

Decisions on Conditions and guidance for GCSE Sociology



In March 2016 we published a consultation about the rules and guidance we proposed to put in place for new GCSEs in sociology.

This consultation set out draft Subject Level Conditions, requirements and guidance which would apply to all new GCSEs in this subject.

We have reviewed the responses to the consultation and are now announcing our decisions. We are also publishing a more detailed analysis of the responses alongside this document.¹

GCSE sociology

Compliance with content requirements

We proposed that all reformed GCSEs in sociology should comply with the subject content requirements published by the Department for Education,² and with our assessment objectives.

All the respondents who commented on this proposal supported it, noting that it would help ensure comparability between different specifications. No respondents raised any concerns with this aspect of our proposals.

We have therefore decided to confirm our proposals in this area.

Assessment of research methods

We proposed that reformed GCSEs in sociology should require a minimum of 15 per cent of the marks to be allocated to the assessment of research methods, which are set out in the subject content.

In our consultation, we proposed that in relation to research methods, exams will require students to:

- demonstrate and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills of research methods;

¹ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-reform-regulations-for-sociology

² www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-sociology

- apply research methods in the context of written questions and problems; and
- analyse and evaluate information in the context of research methods.

Respondents to the consultation supported our approach and we have decided to adopt this requirement in full.

Guidance

We proposed to introduce guidance clarifying the interpretation of our assessment objectives.

Respondents to the consultation supported our proposals and we have decided to adopt the guidance in full.

We have slightly amended the wording of our definitions for *analyse* and *evaluate* in the guidance for assessment objective AO3. This is to ensure that these terms, which are used across a number of subjects, are used consistently. These changes are not substantive and are to improve the clarity of our guidance rather than change its meaning.

There were no further comments on the guidance. With the exception of the small amendment to the definitions of *analyse* and *evaluate* outlined above, we have decided to adopt the guidance in full.

Next steps

We have published the following documents which formally introduce our rules and guidance for GCSE sociology:

- *GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Sociology*³
- *GCSE Subject Level Guidance for Sociology*⁴

³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-sociology

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-guidance-for-sociology