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Welsh Assembly Government

Cymry Ifanc
Young Wales

Fair access by design

Guidance for qualifications regulators and awarding bodies on designing inclusive qualifications

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Guidance

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Fair access by design

Audience	Awarding bodies; qualifications regulators; disability groups; examiners and assessors; centres entering learners for examinations and others with an interest in inclusive qualifications.
Overview	This document provides guidance on how qualifications can be designed to give all learners the fairest possible opportunities to show what they know, understand and can do. It includes examples of how this can be achieved. The recommendations in this document are intended to support and complement the best practice of awarding bodies in the design of qualifications.
Action required	Awarding bodies and qualifications regulators are encouraged to use this resource in supporting their work to ensure qualifications are designed to be as accessible as possible.
Further information	Enquiries about this guidance should be directed to the relevant qualifications regulator. Details are on page 58.
Additional copies	This document can be accessed from the Welsh Assembly Government website at www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills
Related documents	<i>The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004); GCSE, GCE, principal learning and project code of practice (qualifications regulators, updated annually); Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration – General and Vocational Qualifications (Joint Council for Qualifications, updated annually); Good practice guide – The application of reasonable adjustments and special consideration in vocational qualifications (Federation of Awarding Bodies, 2005).</i>

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Terminology

A broad range of terms are used in the assessment of general and vocational qualifications. Each has specific meaning in the context and structure of particular qualifications.

To simplify the text, the terms shown in the left-hand column below are used in a general way in this guide, to cover all of those shown in the right-hand column.

Assessor	chief and principal examiner, examiner, general marker, chief and principal moderator, moderator, internal verifier, external verifier, assessor
Assessment	examination, assessment, unit, component, assessment materials, test
Mark scheme	marking criteria, mark scheme, assessment criteria, performance criteria, candidate assessment record (grid)
Awarding body	examining body, examinations board, awarding body, awarding organisation
Regulators	regulators of qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
Written assessment	examination paper, question paper, other written assessment (usually taken under examination conditions)
Internal assessment	coursework, practical test, controlled assessment, portfolio, project (often taken under a lower level of control than written assessments)
Learner	pupil, student, candidate, learner
Qualification	qualification (as a whole), specification, module, component, unit

Throughout this guide, the phrase 'all groups' may include learners:

- at all levels of learning and attainment
- of both sexes
- from different socio-economic backgrounds
- from different ethnic and cultural groups
- from different sexual orientation groups
- with different religions and/or beliefs or those without faith
- with physical and sensory disabilities
- with difficulties in aspects of communication, language and literacy
- with emotional or behavioural difficulties
- with long-term illnesses.

This guide includes boxed examples. Where appropriate, a cross (✘) is shown next to a poor example and a tick (✔) is shown next to the improved version. Some of the examples refer to particular qualifications, though each has been selected to illustrate a general principle.

A checklist at the end of this guide draws the main principles together, to assist awarding bodies as they develop specifications, assessment materials and mark schemes.

Fair access

1. This document provides guidance on how qualifications can be designed to give all learners the fairest possible opportunities to show what they know, understand and can do.
2. This guidance is advisory, though the regulatory criteria referred to below are statutory. This guidance can be adapted to suit particular qualifications and can be shared with centres.
3. Awarding bodies are required to consider the needs of all learners when developing qualifications. If any part of a qualification has an adverse impact on disabled learners, or other groups, the developers need to consider whether that part is absolutely necessary or whether its purpose could be met in another way. If that particular part of the qualification is essential, awarding bodies are required to specify the nature of the barrier it poses, justify its inclusion and give details of how its effect can be mitigated.
4. Awarding bodies design their qualifications to meet the requirements of the regulatory criteria¹ which state (in criterion 9):

'Both in setting the structure and content of qualifications, and in its processes and arrangements for assessment and awarding, the awarding body must:

 - a) ensure access and equality of opportunity while safeguarding the integrity of the qualifications
 - b) not create unnecessary barriers to achievement
 - c) guarantee fair assessment for all learners, including those with particular assessment requirements
 - d) take account of all current legislation in relation to equality of opportunity.'
5. This document does not give guidance on access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, but on designing qualifications that are as accessible as possible. The Appendix provides examples of access arrangements that are available.
6. Every effort should be made to enable all learners to participate in the whole assessment, without affecting the integrity of the qualification. Inclusive design can reduce the extent to which access arrangements are required.

¹ *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (2004)

7. The recommendations in this guidance are intended to support and complement the best practice of awarding bodies in the design of qualifications. The guidance is likely to be most effective when integrated within a wider training and development programme.
8. Awarding bodies need to review their own arrangements on a regular basis including their:
 - procedures for designing assessments
 - working practices
 - staff development programmes
 - printing arrangements
 - house style.
9. Assessments should be designed to enhance learners' ability to access them. Criteria should be closely monitored to ensure there are no unnecessary barriers, and the assessments themselves kept under review. The range of qualifications on offer should be considered along with the nature of support available for learners.
10. Assessment criteria in vocational qualifications are frequently based on National Occupational Standards (NOS). Awarding bodies are advised to check that the NOS themselves do not pose any unnecessary barriers. Where barriers are identified, awarding bodies should refer back to the Sector Skills Council or Body concerned, whose responsibility it is to ensure that NOS do not present barriers to access when used in qualifications.
11. Awarding bodies need to maintain standards and should regularly evaluate feedback on their qualifications from user groups and stakeholders. This feedback can help maintain and improve standards in assessment design and promote fair access.
12. Assessments should promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification. They should:
 - be free from gender, ethnic or other discrimination and stereotyping
 - use content, resources and assessment materials that recognise the achievements and contributions of different groups
 - where appropriate, provide a balance of assessment methods and permit alternative approaches.

13. Plain language and clear presentation in specifications and assessment materials promote fair access for all groups. The appropriate use of new technologies, such as alternative means of communication, can also help more learners demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
14. Fine balances have to be struck to ensure that in improving access for some groups barriers are not created for others – for example, when the proportions of verbal to visual stimuli are adjusted.
15. Stakeholders need to be confident that standards are maintained and consistently applied. The regulators have to ensure that all learners get the results they deserve, and that the qualifications they receive are valued.

Designing qualifications

16. Regulators and awarding bodies ensure fair access to assessment by recognising the diverse needs of learners at the design stage of qualifications and assessments.
17. The following points should be considered in the design of qualifications. These are consistent with the regulatory criteria, but focus on the next level of quality assurance.

Awarding bodies should:

- a) consider the needs of all learners when developing qualifications, tasks and assessments to help minimise any later need to make reasonable adjustments
- b) develop clear specifications, well-designed assessments, source materials and mark schemes to help avoid bias and barriers to the recognition of attainment
- c) ensure specifications are uncluttered and clear for all users
- d) link assessment criteria logically to content
- e) design assessments that use a varied but coherent combination of techniques, where appropriate
- f) ensure there is no ambiguity or hidden expectations in the assessment criteria, learning outcomes or schemes of assessment
- g) take care to avoid creating barriers for particular groups
- h) (working within the regulatory criteria) keep fair access in mind for the content and assessment scheme
- i) provide a justification where a barrier to assessment cannot be eliminated and seek guidance from the regulators (who have specific duties under equality legislation). Where the criteria or standards allow, some parts of the assessment could be made optional or replaced.

