

# **GCE Subject Level Guidance for Geology**

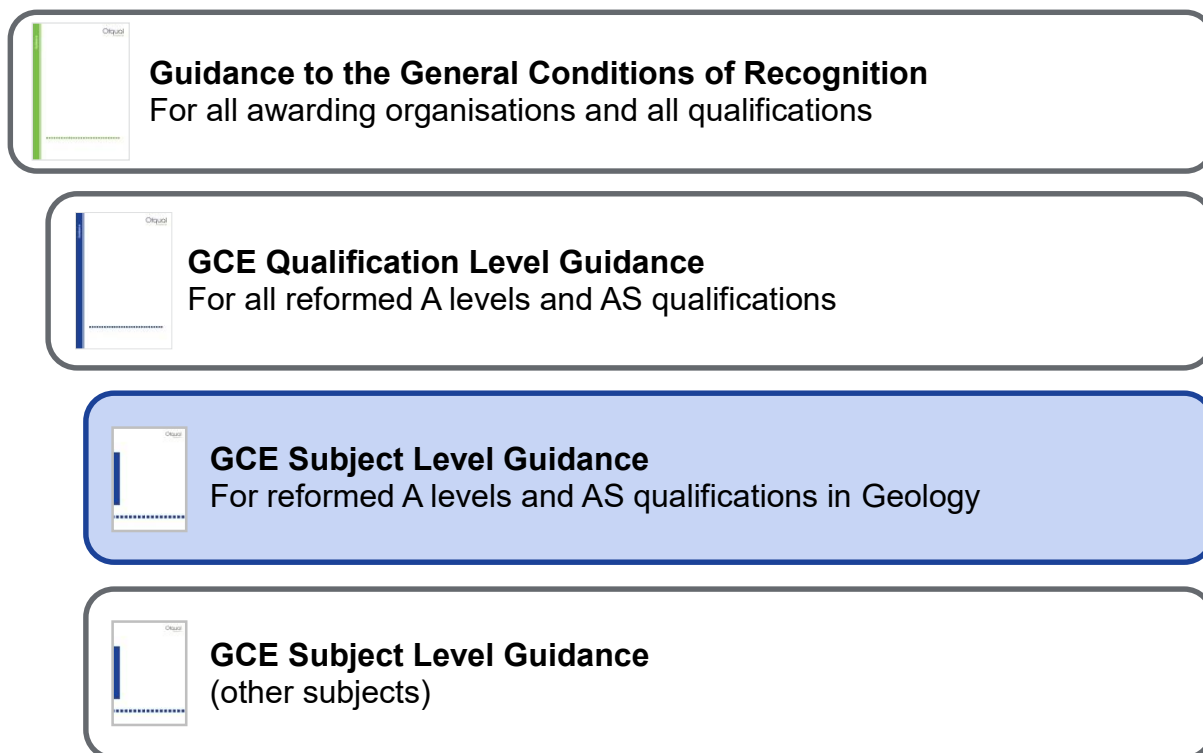
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## Introduction

This document (highlighted in the figure below) is part of a suite of documents which outlines our guidance for awarding organisations offering GCE Qualifications.



This document sets out guidance which applies to the following qualifications:

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

This guidance supports the *GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Geology*.<sup>1</sup>

This document constitutes guidance for the purposes of section 153 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the '2009 Act') and Condition GCE(Geology)1.

An awarding organisation has a legal obligation under the 2009 Act to have regard to this guidance, where relevant, in relation to each GCE Qualification in Geology that it makes available or proposes to make available. Condition GCE(Geology)1 imposes

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<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-geology](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-geology)

the same obligation in respect of the guidance below which is issued under that Condition.

An awarding organisation should use the guidance in this document to help it understand how to comply with the *GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Geology*.

## **Guidance set out in this document**

This document provides guidance in relation to assessment objectives for GCE Qualifications in Geology.
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## Guidance on assessment objectives for GCE Qualifications in Geology

Condition GCE(Geology)1.2 allows us to specify requirements and guidance relating to assessment objectives for GCE Qualifications in Geology.

We published our requirements in relation to assessment objectives in the *GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Geology*, and reproduce them in the table below.

	Objective	Weighting (A level)	Weighting (AS)
<b>AO1</b>	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of geological ideas, skills and techniques	30-35%	35-40%
<b>AO2</b>	Apply knowledge and understanding of geological ideas, skills and techniques	40-45%	40-45%
<b>AO3</b>	Analyse, interpret and evaluate geological ideas, information and evidence, to make judgements, draw conclusions, and develop and refine practical design and procedures.	25-30%	20-25%

We set out below our guidance for the purposes of Condition GCE(Geology)1.2. This guidance explains how we expect awarding organisations to interpret these assessment objectives in terms of:

- the discrete ‘elements’ within each assessment objective and its strands that questions and tasks could target and/or seek to credit – our expectation is that each and every question/task should target or seek to credit at least one of these elements, and may target or seek to credit multiple elements across one or more assessment objectives;
- the coverage expectations, such as in relation to the different elements within each assessment objective and how those elements should be sampled over time; and
- the key areas of emphasis in each assessment objective and the particular meaning for the subject of any key terms and phrases used; defined terms are shown in bold text, followed by their definitions.

