 20 per cent, an awarding organisation must ensure that –

- (a) no marks are made available in respect of assessment objective AO1,
- (b) at least 5 per cent of the total marks for the qualification are made available in respect of assessment objective AO2, and
- (c) at least 10 per cent of the total marks for the qualification are made available in respect of assessment objective AO3.

The subject content for GCE Qualifications in Archaeology is set out in the Secretary of State's *Archaeology AS and A Level subject content*, document reference DFE-00035-2016 (the 'Content Document').

Paragraph 17 of the Content Document states that each GCE A level qualification in Archaeology must –

require that students undertake an individual archaeological investigation that is independently researched and that interacts with the archaeological record, drawing on the knowledge, understanding and skills outlined above.

In respect of the assessments which are not Assessments by Examination, an awarding organisation must ensure that each Learner is required to complete a single task which requires the Learner to –

- (a) undertake an archaeological investigation which meets the requirements specified in paragraph 17 of the Content Document, and
- (b) produce the following evidence –

- (i) a written report setting out the findings of his or her investigation, and
- (ii) such additional evidence as is necessary to enable the consideration of that Learner's level of attainment in respect of all of the relevant criteria against which Learners' performance in that assessment will be differentiated.

### **Setting of non-examination assessment**

An assessment for a GCE A level qualification in Archaeology which is not an Assessment by Examination may be set –

- (a) by the awarding organisation, or
- (b) by a Centre.

In any event, the awarding organisation must demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction in its assessment strategy that it has –

- (a) taken all reasonable steps to identify the risk of any Adverse Effect which may result from its approach to setting the assessment, and
- (b) where such a risk is identified, it has taken all reasonable steps to prevent that Adverse Effect or, where it cannot be prevented, to mitigate that Adverse Effect.

### **Marking of non-examination assessment**

Evidence generated by a Learner in an assessment for a GCE A level qualification in Archaeology which is not an Assessment by Examination may be marked –

- (a) by the awarding organisation or a person connected to the awarding organisation,
- (b) by a Centre, or
- (c) through a combination of (a) and (b).

In any event, the awarding organisation must demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction in its assessment strategy that –

- (a) it has taken all reasonable steps to identify the risk of any Adverse Effect which may result from its approach to marking the assessments (and to moderation where appropriate), and
- (b) where such a risk is identified, it has taken all reasonable steps to prevent that Adverse Effect or, where it cannot be prevented, to mitigate that Adverse Effect.

# **Subject content (published by Department for Education)**

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Department  
for Education

# Archaeology

**AS and A level subject content**

**February 2016**

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# The content for archaeology AS and A level

## Introduction

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

## Aims and objectives

2. AS and A level specifications in archaeology must encourage students to develop their interest in archaeology as they:

- understand past human societies and develop archaeological skills through experience of a broad and balanced course of study
- understand archaeological terms, concepts and skills
- practically apply archaeological skills and methods to both primary and secondary archaeological material and data
- demonstrate their breadth and depth of archaeological knowledge and understanding, and an awareness of chronology
- understand what archaeological evidence can tell you about the nature of past societies, human achievements, beliefs, moral values and attitudes and their impact on individuals, groups and whole societies as reflected in material remains
- understand the intrinsic value and significance of archaeology and its importance in contemporary society and heritage
- appreciate the importance of local social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity issues to the practice of archaeology

## Subject content

### Breadth and depth of content

3. AS and A level specifications in archaeology must provide sufficient depth and breadth to allow students to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding specified below, and must include a rationale for the specification of topics including period and breadth studies which indicate how the following criteria for content are addressed.

4. AS and A level specifications in archaeology must provide a broad and coherent course of study for all students.

5. There are no prior knowledge requirements for AS and A level specifications in archaeology.

## Knowledge, understanding and skills

6. AS and A level specifications must require students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the nature and types of archaeological evidence, and what examining such evidence can tell us about past human societies, including (but not restricted to):

- burial evidence including human remains
- buildings and other structures
- artefacts
- sites and settlements
- botanical and faunal remains
- landscapes

7. AS and A level specifications must require students to develop and demonstrate knowledge, understanding and practical application of archaeological techniques, including contemporary techniques, used by archaeologists to investigate the archaeological record, including (but not restricted to):

- how sites are formed including: site formation processes, and survival and limitations of evidence
- how archaeologists discover and record sites and landscapes including: aerial photography; field work, including on-site survey; sampling strategies; desk-top sources, documentary evidence and databases; methods of recovering archaeological materials from the surface; surveying; geoprospection; geochemistry; post-excavation conservation; and collaboration with the local and the wider community
- archaeological excavation and recovering evidence including: rationale, processes and strategies of excavation; on-site recovery; stratigraphy; and recording techniques (section drawings, photographs, plans)