A media qualification might require some film or television to be studied. An alternate unit on sound could offer a worthwhile option for many, including visually impaired learners. Conversely, a subtitled/signed television extract might be a suitable alternative to a radio extract for hearing-impaired learners. Use of a DVD or live voice rather than audiotape for modern foreign languages (MFL) listening tests would enable some hearing-impaired learners to lip-read and pick up cues.

Designing specifications

18. The following points deal with aspects of specification design. Each aspect (identified in bold) features in the regulators' criteria for accreditation.

Awarding bodies should:

- a) ensure that **titles** used for a qualification and each of its units denote learning outcomes that are relevant to all

Gender stereotyping may persist in some curriculum areas such as manufacturing, engineering and health and social care.

Assumptions about the experiences offered by a subject can be countered to some extent by careful balancing and presentation of the titles and range of its units.

The range and balance of optional units can also help. For example, a unit on Technology in Hospitals might complement an existing Vehicle Technology option in VCE Engineering.

- b) limit recommended **prior knowledge and experience** to the essentials

In some subjects, including modern foreign languages, mathematics and science, each new concept introduced builds successively on previous more basic knowledge and understanding. However, if the sequence of learning is followed too rigidly, it could create a barrier to fair access.

- c) ensure that all **subject material** described as **mandatory** is essential
- d) specify content in terms that make the specification relevant and attractive to all groups

A specification that requires learners to demonstrate 'public speaking' skills would exclude many. A requirement to demonstrate 'presentation' skills, such as in the Diploma Project, would permit a range of valid alternatives. This would extend access and could make the specification more attractive to all.

- e) ensure that any **optional material** is either equally accessible to all or matched by other equally demanding options that extend access while maintaining the integrity of the qualification

A geology specification might require learners to undertake experimental work on materials collected from the field. Learners with certain physical disabilities could find it difficult to collect materials, while being capable of conducting the experiments.

The specification could indicate that first-hand collection of materials is not required. Alternatively, an option involving physical activity in the field might be balanced by equally challenging work on the planning of an expedition or the evaluation of field-derived data.

- f) identify **opportunities for developing wider understanding** that incorporate experiences across all groups

Accreditation criteria identify spiritual, moral, ethical, social, legislative, economic and cultural issues as examples of the wider understanding that a specification might encourage. They also refer to health and safety, sustainable development and international agreements.

Most subjects offer scope to extend understanding in several of these areas. There are significant social and ethical implications, for example, in company downsizing (business studies), international fair trade agreements (geography) and nuclear energy programmes (physics).

Specifications that take advantage of these opportunities can help motivate learners.

- g) develop **assessment criteria** (where these are not defined by the subject criteria or standards) and **a scheme of assessment** that focuses sharply on the required skills, knowledge and understanding. Unnecessary hurdles should be avoided

Assessment grids are used to chart the coverage of assessment criteria and content against all parts of an assessment.

Similar grids could be used to analyse the accessibility of each part of the assessment for learners with disabilities.

- h) avoid over-assessment by identifying outcomes that focus on the required skills, knowledge, understanding, scope and range
- i) ensure assessment methods are reliable, valid and fit for purpose for all groups
- j) check that, where appropriate, **assessments** allow a variety of response modes. Where a particular mode of response would be inappropriate, alternative assessment methods should be included wherever possible

Tasks designed to assess speaking and listening often cannot determine deaf learners' levels of skill, for example in aspects of modern foreign languages or the aural part of music.

Consideration should be given to alternative response modes which would permit assessment of these learners.

A history specification includes internal assessment of research skills. It requires learners to give a short talk which is assessed for its clarity and relevance as well as for evidence that the required skills have been deployed.

In some circumstances a written presentation, signing or the use of an interpreter could provide equally valid alternative response modes.

- k) ensure that where a variety of assessment methods are allowed there is parity for all groups.

Designing assessments

19. There are common points which should be considered in the design of all assessments. However, this section has been subdivided using the following headings, making it easier to emphasise the particular considerations for:

- written assessments
- practical, speaking and listening assessments
- internal assessments
- stimulus and source material
- mark schemes.

Written assessments

20. Assessments should cover subject content at the appropriate level without bias or stereotyping.
21. The rubric should tell learners clearly what information is required and how that information should be presented. This will help ensure that learners' subject attainment is appropriately recognised.
22. The language and syntax of questions should be easy to understand. Even complex concepts and instructions can be communicated in plain language without compromising standards.
23. Distraction can arise from poor diagrams and inadequate labelling. It can be helpful to highlight questions or command words by separating them from the stem or introductory information.
24. Awarding bodies use specialists to modify prepared assessment materials to meet particular needs. By involving specialists alongside subject experts at an early stage in the development process, the need for later adjustments can be reduced.

Diversity

25. The following points illustrate how access can be enhanced when written assessments are designed to recognise the full diversity of the learner population.

Awarding bodies should:

- a) ensure that people represented in assessment materials reflect the diversity of society. Narrow cultural referencing should be avoided

- b) avoid narrow, negative or stereotypical representations of different groups

In a question on customer service, learners were asked to:

Plan a rota for 8 part-time women workers manning a 24-hour telephone helpline. **X**

The same question can be easily rewritten to avoid sexual stereotypes.

Plan a rota for 8 part-time workers to staff a 24-hour telephone helpline. **✓**

- c) adopt a balanced approach to roles, activities and appearances

The following sentence is clearly unacceptable:

The local doctor may be lucky: he keeps much of his social status. **X**

The evident sex-bias can be avoided by the use of the plural or alternative structures, such as:

Local doctors are lucky. They keep much of their social status. **✓**

- d) ensure that people across the world are presented accurately and with respect
- e) use contexts for questions that reflect the experience of all groups in a balanced way

Practices accepted by some groups can offend others. Gambling 'odds', for example, might seem to offer a real-life context for mathematical problems, but learners with certain beliefs could find such references distasteful. Learners from particular cultures may not be familiar with an apparently familiar term such as 'dice'.

Certain contexts can be emotionally disturbing to learners with related experiences such as serious illness, bereavement, violence, abuse, house fires and road accidents. Where the subject demands such references the use of affective language should be limited.

Some illustrations can cause offence to particular groups. Images of clothing styles and food items require particular sensitivity.

The use of 'real world' contexts often makes helpful connections for learners. However, the context should not dominate. If learners lose subject focus, they may rely on general knowledge rather than subject knowledge to answer the question. Perceptions of the 'real world' also vary according to learners' experiences, beliefs and circumstances. For example, basing a question on the songs of a particular pop group may make it more interesting to some learners, but could cause difficulties for deaf learners.

- f) avoid biased, derogatory or racist language.

Readability

26. The following points deal with the readability of questions. Each point should be considered in its own right, and from an overall perspective. Changes that make sense on their own sometimes do not work well in combination.

Awarding bodies should:

- a) use simple sentence structures with accurate punctuation, and a logical conceptual flow (subject, verb, object) wherever possible
- b) avoid subordinate clauses unless absolutely necessary

The following science question is unnecessarily complex.

If a student were provided with three painted metal rods, one of which was known to be made from brass, one from magnetised steel and one from non-magnetised steel, describe how, without scratching the paint, the student could identify each of the rods.



This redraft is simpler.

A student has three painted metal rods. One is made from brass, one from magnetised steel and one from non-magnetised steel.



Describe how the student could find out which rod is which, without scratching the paint.

Even short questions can be difficult to understand.

What kind of cleaning agent will remove the hard water stains left by a dripping tap on a washbasin?



The following redraft is simpler. It follows a logical pictorial flow. The question has been separated from the information by starting on a new line and using half a line space between them.

A dripping tap leaves hard water stains on a washbasin.