In line with the obligations set out in Condition GCE(Geology)1.2, we expect awarding organisations to be able to demonstrate how they have had regard to this guidance. For example, an awarding organisation could map how it has regard to the guidance as it:

- develops its sample assessment materials;
- delivers the qualification;
- develops and applies its approach to sampling the elements into which the assessment objectives are divided; and
- monitors the qualification to make sure it addresses all elements appropriately.

AO1 – Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of geological ideas, skills and techniques.		A level 30-35%	
		AS 35-40%	
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and Definitions
n/a	1a – Demonstrate knowledge of geological ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).<sup>2</sup></li> <li>■ A maximum of 10% of the total marks for the qualification should reward demonstrating knowledge in isolation.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Ideas</b> are aspects of subject content outlined in Paragraphs 9 and 10 of the document published by the Secretary of State entitled ‘Geology GCE subject content’, document reference DFE-00056-2016 (the ‘Content Document’).</li> <li>■ <b>Skills and techniques</b> are aspects of subject content and include the skills and techniques outlined in appendix 1 to the Content Document and the mathematical skills requirement set out in appendix 2 to the Content Document.</li> <li>■ The emphasis in this assessment objective should be on the demonstration of knowledge and understanding of geological ideas.</li> </ul>
	1b – Demonstrate knowledge of geological skills and techniques		
	1c – Demonstrate understanding of geological ideas		
	1d – Demonstrate understanding of geological skills and techniques		

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this guidance, a ‘set of assessments’ means the assessments to be taken by a particular Learner for a GCE Qualification in Geology. For clarity, the assessments taken by Learners may vary, depending on any possible routes through the qualification.

<sup>3</sup> Marks that “reward demonstrating knowledge in isolation” include any mark awarded solely for recalling facts or other knowledge. It does not include marks awarded for selecting appropriate knowledge (for example, to evidence an argument), or for applying knowledge to a particular context.

AO2 – Apply knowledge and understanding of geological ideas, skills and techniques.			A level 40-45%
			AS 40-45%
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and Definitions
n/a	1a – Apply knowledge and understanding of geological ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).</li> <li>■ A reasonable balance of the elements in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Ideas</b> are aspects of subject content outlined in Paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Content Document.</li> <li>■ <b>Skills and techniques</b> are aspects of subject content and include the skills and techniques outlined in appendix 1 to the Content Document and the mathematical skills requirement set out in appendix 2 to the Content Document.</li> <li>■ Learners should be expected to apply their knowledge and understanding to stimulus and source material to provide meaning and explanations in particular contexts. This application should relate principally to developing further material that is covered in the specification by – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ exploring contexts and situations that are not explicitly indicated in the specification;</li> <li>□ making links between types of material which are not explicitly indicated in the specification.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	1b – Apply knowledge and understanding of geological skills and techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Awarding organisations should justify the balance between elements in their assessment strategies.</li> </ul>	



AO3 - Analyse, interpret and evaluate geological ideas, information and evidence to make judgements, draw conclusions, and develop and refine practical design and procedures.		A level 25-30%	
		AS 20-25%	
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and Definitions
n/a	1a – Analyse geological ideas, information and evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).</li> <li>■ Reasonable balance of the elements in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).</li> <li>■ Awarding organisations should justify the balance between the elements in their assessment strategies.</li> <li>■ Elements 1d and 1e may be assessed separately or together, but they should be assessed in combination with one or more of elements 1a – 1c.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Ideas, information and evidence</b> are aspects of subject content. Awarding organisations should explain their approach to targeting them in their assessment strategy. Information and evidence includes sources covering the skills and techniques outlined in appendix 1 to the Content Document. It should include: information and evidence from practical work and from fieldwork; both qualitative and quantitative approaches.</li> <li>■ <b>Analyse</b> means deconstructing ideas and/or information and/or evidence to find connections and provide logical chains of reasoning</li> <li>■ <b>Interpret</b> means describing and ascribing meaning</li> <li>■ <b>Evaluate</b> means appraising and/or ascribing value with respect to information and/or issues. This could, but need not, lead to synthesising ideas and/or information and/or evidence.</li> <li>■ <b>Make judgements</b> means coming to decisions, including in relation to information and evidence</li> <li>■ <b>Draw conclusions</b> means providing a final view or outcome through a process of reasoning, including in relation to the use and summary of information and evidence</li> </ul>
	1b – Interpret geological ideas, information and evidence		
	1c – Evaluate geological ideas, information and evidence		
	1d – Make judgements		
	1e – Draw conclusions		
	1f – Develop and refine practical design and procedures.		

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