8. AS and A level specifications must require students to develop and demonstrate knowledge, understanding and practical application of how archaeological data is analysed and interpreted including (but not restricted to):

- analysis of recorded data from survey or excavation
- dating archaeological sites, including: relative dating methods (typology); and absolute dating methods (including radiocarbon dating and thermoluminescence)
- environmental analysis (including macro and micro fauna and flora, soils and sediments)
- analysis of human remains (including age, sex, stature, occupation, diet, ancestry, and cause of death)
- visual analysis of metals, ceramics, and lithics
- ethnography and experimental archaeology

9. AS and A level specifications must require students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how past human societies changed or stayed the same and the causes of changes. These must include (but are not restricted to) the following: climate, human innovation, conflict, migration, trade and agriculture.

10. In addition, A level specifications must require students to understand the practice of responsible archaeology, through the study of archaeological issues and debates in Britain and the wider world. This includes (but is not restricted to) the following aspects:

- human evolution and our changing relationship with the environment, including: key changes in the development of hominins over the last three million years, the lineage of anatomically modern humans, the development of modern human patterns of behaviour, factors affecting human development (including competition, natural selection, diet), the impact of the changing climate on human evolution, the changing place of humans in nature and human interaction with their environment over the long term
- cultural resource management, including: the role of UNESCO, the purpose and impact of protective legislation, debates about preservation versus excavation; the impact of the trade in antiquities, and attitudes towards metal detecting
- differences and tensions between professional and amateur archaeologists, the relationship between research and rescue archaeology, the funding of excavations and preservation of archaeological remains, the value of archaeology, and the social and economic role of museums
- the relationship between indigenous peoples and archaeologists, repatriation, the excavation of sacred or burial sites, the role of archaeology in the construction of national or ethnic identity, and how and why archaeology involves local communities

11. AS specifications must require students to study one archaeological context in depth and one breadth study. A level specifications must require students to study two contrasting archaeological contexts in depth and two breadth studies<sup>1</sup>.

12. An archaeological context is defined as a time span and place where the activity of a past human society can be studied using data, buildings, artefacts and remnants left behind.

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<sup>1</sup> At A level students may study the same (or some of the same) contexts and sites for their two breadth studies. At AS and A level students may not study the same context/s or sites for their breadth study/studies and depth study/studies. At A level students may not study the same context or sites for their two depth studies. As a minimum therefore specifications must require students at AS to study 4 contexts and 20 sites and students at A level to study 5 contexts and 25 sites.

13. For each archaeological context studied in depth students must cover five sites. The context chosen must be a restricted geographic location and time period<sup>2</sup> and must be prescribed in specifications. Specifications must require students, in the in-depth study, to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how a particular past human society lived in the context chosen based on what archaeological evidence can tell us. Specifications must require that in each depth study students must show knowledge and understanding of the following areas as a minimum, in relation to the context studied:

- the social organisation of the context chosen and why this may have developed in this particular society (e.g. conflict, exchange networks and proximity to farming societies)
- the belief system of the context chosen (e.g. beliefs in gods/goddesses, creation, spirits, ancestor worship and cults)
- art in the context chosen (e.g. painting, carvings, sculpture, statues, pottery and hieroglyphs)
- technology in the context chosen (e.g. copper-smelting, hand axes, bow and arrow, and cordage)

14. Each breadth study must extend across a minimum of three contexts each covering a minimum of five sites. Each breadth study must include contexts which cover multiple geographic locations and/or time periods. Specifications must stipulate the contexts which can be studied for each of the types of breadth studies covered below. Specifications must also provide guidance on the selection of sites for each breadth study to ensure that these sites cover all of the content for the relevant breadth study and can illustrate change and continuity through time. Specifications must require students, in the breadth study, to develop and demonstrate an understanding of change and continuity in and between the contexts studied, and make informed comparisons between these contexts. Specifications must require that students choose breadth studies from the following options, and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the content required under each option in relation to the contexts studied:

- people and their activities in relation to religion and ritual including (but not restricted to):
  - ritual activities, including: how ritual activities are related to beliefs; different types of ritual (including personal rituals and organised group activities), structure/organisation of rituals, and specialist religious and ritual organisations
  - mortuary practices, including: treatment of bodies and related practices

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<sup>2</sup> Geographic location means the whole, or parts of, a country or group of countries. The time period will vary depending on the age of the area being studied, but must be a minimum of 100 years.