What kind of cleaning agent will remove them?

- c) present information in short sentences
- d) divide even relatively short sentences if they contain a lot of condensed information. If long sentences are unavoidable, make them as straightforward as possible

The following question is made more complex by the use of a long sentence. The punctuation is incorrect. It is expressed partly in the passive tense.

Identify two faults that have been made in the central heating system (illustrated in figure 3); describing in each case how the fault can be corrected.



The following redraft is simpler. It has shorter sentences. The punctuation has been corrected and an active voice is used.

Identify two faults in the central heating system illustrated in figure 3. Describe how to correct each fault.



- e) avoid dense text, unnecessary words and metaphors, clumsy phrases and redundant information

The following question contains a sentence that is short but dense.

Four-fifths of a Year 11 class of 35 pupils are going on a field trip. How many pupils will be on the trip?



It is easier to grasp what is required if the first sentence is divided.

A Year 11 class has 35 pupils. Four-fifths of them are going on a field trip. How many pupils will be on the trip?



Elaborate phrases may seem to add substance to a question but they often introduce unnecessary complexity. For example, the phrase 'in conjunction with' says no more than the word 'with'.

The following question is clumsily expressed.

Given that a stone takes 1.8s to fall through 16m, how long does it take to fall through 25m?

✗

This simpler version is easier to understand.

A stone takes 1.8s to fall through 16m.
How long does it take to fall through 25m?

✓

The instruction below incorporates a number of unnecessary words within some clumsy phrases.

These observations, together with the deductions that you can make from them, must be transposed for the record into the table that is provided for you on the opposite page

✗

It would be sufficient to write.

Record your observations and conclusions in the table on the opposite page.

✓

Metaphors can mislead as learners may take them literally.

Instead of:

Why did the government frown on the regime?

✗

write:

Why was the government opposed to the regime?

✓

and

He had the weight of the world on his shoulders.

✗

could easily become:

He was very worried.

✓

- f) avoid jargon unless it is a requirement of the assessment
- g) avoid asking more than one question in a single sentence
- h) separate questions from other information

The following text contains two questions.

Name one everyday product that can be recycled, identifying the main material that can be recovered from it.



Separating them improves clarity.

Name one everyday product that can be recycled.



Identify the main material that can be recovered from the product.

The following question can be made simpler and fairer by a little reorganisation.

Referring in particular to differences between traditional local weekly newspapers and their newer free competitors, explain how the balances between advertising revenue, costs and cover price operate within the newspaper industry.



Explain the balances between advertising revenue, cost and cover price within the newspaper industry.



In your answer, refer to differences between traditional local weekly newspapers and their newer free competitors.

The following question is not easy to understand.

What reasons can you suggest for the facts that, of children placed in the lowest teaching set for a subject, 5 per cent were from professional backgrounds and 32 per cent were from unskilled backgrounds?



The question is easier to pick out if it is separated from the background material, as follows:

In the lowest teaching set for a subject, 5 per cent of children were from professional backgrounds and 32 per cent were from unskilled backgrounds.



Suggest reasons for these facts.

- i) avoid the passive voice wherever possible because the active form is easier to understand. The passive voice of a verb says that something is being done rather than someone is doing something, e.g. 'the car was sold by a VW dealer' is passive, while 'a VW dealer sold the car' is active

The following question uses the passive voice.

Identify two faults that have been made in the design of the experiment shown, describing in each case how the fault can be corrected.



Use of the active voice, as follows, gives learners a more direct lead. The question is further improved by separating the two parts.

- (a) Identify two faults in the design of this experiment.
- (b) Describe how to correct each fault.



- j) avoid negative ('not') or partly negative ('only') expressions wherever possible. If a negative is essential, put it in bold type to help ensure that learners notice it or phrase the question so that it ends in the word 'except'

Rather than Which of the following is not a mammal?



Use Each of the following is a mammal except . . .



Rather than Explain why the Lake District does not have a dry climate.



Use Explain why the Lake District has a wet climate.



- k) avoid situations where a wrong answer to a question makes it impossible to correctly answer a later question, unless the linkage is the focus of assessment. Unnecessary linkage penalises learners repeatedly for the same error
- l) use plain language in questions and ensure the vocabulary is suitable for the level and context of the assessment. Differentiation should be based on subject content rather than vocabulary

In GCSEs with tiered examinations, essentially similar (overlap) questions are sometimes worded slightly differently. For example, in the foundation tier examiners might use the terms 'find', 'make' and 'use' replacing these with 'locate', 'produce' and 'utilise' in the higher tier.

Using the simpler vocabulary in both tiers should help ensure learners are tested on subject content only.

m) use verbs/adverbs rather than the related abstract nouns

Rather than	What steps can you take to ensure the protection of steel from rust?	✘
Use	How can you protect steel from rust?	✔

n) avoid words with multiple meanings, unless they are the focus of assessment. Learners may make different, valid decisions about what is meant

'Settlement' can mean 'village', 'agreement' or 'payment'.

'Volume' can mean 'book', 'loudness' or 'amount of space'.

'Revolution' can mean 'uprising' or 'rotation'.

The words in bold make the following questions ambiguous.

- The **last thing** you should do when serving a soufflé is leave it to settle.
Explain why.
- Some walkers see whistling as **a sound way** to keep cheerful on a lonely path.
Suggest one reason why.
- The decorators' equipment looked modern enough, but their **overall** appearance was shabby.

Discuss how the public image of a company can be affected by the way its employees look.

- o) use command words consistently and correctly. Different command words should be used to elicit different kinds of responses, not just for the sake of variety.

27. Where a written assessment or task is offered through the medium of Welsh or Irish, the draft should be checked both by a language specialist, and by a subject expert who can ensure the accuracy of technical terms. Papers and tasks need to be equally accessible in each language.

The process of translation may uncover an ambiguity in the original text. Where this happens, it may be helpful to amend the question(s) in both languages.

Legibility

28. Each of the following points deals with an aspect of legibility.

Awarding bodies should:

- a) carefully consider layout of written assessments as poor presentation can hinder effective communication
- b) use an appropriate font of sufficient size

- A 12-point font size is frequently used in written assessments as it is generally accessible.
- Even a small change in font size, e.g. to 10-point, can impair readability.
- **Arial is widely regarded as legible. As a general principle a sans serif font such as Arial is easy to read.**
- Times New Roman and other fonts have their merits but may be less easy to read in 12-point. Compare this sentence with the one above.
- Where appropriate, opportunities to use a larger font such as 14-point could be considered.
- **For some purposes, an 18-point font may be suitable.**

If paper larger than A4 is necessary as a result of using a large font, the benefits must be balanced against the fact that A3 and larger sizes can adversely affect layout and readability.

- c) use underlining, bold, italics, boxes, indentation and shading consistently
- d) use headings, subheadings, bullet points and numbers to ensure questions are well structured, clear and easily managed
- e) use simple rubric in plain English so that the question or task is clear

A written assessment rubric contains the statement: 'In addition to this paper, a 12-page answer book is required.'



This information is for the invigilator rather than the learner.

If the information is needed by the learner, use a simpler statement such as: 'Check that you have a 12-page answer book.'



- f) include diagrams, pictures or photographs in questions only when there is a clear purpose or benefit to all learners (for guidance on the legibility of stimulus and source material, see paragraphs 46–53)
- g) avoid questions where the correct answer requires learners to distinguish between different colours. This could disadvantage colour-blind learners
- h) (if answer booklets are being used) provide enough space for learners' responses
- i) clearly show the mark allocation for each question or question part
- j) ensure cover pages are clearly laid out and include only essential information about the assessment.

