

GCSE Subject Level Guidance for Geography

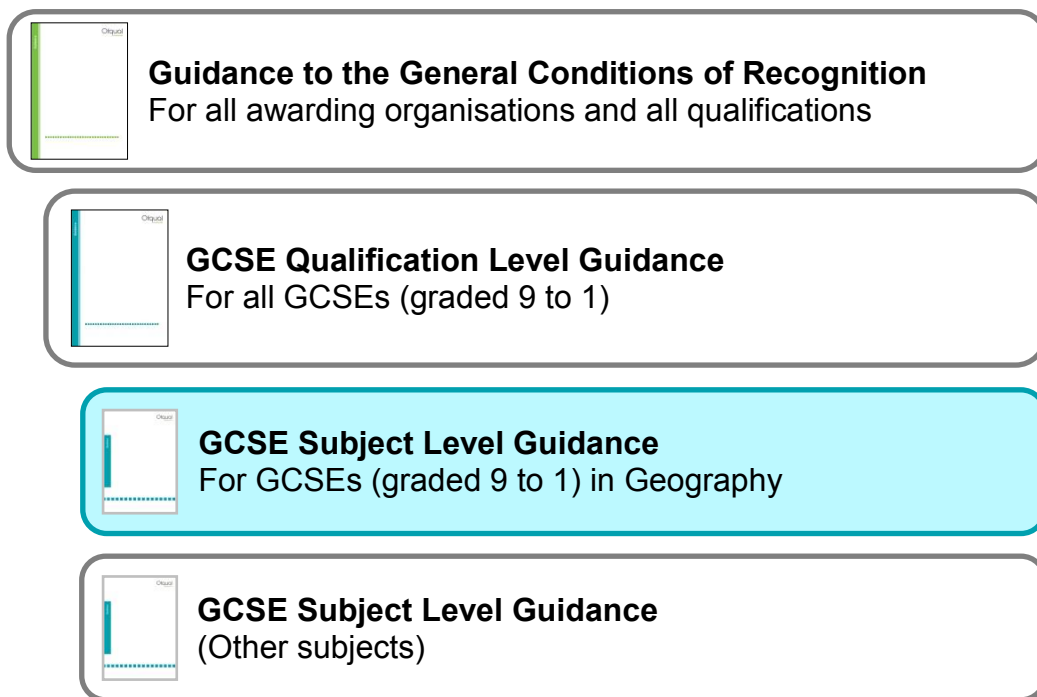
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Introduction

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



This document sets out guidance which applies to all GCSE Qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in Geography. It supports the *GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Geography*.¹

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

An awarding organisation has a legal obligation under the 2009 Act to have regard to this guidance, where relevant, in relation to each GCSE Qualification in Geography that it makes available or proposes to make available. Condition GCSE(Geography)1 imposes the same obligation in respect of the guidance below which is issued under those Conditions.

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

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

Guidance set out in this document

This document provides guidance in relation to subject content, and on assessment objectives, for GCSE Qualifications (graded 9 to 1) in Geography.

Guidance in relation to subject content for GCSE Qualifications in Geography

The subject content for GCSE Qualifications (graded 9 to 1) in Geography is set out in the Department for Education's *Geography: GCSE Subject Content*, document reference DFE-00345-2014 (the 'Content Document').²

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

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

Fieldwork knowledge, skills and understanding

The Content Document sets out six areas of knowledge, skills and understanding related to fieldwork which assessments should cover –

- (i) Understanding of the kinds of question capable of being investigated through fieldwork and an understanding of the geographical enquiry processes appropriate to investigate these.
- (ii) Understanding of the range of techniques and methods used in fieldwork, including observation and different kinds of measurement.
- (iii) Processing and presenting fieldwork data in various ways including maps, graphs and diagrams.
- (iv) Analysing and explaining data collected in the field using knowledge of relevant geographical case studies and theories.
- (v) Drawing evidenced conclusions and summaries from fieldwork transcripts and data.
- (vi) Reflecting critically on fieldwork data, methods used, conclusions drawn and knowledge gained.

As with all other content, we expect an awarding organisation to ensure that the assessments for a GCSE Qualification in Geography which it makes available or proposes to make available sample this content in sufficient depth and in a way which –

- ensures balanced coverage over time,
- is at an appropriate Level of Demand, and

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

- minimises predictability of the assessments.