- related locations and structures, including: how rituals can be shown to have taken place at particular locations and/or in specific structures, association with the surrounding landscape, and how locations/structures act as a focus for belief
  - symbolic expression, including: art works, and the use of symbols and how these can be interpreted
  - artefacts including: the function and interpretation of artefacts in relation to religion and ritual
- people and their activities in relation to society in the past including (but not restricted to):
    - migration of populations in the past
    - organisation of human societies in groups, including: the organisation of social units, families and households; variations in basic social organisation (including seasonality); and the nature and workings of specialist organisations (including religious groups, military groups)
    - social differentiation, including: the nature of, and reasons, for differences between individuals or groups in the past (including status differences, age, gender, ethnicity); evidence for presence or absence of ranking or stratification and its causes; and evidence for specialists and how they operated within society
    - power and social control, including: evidence for individuals or groups having power over others, and how it was maintained in the past; warfare as a means of control; and forms of resistance to control
    - social change, including: identification and causes of social change in the past
  - people and their activities in relation to sites in the landscape including (but not restricted to):
    - the adaptation of people to their landscapes, including: the human impact on the environment and the constraints on human activity imposed by the environment
    - the functions of particular sites or areas within sites, including: how sites are identified and differentiated from other areas of human activity; and the siting, growth, reorganisation and abandonment of particular sites
    - reconstruction and understanding of structures and buildings, their significance and form, including: the classification of different functions of buildings and structures (including ritual, defensive, economic and social)
    - territory and boundaries, including: the way human groups identified with particular areas of the landscape, and the nature of boundaries in the past
  - people and their activities in relation to economics and material culture including (but not restricted to):

- the exploitation of plants and animals, including: identification of past subsistence and diet, the different ways animals and plants were exploited for food, and non-food uses of animals and plants
- extraction and production, including: artefacts and their manufacture and use, and evidence of specialist production in the past
- economic strategies, including: ways of coping with uncertain food supplies; the relationships between resources and site location, and permanence and function; and different modes of exchange of goods, and the nature and function of trade
- economic change, including: major changes in the economic basis of societies in the past; and changes in past technology and the impact of these changes

15. AS and A level specifications must require students to:

- interpret and analyse archaeological material and data
- communicate effectively and argue critically using archaeological terminology and conventions
- exemplify their interpretations of data by placing it in their relevant archaeological contexts
- employ knowledge and understanding both of the nature of archaeological evidence and of the strengths and limitations of methods used by archaeologists to gather and interpret that evidence, and be able to evaluate alternative explanations
- organise and communicate their archaeological knowledge and understanding, arguing a clear and logical case and reaching substantiated judgements

16. In addition, A level specifications must require students to:

- make links and draw comparisons between different aspects of periods, societies or breadth studies covered in their course of study
- critically evaluate a range of primary and secondary evidence and data, draw substantiated conclusions, and understand how provisional interpretations could be strengthened through future analysis

17. A level specifications must require that students undertake an individual archaeological investigation that is independently researched and that interacts with the archaeological record, drawing on the knowledge, understanding and skills outlined above. A level specifications must require students to:

- identify, and provide a rationale, for the archaeological topic they have chosen to investigate, using the knowledge and understanding outlined above and 'desk-top' research to identify an appropriate question

- apply an understanding of the nature and reliability of archaeological evidence required in paragraph 15 in order to comment on the accuracy of their own primary evidence and the extent to which they are representative
- apply an understanding of the relevant archaeological concepts which form and support the context of their study to exemplify their interpretations of data
- gather, select, organise, and translate data obtained from primary sources using at least one of the archaeological investigative techniques outlined in paragraph 7, as well as 'desk-top' research, to investigate one of the types of archaeological evidence in paragraph 6
- interpret and analyse archaeological data and material using at least two archaeological data analysis techniques outlined in paragraph 8 above in order to reach substantiated conclusions about the investigation undertaken
- apply their understanding of the different methodologies of archaeological investigation and analysis, demonstrating understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the different methodologies, justify their choices of methodology and recognise associated problems
- apply their understanding of the different methods for the presentation of evidence (including written, illustrative, graphical, photographic), and consider which are most appropriate to present the evidence they have gathered in their investigation
- evaluate the outcomes of their investigation, including the methodologies used and how provisional interpretations could be strengthened through future analysis
- organise and communicate their archaeological knowledge and understanding effectively, arguing critically using archaeological terminology and conventions, in order to reach substantiated judgements



Department  
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