This version of a cover page is cluttered and badly organised. The background is too dark for comfortable reading.

GCSE Geography (Reference 510Geo/A) Paper 2 **X**
Foundation Tier: Paper Reference 2010/510/1a

Monday 14 June 2010 from 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm. (Duration two hours).

The paper should be answered in black or blue ink on the answer sheet that you should have been provided with.

Instructions and information you might need during the examination

Rough working should be done in the Answer Book, with any work that is not intended for marking being crossed out.

Marks are shown for each question in brackets with a total of 95 and 5 maximum for quality of written communication.

Question 1 has some informational source material that can be found on pages 5 and 6 (which are perforated) and can be torn out and used with the question.

On the answer sheet you should find spaces for candidate name and the paper number to be filled in.

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This version of the cover page is less cluttered and more logically organised. It has better contrast and the essential information is easier to find and understand.

**GCSE GEOGRAPHY
PAPER 2**



**Foundation Tier: Paper Reference 2010/510/1a
Monday 14 June 2010: 1.30pm to 3.30pm
You have two hours.**

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink.
- Write your name and the paper number on the answer book in the spaces provided.
- Information sources for Question 1 are printed on pages 5 and 6. The pages are perforated. **Tear them out now and use them to help you with your answer.**
- Do all rough work in the answer book. **Cross out work that you do not want marked.**

Information

- The maximum mark for the paper is 95. The marks for each question are shown in brackets.
- You can earn up to 5 extra marks for the quality of your written communication.

The RNIB² advises that 'For someone with a sight problem, user-friendly design means design that is simple and uncluttered'. All learners will benefit from such an approach to the design of written assessments. As a consequence, the need for modified papers may be reduced.

This version of the question contains all the necessary information. However, the signs are not labelled clearly, the three parts of the question are not separated out and the mark allocation is not broken down.

Two of the symbols shown below have one line of symmetry and one has rotational symmetry. ✘



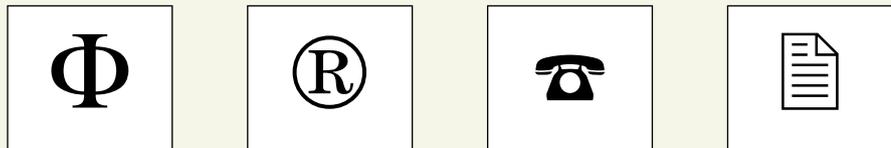
Indicate which of the symbols have one line of symmetry and which has rotational symmetry, specifying the order of the rotational symmetry.

(4 marks)

In this version of the question, the signs are given specific labels. They are also larger.

The parts of the question are separated out and the mark allocation for each is indicated.

Here are **four** symbols. Each is labelled with a letter. ✔



A

B

C

D

(a) **Two** of the symbols have only one line of symmetry.

Write down the letters of these two symbols:

_____ and _____ (2 marks)

(b) **One** of the symbols has rotational symmetry.

(i) Write down the letter of this symbol:

_____ (1 mark)

(ii) Write down the order of rotational symmetry:

_____ (1 mark)

The table used in the question below is difficult to interpret. It gets in the way of the main purpose of the task, which is to test the learners' skills of interpretation.

Study the data in the table below then answer the questions that follow. 

The figures for vehicle thefts reported in selected cities are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1			
City	Year		% increase or decrease
	2007	2008	
Numbers			
England			
Bristol	606	635	+5
Newcastle	856	890	+4
Birmingham	1255	1180	-6
Wales			
Swansea	825	790	-4
Cardiff	740	785	+6

In this version of the question the table is better presented. It is easier for all learners to find the relevant data, but the key task of interpretation requires the same level of subject understanding.

Study the data in the table carefully and then answer the questions that follow. 

Number of vehicle thefts reported in selected cities in England and Wales

City	2007	2008	% change
Birmingham	1255	1180	-6
Bristol	606	635	+5
Cardiff	740	785	+6
Newcastle	856	890	+4
Swansea	825	790	-4

Multiple-choice items

29. The points made above apply to all forms of written assessment. Where the written assessment includes multiple-choice items, there are additional factors to consider. Each of the following points deals with an aspect of writing multiple-choice items.

Awarding bodies should:

- a) ensure that, as with any other form of assessment, any test including multiple-choice items is reliable and valid
- b) take care that the stem of the question and the options (distractors and key) are clear and unambiguous. This is particularly important for the options where the differences may be subtle
- c) ensure the stem poses one question/problem only
- d) where possible, limit the lengths of the distractors and key. Including as much information as possible in the stem rather than in each option is generally helpful in developing clear, unambiguous items
- e) avoid the inclusion of irrelevant detail in an effort to make the correct response less obvious. This can result in reading skills rather than subject knowledge having a significant influence on learners choosing the correct response.

Internal assessments

30. Awarding bodies use different terms for assessments where evidence is collected over a period of time, often outside of examination conditions. This is particularly true for vocational qualifications. Portfolio, coursework, work-based observations, oral questions, assignments and project assessments should provide opportunities for all groups to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do.

31. Where practical performance is the focus, internally assessed work (including controlled assessments within GCSE³) enhances access. Skills are assessed without the time constraints normally associated with written assessments.

³ Controlled assessments can be either internally or externally assessed, depending on the level of control in 'task marking'. Whether external or internal, controlled assessment must be conducted in accordance with the procedures specified by the awarding body.

32. Internally assessed work offers scope for centres to promote fair access for all learners. The degree of flexibility needs to be controlled in the interest of fairness for all, but even where key points within controlled assessments have a high level of control, opportunities should exist for centres to contextualise tasks. Centres should ensure that, where specifications allow flexibility in task setting, they design tasks that meet the criteria set out by the awarding body.
33. An internally assessed component should match the standards of quality and fairness in other parts of the assessment. Where centres are allowed to design their own tasks, awarding bodies should provide enough information for them to design suitable tasks.
34. In some qualifications internally assessed work may be offered as an alternative to an external component. Where this is so, the level of demand in tasks and associated assessment criteria should be comparable to that of the external option.
35. Clear presentation, language and expectations are as important for internally assessed tasks as for written assessments.
36. Awarding bodies must provide clear guidance to internal assessors. Paragraphs 61 and 62 in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (2004) state the arrangements awarding bodies must make when moderating or verifying internal assessments.

Design points

37. Each of the following points considers an aspect of the design of internally assessed tasks. Many of the principles considered in earlier sections of this document are equally relevant here.

Awarding bodies should:

- a) ensure that the purpose of each task is clear. Readability and legibility are as important for internally assessed work as they are for external assessments

- b) ensure tasks address assessment criteria explicitly without unnecessary prescription. Tasks should allow appropriate alternative modes of information gathering and response
- c) avoid a requirement for learners to demonstrate skills that are not essential to the subject

A requirement to manipulate specific instruments in a practical science examination may narrow opportunity. Where the focus of assessment is a science concept or problem-solving skill, such a requirement should be avoided.

However, where the requirement relates to a competence standard (e.g. in a motor vehicle maintenance assessment) demonstrating the skill is essential.

The following business task is well designed.

Sample the opinions of employees about a formal training programme.
Evaluate their comments and report to the employer on the programme's success. ✓

The broad wording of the task means that learners may capture the information and report in a variety of ways. For example, learners with hearing or communication difficulties could complete the task using a written questionnaire, a computer programme or sign language. They could then 'report to the employer' using various means of communication without compromising the validity of the task.