In respect of each assessment of fieldwork, an awarding organisation should interpret the references to both “fieldwork data” and “data collected in the field” as including –

- data collected by a Learner, or group of Learners, as part of a fieldwork experience, and/or
- exemplar data provided by the awarding organisation.

Guidance on assessment objectives for GCSE Qualifications in Geography

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

We published our requirements in relation to assessment objectives in *GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Geography*, and reproduce assessment objectives AO1 to AO4 and their respective weightings in the table below.

	Objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge of locations, places, processes, environments and different scales.	15%
AO2	Demonstrate geographical understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ concepts and how they are used in relation to places, environments and processes; ▪ the interrelationships between places, environments and processes. 	25%
AO3	Apply knowledge and understanding to interpret, analyse and evaluate geographical information and issues and to make judgements.	35%
AO4	Select, adapt and use a variety of skills and techniques to investigate questions and issues and communicate findings.	25%

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

- the different 'strands' within each of the assessment objectives;
- 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 GCSE(Geography)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 of locations, places, processes, environments and different scales.			15%
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
n/a	This AO is a single element.	Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Locations, places, processes and environments are aspects of subject content. Awarding organisations should explain their approach to targeting them in their assessment strategy. ■ Scales relate to locations, places, processes and environments. There is not a specific defined set of scales, but they should range, as appropriate, from local to global in each set of assessments. ■ We do not expect every set of assessments to cover each aspect of subject content across all scales, or every aspect of subject content at the same scales.

AO2: Demonstrate geographical understanding of:			25%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concepts and how they are used in relation to places, environments and processes ■ The interrelationship between places, environments and processes. 			
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
1 – Concepts and how they are used in relation to places, environments and processes	This strand is a single element.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Full coverage of each strand in each set of assessments (but not every assessment). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Places, environments and processes are aspects of subject content. Awarding organisations should explain their approach to targeting them in their assessment strategy. ■ The emphasis here is on Learners' understanding. The application of that understanding is addressed by AO3.
2 – The interrelationship between places, environments and processes	This strand is a single element.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A reasonable balance between strands 1 and 2 in each set of assessments (but not every assessment). 	

AO3: Apply knowledge and understanding to interpret, analyse and evaluate geographical information and issues to make judgements.			35% (10% applied to fieldwork context(s))
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
n/a	1a – Interpret geographical information and issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Full coverage of each strand in each set of assessments (but not every assessment). ■ A reasonable balance in each set of assessments (but not every assessment) between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ interpret, analyse, and evaluate; □ information and issues; and □ make judgements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Interpret means describing and ascribing meaning. ■ Analyse means deconstructing information and/or issues to find connections and provide logical chain(s) of reasoning. ■ Evaluate means appraising and/or synthesising information and/or issues. ■ Make judgements means coming to decisions and/or conclusions based on evidence. ■ The emphasis here is on application – this should include (for each set of assessments) questions/tasks which require Learners to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ tackle novel situations that are not clearly indicated in the specification; □ develop material beyond what is covered in the specification; or □ make links between such types of material, which are not signalled in the specification.
	1b – Analyse geographical information and issues.		
	1c – Evaluate geographical information and issues.		
	1d – Make judgements.		

AO4: Select, adapt and use a variety of skills and techniques to investigate questions and issues and communicate findings.			25% (5% used to respond to fieldwork data and context(s))
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
n/a	1a – Select a variety of skills and techniques to investigate questions and issues.	Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not every assessment).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Skills and techniques are aspects of subject content. Awarding organisations should explain their approach to targeting them in their assessment strategy. ■ Questions are geographical matters requiring resolution or discussion. ■ Issues mean topics about which there can be debate or discussion. ■ The emphasis in this assessment objective should be on the use of skills and techniques – and the weighting of element 1c should reflect this emphasis. ■ Element 1d should be assessed in combination with one or more of the other elements. ■ There are different ways in which findings can be communicated. This may include written responses or data responses. ■ We do not expect individual tasks/questions to cover a variety of skills and techniques. ■ We do not expect individual tasks/questions to cover both questions and issues.
	1b – Adapt a variety of skills and techniques to investigate questions and issues.		
	1c – Use a variety of skills and techniques to investigate questions and issues.		
	1d – Communicate findings.		

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