- d) require assessment within group settings only if the interpersonal skills needed are essential to the subject
- e) ensure internally assessed tasks are accessible and accommodate learners' diverse needs

The following task is narrow as it allows only one mode of response.

Write an account contrasting aspects of working life in Victorian Britain with working life today.



This version is more inclusive and simpler.

Contrast aspects of working life in Victorian Britain with working life today. Your account can be handwritten, signed or spoken, or presented using a suitable ICT application.



- f) design internal assessments and mark schemes that recognise the practical constraints under which centres operate.

Collecting evidence

38. Each of the following points should be considered when developing assessments where evidence is collected over a period of time. These are particularly relevant to many vocational qualifications.

Awarding bodies should:

- a) specify any mandatory requirements for the type, amount and presentation of evidence
- b) design tasks with appropriate alternatives for collecting information and communicating responses
- c) develop assessment criteria that measure skills, knowledge and understanding rather than the mode of demonstration, unless this is a requirement of the assessment
- d) specify any time limits on the use of evidence
- e) specify requirements to authenticate evidence
- f) provide clear guidance on centre-devised tasks
- g) ensure assessments reflect, where possible, current working practices
- h) take account of learners' usual ways of working.

Practical, speaking and listening assessments

39. Practical skills are central to many subjects such as dance, music, art and design, design and technology, science, ICT and to most vocational qualifications. However, practical tasks should only be included when they are essential to the qualification.

A qualification might require learners to 'demonstrate' a range of practical techniques. This implies learners must physically manipulate equipment to get the marks.

If this is not the focus of the assessment and the requirement can appropriately be changed to 'demonstrate knowledge' of a range of practical techniques, the assessment could then be accessible to learners with physical impairments.

40. Speaking and listening assessment is an important part of languages, music, drama and jobs with a strong customer interface, such as leisure and tourism or social care.
41. Practical, speaking and listening assessments bring both advantages and challenges. They give learners – including those who have difficulties with written text – other ways to demonstrate their attainment.
42. No one form of assessment is equally accessible to all. For example, assessment methods that demand normal hearing or physical dexterity create difficulties for certain groups. Where possible, alternative methods should be available except where the skill is the focus of the assessment.
43. Facial expression can be an important part of communication. Learners who are unable to demonstrate facial expression may be unable to get maximum marks in an assessment. This requirement should only be included if the assessment cannot be done in any other way.

A learner in a spoken English examination wears a face veil for religious reasons. Ideally the assessor should be able to see the learner's face, as facial expression can enhance meaning and intention.

The awarding body agrees to an examination arrangement of all-female learners, with a female assessor. This provides an acceptable environment for unveiling, thus ensuring fair access to all.

A learner in a British Sign Language assessment has facial paralysis, and asks for this to be taken into account.

The awarding body is unable to agree to a suitable reasonable adjustment because the meaning of a BSL sign is changed by the facial expression that accompanies it. For example, the sign for 'happy' is the same as the sign for 'not happy': the meaning is indicated by the accompanying facial expression. Appropriate use of facial expression is therefore a competence standard in this assessment.

Learners should be made aware of the assessment requirements before starting a course. They may wish to continue with the course, but choose not to be assessed.

44. The design of practical, speaking and listening assessments require careful consideration and a balanced approach.

Awarding bodies should:

- a) be clear about what is to be assessed and design assessments that avoid unnecessary focus on a particular form of assessment
- b) check that, where appropriate, each component allows a variety of response modes. Alternative assessment methods should be included wherever possible

In vocational qualifications such as leisure and tourism or business studies, learners may be required to demonstrate understanding and skills in customer care, e.g. answering customer queries.

Learners could be required to answer a telephone helpline. However, relevant understanding and skills may be demonstrated in a variety of other ways. For example, responses to enquiries could be provided in the form of letters, e-mails or via a 'frequently asked questions' (FAQ) web page.

A music aural test requires learners to identify a note given immediately after the named tonic. In response learners can:

- give the letter name of the note (D, E, etc.)
- play the note on a musical instrument
- record the note on a musical staff.

These three alternatives provide a variety of valid response modes.

- c) where possible, design speaking, listening and practical tasks so that live evidence can be recorded and authenticated as required
- d) where appropriate, select tasks that are likely to be within the experience of all learners.

A speaking task requires learners to describe a recent holiday. Some might not relate to this task as regular holidays are not part of their experience. The task can be redesigned to require learners to describe a recent journey. All learners should be able to relate to the revised task.

- 45. Practical demonstrations (including those in the work place), role play, simulations and discussions⁴ should provide opportunities for all learners to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do.

Awarding bodies should:

- a) select tasks that are within the experience of all groups in a balanced way

⁴ Discussions include individual interviews, panel interviews, professional discussions and oral questions.

- b) take account of health and safety requirements by carrying out a risk assessment at the design stage
- c) consider practical arrangements and resource implications including timings, equipment, staffing, cost-effectiveness and access to buildings
- d) specify any alternative assessment methods and allow a variety of response modes
- e) consider how an individual's contribution can be assessed within group work
- f) develop mark schemes to help ensure consistent judgements are made of the standards being demonstrated
- g) adopt the relevant design points for presentation, layout and readability in any written material developed for the assessment
- h) provide understandable, clear questions
- i) avoid the use of multiple questions during oral assessment, where the learner may be confused about which question to answer
- j) avoid the use of closed questions unless a 'yes' or 'no' answer is specifically required
- k) use open questions with 'why', 'what', 'how', 'where' and 'when' to provide more opportunities for all groups to demonstrate attainment.

Stimulus and source materials

- 46. Stimulus and source materials are often used to support assessments. Stimulus materials designed or selected by assessors should be developed with fair access in mind. Most source materials have already been created for another purpose; they rarely originate with the awarding body. Whatever their source, they should be relevant and valid in terms of the task set.
- 47. Examples of stimulus and source materials include pictures, maps, photographs, film, sound, text, diagrams, charts and graphs. They may be presented electronically or as hard copies.

48. It is important to ask whether the source or stimulus material adds value to the question. It should only be used where it is an integral part of the assessment as it may create a barrier for some learners. For example, many materials cannot be converted into Braille or enlarged for visually impaired learners, and may have to be described in words in the Braille version.
49. Clear presentation is equally important to stimulus and source materials as it is to the questions themselves. Stimulus and source materials should be shown in a separate box from the rest of the question.

SOURCE A lists some important changes in British coal mining.

SOURCE A

- 1842** Underground work by women and children under 10 years of age forbidden.
- 1850** Safety rules and government inspectors introduced.
- 1872** Daily safety inspections for all coal mines required.

50. Issues can arise with the modification of source materials, since they are normally owned by third parties. Copyright regulations apply where extended extracts or complete works are used.
51. There are likely to be issues of misrepresentation if materials are altered without permission. Depending on the amount of material involved, it may be necessary to seek the agreement of the authors and publishers and acknowledge their ownership of the original material.
52. Where source material is taken directly from information relevant to a vocational area (e.g. an extract from a repair manual in an assessment for a motor vehicle qualification), there should be no requirement to modify the material, as the learner would be expected to understand and apply it.

53. Each of the following points considers an aspect of stimulus or source material selection and use.

Awarding bodies should:

- a) be clear about the purpose of including stimulus or source material. Diagrams, pictures or photographs should be included only when there is a clear purpose or benefit to all groups
- b) choose material that enhances or at least maintains the readability and legibility of the question or task. If it is unlikely to do so, its purpose should be reviewed or different material selected

Some tabloid newspapers may tend to sensationalise their reporting. However, they also have a keen sense of audience and use plain, direct language.

Provided that awarding bodies take care over content, tabloid newspapers and popular magazines can offer ideas for clearly written source material.

- c) present diagrams, charts and graphs in a familiar format, unless interpretation of novel formats is the focus of assessment. Sharp contrast, clear definition and sufficient resolution help important information to be easily identified
- d) use diagrams, charts and graphs which lend themselves to being enlarged for visually impaired learners
- e) avoid unnecessary information in diagrams, pictures or photographs. This will help learners to identify the relevant information
- f) label significant features using keys rather than lines and arrows, where possible
- g) present tables with clearly separated columns
- h) avoid handwritten material where possible. If such material is a requirement of the assessment a font that resembles handwriting could be considered

- i) present required information close to the relevant question or on a facing page and not overleaf. This will help learners to link related materials
- j) match the font type and font size to those in associated material, where possible
- k) include clear and precise instructions where additional resources are used. For example, it should be stated whether or not learners can make notes while watching a video clip
- l) check, where a source shows bias or a stereotypical view of a particular group, that the associated question draws attention to or seeks comment on this.

A source claims superiority for European values and lifestyles. The associated question could appropriately ask learners to consider the stance from which the claims are made and comment on the position taken.

Mark schemes

- 54. Assessments designed to maximise fair access need mark schemes that are fit for purpose. Mark schemes that are valid and use clear language will support both accurate marking and equal opportunities.
- 55. Mark schemes should be designed so that they can be easily and consistently applied by all assessors. In addition, teachers and learners may have access to assessed work and the associated mark scheme. It is therefore important that mark schemes show clearly what, where and how marks are awarded.
- 56. As part of the development process, each mark scheme should be evaluated by experts who have had no previous involvement with the materials. Wherever possible, language and equal opportunities specialists should be involved in the process, along with subject experts.
- 57. Assessments should be designed to reward positive achievement. They should differentiate between learners purely on evidence of subject knowledge, understanding and skills. The degree of flexibility of a mark scheme will reflect the nature of the subject and what is being assessed. Equally valid responses presented in different forms should achieve the same marks.

58. Mark schemes should credit appropriate responses that reflect the diverse background of learners and the different ways in which they may demonstrate what they know, understand and can do. Some types of task present particular challenges. Synoptic questions, for example, need to take account of the many valid ways in which learners may answer the question.

A question may ask learners to identify patterns in social behaviour from their knowledge of the way that individuals and groups contributed to national events in different historical periods.

Learners may give a chronological overview of a series of events and the role of the main participants before identifying patterns. Alternatively, they may present a deeper analysis of contemporaneous contributions before picking out similar or contrasting behaviour from other periods.

There are other acceptable approaches. The mark scheme should be sufficiently precise to ensure that the relevant skills are appropriately rewarded, and sufficiently open to accommodate alternative approaches.

59. Some multi-part questions may explicitly be designed to test a sequence of logical thought. Generally, however, mark schemes should not allow a wrong answer on one part of a question to make later marks harder or impossible to earn.
60. Feedback from stakeholders can influence the development of assessments. Live assessments and mark schemes, however, raise the issue of security. In the case of item banks, pre-tests using control groups can inform the development of accessible materials. In other cases, post hoc reviews of questions and mark schemes will help identify access issues and establish how best to address them for the future.
61. The increasing use of technology in assessments raises both opportunities and challenges. This is picked up in the later section on the use of technology.
62. Each of the following points considers an aspect of the design of mark schemes.

Awarding bodies should:

- a) ensure that the purpose of each assessment is fully reflected in the associated mark scheme

- b) ensure that the mark scheme rewards a variety of appropriate responses

An ICT question may ask learners to discuss the use of a mouse as an input device. Visually impaired learners could better demonstrate their knowledge and understanding by describing the use of a keyboard which provides them with similar access.

A mark scheme designed to credit a relevant description of a range of input devices is more likely to accommodate learners' normal ways of working.

- c) design mark schemes that are sufficiently flexible to allow alternative response modes, where these are necessary

An example in section 37 c) shows a well-designed, accessible business task. The care taken in designing this task would be wasted if the mark scheme were not equally accessible.

For example, if marks are allocated for learners gathering information from employees, the means by which they engage with employees should be as flexible as possible to avoid introducing unnecessary barriers.

Similarly, if marks are allocated for a report, the means by which that report is presented should be appropriate for the subject, without introducing any unnecessary barriers.

- d) aim to make mark schemes as clear and legible as the tasks to which they relate
- e) ensure that marks awarded reflect fully and consistently the agreed interpretation of command words.

When learners are asked to describe something, the expectation is that they should set out the characteristics of the item, attribute or event.

In this case the mark scheme should fully reward a description. Learners are not asked for an explanation, an analysis or a comparison.

Technology

63. Advances in technology have an impact on the design of qualifications and assessments. This document does not give guidance on issues of security, delivery or accommodation associated with the use of technology in national assessments, but concentrates on the implications for fair access.
64. The development of e-assessment has introduced options that can extend access and opportunity to learners who might otherwise be excluded. However, the pace of development is rapid and the access implications of e-assessment for all learners need to be carefully considered. Awarding bodies and regulators have to ensure that new technologies advance rather than reduce opportunity.
65. Many of the principles outlined earlier in this document apply equally to the design of assessments, stimulus/source materials and mark schemes in electronic form. However, the flexibility that technology offers raises additional points.

Awarding bodies should consider:

- a) whether technology offers ways of making mandatory material more widely accessible
- b) whether technology-based options would extend access to groups who might otherwise be excluded

Qualifications continue to evolve as technology opens up new ways of working. Computer graphics in art and design and electronic systems in music, for example, have affected both the scope and practice of these subjects. Technology also offers new ways of creating and decoding text.

Regulators and awarding bodies need to consider carefully how such developments might impact on assessments and what implications arise for fair access.

Design and technology tasks require learners to demonstrate 'design and make' skills. Part of the assessment typically focuses on the skills of modelling, sketching and rendering of design proposals. Products are subsequently made by learners using appropriate manufacturing processes and materials.

Familiar terms may need to be reviewed, as technology provides new ways of carrying out practical tasks. For example, the assessment of 'making' in design and technology has traditionally required the activity to be carried out by hand. However, by using computer aided design and computer aided manufacture (CAD/CAM) equipment learners with limited motor skills may be able to complete valid 'design and make' tasks, which deserve appropriate recognition.

In vocational qualifications, however, if 'make' is a competence standard being assessed, awarding bodies should make clear the extent to which other approaches are acceptable.

- c) introducing a systematic review of the ways in which specifications, assessments and source/stimulus materials are presented, checking that technology is being used effectively to enhance quality
 - d) reviewing each assessment scheme to establish whether technology could be used in ways that would enhance access
 - e) evaluating the comparability of alternative response modes.
66. Electronic marking and other forms of e-assessment are emerging applications of technology. One possible benefit of e-assessment is that assessors may be able to respond more quickly and flexibly to learners' work.
67. Issues inevitably arise as awarding bodies explore the possibilities of e-assessment. New ways of interacting become possible, and it is clear that fresh approaches are required to maintain security and consistency.
68. Awarding bodies should ensure that the opinions and assessment needs of disabled users are gathered at an early stage and that, as far as possible, on-screen tests accurately capture these users' particular requirements.

69. World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) guidelines and specifications for web development provide a useful starting point for the design of on-screen tests.
70. On-screen test developers need not be experts in the wide range of technologies available for disabled people to access information technology. A range of alternative input and output devices can be used for content that is designed to W3C guidelines and specifications.
71. To take advantage of the flexibility offered by e-assessment, awarding bodies should:
 - a) consider providing centres/learners with the opportunity to change the font, font size or colours displayed on-screen. The presentation can then be tailored to individual learners' needs, provided that the security of the assessment is not compromised. The user's operating system may allow them to make other changes, for example to the size of the mouse pointer or to the flash rate of the cursor
 - b) include, where possible, text equivalents for graphical elements
 - c) consider providing additional versions of tests, e.g. low graphics versions
 - d) ensure that, where on-screen content does not lend itself to adjustment, accessible and equivalent alternatives (e.g. pencil and paper tests) are provided and that these make comparable demands of learners
 - e) ensure that navigation (forward and backwards if learners are allowed to review their responses) is straightforward and intuitive for all learners. This is particularly important where on-screen assessment has been provided as a reasonable adjustment to a normally paper-based assessment
 - f) be aware of the importance of accessibility testing of on-screen formats. Users with disabilities may uncover difficulties missed by others. Trialling will help ensure a range of assistive technologies can interact with the test environment.

72. Useful information and case studies can be found outside the world of education, for example:

- the BBC www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility
- AbilityNet (a national charity that helps disabled adults and children use computers and the internet by adapting and adjusting their technology) www.abilitynet.org.uk
- the British Computer Association of the Blind www.bcab.org.uk
- the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) www.w3c.rl.ac.uk

Checklist

This checklist draws the main principles together to assist awarding bodies as they develop qualifications, assessment materials and mark schemes.

73. The accreditation processes for many qualifications require that proposals are reviewed in consultation with learners and/or their representatives to ensure there are no barriers to entry for disabled people, for women or men, or for different racial groups, and that every possible step has been taken to reduce the need for reasonable adjustments.
74. In the context of this guide awarding bodies are advised, before submitting any specification for accreditation, to be sure that:
 - a) all text is free from ambiguity and hidden expectations
 - b) no unnecessary material is included that could present barriers to entry for particular groups
 - c) any assessment criterion that does present an obstacle to a particular group is justified
 - d) the titles, mandatory content, optional content (where available) and assessment scheme are attractive, relevant and accessible to all groups within the attainment range of the qualification
 - e) the overall qualification is both balanced and coherent from the perspective of learners and other stakeholders.
75. In the context of this guide, awarding bodies are advised, before signing off any assessment, to be sure that:
 - a) all text is written in plain, clear and consistent language
 - b) the rubric is clear and easily distinguished from the questions
 - c) only essential and relevant source material is included
 - d) all pictorial, tabular and graphic material is presented in a clear, uncluttered and logical way
 - e) all materials associated with a particular task are kept close together and presented in a logical manner

- f) the scope each part of the assessment offers to extend fair access has been fully exploited
 - g) each item makes a significant contribution to the balance of the overall qualification
 - h) equality is promoted
 - i) no offence is caused with respect to any of the strands of Equalities legislation because of inappropriate subject matter or language.
76. Awarding bodies are advised, before signing off any mark scheme or set of assessment criteria, to be sure that:
- a) all text is readable, legible and valid in relation to the assessment objectives
 - b) the mark scheme is clear and can be easily and consistently applied
 - c) language and equal opportunities specialists have been included alongside subject experts in the development process
 - d) the mark scheme has been evaluated by experts who have not been involved in the earlier stages of development
 - e) the mark scheme reflects the diverse ways in which learners can demonstrate attainment and includes an indication of the nature and range of responses likely to be worthy of credit.

77. The following table provides a summary of some of the principles and design points in this guidance. Awarding bodies could use this during the development of standards, specifications and assessments as part of their quality assurance arrangements.

Before signing off development work, complete the following:

Qualification and content matter	Further work required	Completed
The titles and mandatory content are relevant to all groups within the attainment range.		
Any prior knowledge and experience is limited to essentials.		
Any optional routes are accessible to all groups and equally demanding.		
All text is free from unnecessary material that could present obstacles to particular groups.		
Any assessment criteria that may present an obstacle to particular groups are justified.		
The needs of all groups have been considered.		
There is no inappropriate or unnecessary testing.		
A variety of response modes have been specified.		
Current working practices are recognised.		

Glossary

General terms

The majority of terms and definitions that follow are identical with those included in the glossary within the regulators' 2004 publication *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*. Where additional terms have been included, these appear with an asterisk.

Access arrangements*	Arrangements which are agreed before an assessment to allow learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment. They allow learners to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. An access arrangement that meets the needs of a disabled learner would be a 'reasonable adjustment' for that particular learner.
Accreditation	The process through which the regulators confirm that a qualification and the associated specification conform to the regulatory criteria.
Assessment	The process of making judgements about the extent to which a learner's work meets the assessment criteria for a qualification or unit, or part of a unit.
Assessment criteria	The requirements that learners need to meet in order to achieve success (or a given grade) in a qualification or unit, or part of a unit.
Assessment objective*	One of a set of statements in a specification describing the focus of assessment.
Assistive technologies*	Mechanical or electronic devices that help individuals with particular needs to overcome limitations.
Awarding	The process through which learners' results and/or grades are determined on the basis of available evidence.

Carrier language*	The language used to set an assessment (as opposed to technical language which is being assessed).
Command words*	The words used in instructions to learners to elicit a response.
Competence standard*⁵	An academic, medical, or other standard applied by or on behalf of a qualifications body for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability.
Content	The coverage of a qualification, programme, module, unit or other component, expressed as the skills, knowledge, understanding or area of competence that is covered.
Controlled assessment*	Assessment undertaken where full examination conditions do not apply. The awarding body specifies the controls that apply to how work is set, the conditions under which it is done and how it is assessed.
Coursework*	Tasks completed by a learner during the course of study and assessed against criteria made explicit in the specification.
Examination*	The totality of assessment that a learner must undertake to gain a qualification. The examination may include several different assessment components.
Learning outcomes*	What the learner has to be able to do or know in given circumstances.
Mark scheme	Detail of how marks are to be awarded in relation to a particular assessment task.
Modified papers*	Papers which are adapted to meet the needs of individual learners, for example by increasing font size or producing a Braille version.
Portfolio*	A collection of evidence submitted for assessment.

⁵ Competence standards, as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), are used in vocational qualifications. Under the Equality Act (2010), the concept of competence standards has been removed for general qualifications.

Project*	An extended piece of work undertaken by a learner for assessment.
Qualification	An award made by an awarding body for demonstration of achievement or competence.
Reasonable adjustment*	A reasonable step taken to lessen or remove the effects of a substantial disadvantage to a disabled learner in an assessment. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual.
Reliability	The extent to which assessment results are an accurate measurement of the learners' demonstration of the abilities specified by the assessment criteria.
Rubric*	The written instructions telling a learner how to approach an assessment. Learners should be told to pay attention to the rubric in all assessments.
Scheme of assessment	The methods and processes (and tasks where appropriate) to be used to assess a qualification or unit.
Special consideration*	An adjustment to a learner's mark or grade to reflect temporary illness, injury or other indisposition at the time of the assessment.
Specification*	The complete description – including mandatory and optional aspects – of the content, assessment arrangements and performance requirements for a qualification.
Stimulus material*	Material generated by assessors and included in a task to encourage learners to demonstrate their subject capabilities.
Source material*	Material from external sources that learners are invited to draw on in order to respond to a task.
Unit	The smallest part of a qualification that is capable of certification in its own right.
Validity	The fitness for purpose of an assessment tool or scheme.

Command words

Awarding bodies have prepared various glossaries for the command words used in assessments. The definitions below draw on information found in these glossaries. They have been grouped by meaning.

The same command words are often used in a wide range of different subjects. However, any common definitions should be used with caution because subjects have their own traditions and expectations.

Use command words consistently and correctly. Avoid words that prompt inadequate, single-word answers. Use different command words to elicit different kinds of responses, not purely for the sake of variety.

Analyse	separate information into components and identify their characteristics
Assess	make an informed judgement
Consider	review and respond to given information
Criticise	assess worth against explicit expectations
Evaluate	judge from available evidence
Examine	investigate closely
Explore	investigate without preconceptions about the outcome
Review	survey information

Comment	present an informed opinion
Deduce	draw conclusions from information provided
Define	specify meaning
Describe	set out characteristics
Discuss	present key points
Explain	set out purposes or reasons
Illustrate	present clarifying examples

Interpret translate information into recognisable form
Outline set out main characteristics
Relate demonstrate connections between items
State express in clear terms
Summarise present principal points without detail

Argue present a reasoned case
Debate present different perspectives on an issue
Give produce an answer from recall
Justify support a case with evidence
Prove demonstrate validity on the basis of evidence
Suggest present a possible case

Calculate work out the value of something
Estimate assign an approximate value

Compare identify similarities
Contrast identify differences

Apply put into effect in a recognised way
Complete finish a task by adding to given information
Develop take forward or build upon given information
Identify name or otherwise characterise

Appendix

Examples of access arrangements

For further details please refer to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document *Access Arrangements Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration – General and Vocational Qualifications* (updated annually) and the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) document *Good practice guide – The application of reasonable adjustments and special consideration in vocational qualifications* (FAB, 2005).

Access arrangements are provided for learners with short- or long-term disabilities, though a learner does not necessarily have to be disabled as defined in law to be eligible for an access arrangement. Access arrangements must:

- be approved before an assessment
- allow access to assessment without giving an unfair advantage
- reflect the learner's normal way of working
- not compromise the assessment criteria of the specification in question.

Evidence of learners' needs must be obtained by centres to support an access arrangement.

Readers/computer readers

A reader reads the questions to the learner but does not explain or clarify the question. A reader is not allowed in sections of papers that test the skill of reading.

Scribes/voice input systems

A scribe writes down or word-processes a learner's dictated answers to questions in assessments. A scribe cannot be used in assessments that are testing writing such as modern foreign languages writing papers unless the learner dictates the foreign words letter by letter. On papers testing quality of written communication marks should not be awarded for spelling and punctuation when a scribe is used.

Practical assistants

A practical assistant carries out practical tasks at the instruction of the learner during an assessment. The learner will not be credited with marks for any skill that has been performed by the practical assistant. A practical assistant cannot be used when the practical skill is itself being tested, e.g. in music, art and design, design and technology and many vocational qualifications.

Oral Language Modifiers

An Oral Language Modifier may clarify the carrier language used in an assessment but must not explain any technical term as this will compromise the demands of the question. An Oral Language Modifier is not allowed in assessments that test the skill of reading.

Transcripts

A transcript is a word-for-word copy of the learner's script which is made after the assessment without the participation of the learner. A transcript may be a full copy or a partial copy where only some words need clarification.

Sign Language Interpreters

British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) are recognised as official languages. Sign Language Interpreters can be used to sign the instructions and questions to learners during assessments. Technical terms or subject specific language must be finger-spelled and not signed. In many assessments learners may only be permitted to sign their answers where it is possible to finger-spell the answers, or where the answers involve single words.

Modified papers

Modified papers are ordered in advance and individually prepared for learners who are deemed to have learning or language difficulties. Braille and large print papers are produced in line with the publication *Best practice guidance for the modification and production of examination papers for candidates with a visual impairment*.

JCQ has noted that 'several technological developments are currently underway, such as adapting modified papers to be read on screen' (*Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration – General and Vocational Qualifications*). The availability of on-screen access is likely to increase in the future.

Extra time

Applications for extra time may be made by centres. Extra time is not allowed in assessments that test the time in which a skill is performed.

Examples of learners who may require access arrangements

Access arrangements are made on the basis of an individual learner's needs. The following are examples only.

Communication and interaction

Learners with communication and interaction difficulties may have problems with written communication skills. They may need to use a word processor or, in particular circumstances, have the assistance of a scribe to write for them. They may need extra time to demonstrate written and oral communication skills.

Cognition and learning

Learners with learning difficulties may require extra time for timed assessments. In appropriate cases, they may also need reading or writing assistance.

Sensory and physical needs

Learners with sensory and physical needs might require extra time, the use of a word processor, and/or a scribe. They may require papers that are modified. They may require a practical assistant. They may also require a reader or an Oral Language Modifier.

Behavioural, emotional and social needs

Learners with behavioural, emotional and social needs might require supervised rest periods, separate invigilation or alternative accommodation arrangements. Where these learners also have learning difficulties, they may require extra time and, in the case of more severe impairment, readers and/or scribes.

Some learners' needs will fall within more than one of the above categories.

Sample inclusion sheet

This is provided as an example to show how barriers can be identified within a specification. It should not be regarded as an accurate analysis of a particular specification.

Media Studies

Assessment objectives		Weightings
AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of media products and the contexts in which they are produced and consumed.	20%
AO2	Analyse and respond to media texts/topics using media key concepts and appropriate terminology.	20%
AO3	Demonstrate research, planning and presentational skills.	30%
AO4	Construct and evaluate their own products using creative and technical skills.	30%

The assessment objectives assess the ability of the candidates to:

	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4
See	No	Yes*	No	No
Speak	No	No	No	No
Hear	No	No*	No	No
Read independently	No	No	No	No
Hand write	No	No	No	No
Manipulate manually	No	No	No	No*
Perform physically	No	No	No	No
Work in a team	No	No	No	No

Do the assessments allow the use of these access arrangements?

	Yes/No	Component
Readers	Yes	All written and practical assessments
Scribes	Yes	All written and practical assessments
Practical assistants	Yes*	All written and practical assessments
Word processors	Yes	All written and practical assessments
Transcripts	Yes	All written and practical assessments
BSL signers	Yes	All written and practical assessments
Live speaker	Yes	All written and practical assessments
Modified question papers	Yes	All written and practical assessments
Extra time	Yes	All written and practical assessments

(This is not a definitive list of access arrangements)

* Further guidance can be given once the initial analysis has been carried out.

Groups for which part of the assessment is a barrier

Some students with visual impairments will encounter a barrier when dealing with print and other visual-based media forms where an appreciation of the visual effect is required.

Some students with a hearing or physical impairment will be restricted as to which media they may select.

Justification

The GCSE subject criteria for this subject require that students must 'demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a minimum of three different media (including at least one print and one audiovisual-based form)'. GCSE Media Studies specifications must abide by this requirement.

Mitigation/advice

Although some disabled students may be restricted as to the media they may select, the wide choice of media forms, including web-based media, available to them should allow them access to the assessment. Practical assistants may be used to assist those with a physical impairment but if the assistant 'constructs' the product (AO4) the student must not be awarded marks for the skill.

Modified question papers, other assistive technologies and careful guidance from their teachers on suitable media choices will help disabled students access this qualification.

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