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Guidance

GCSE, AS and A level Assessment Objectives

Updated 9 May 2016

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1.

GCSE assessment objectives

Assessment objectives are part of the assessment arrangements for these

qualifications. We adopt them into our regulatory framework through the [subject-specific conditions](#) that exam boards must comply with when designing their specifications.

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1.1 Ancient languages

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the language.	50% ¹
AO2	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of literature and/or other ancient sources.	25%
AO3	Analyse, evaluate and respond to literature and/or other ancient sources.	25%

1.2 Art and design

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
AO1	Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources	25%
AO2	Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes	25%
AO3	Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses	25%
AO4	Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language	25%

1.3 Citizenship studies

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of citizenship concepts, terms, and issues	30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of citizenship concepts, terms and issues to contexts and actions	30%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate a range of evidence relating to citizenship issues, debates and actions, including different viewpoints, to develop reasoned, coherent arguments and make substantiated judgments	40%

1.4 Computer science

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
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AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key concepts and principles of computer science	30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles of computer science	40%
AO3	Analyse problems in computational terms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to make reasoned judgements • to design, program, evaluate and refine solutions 	30%

1.5 Dance

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
AO1	Perform dance, reflecting choreographic intention through physical, technical and expressive skills	30%
AO2	Create dance, including movement material and aural setting, to communicate choreographic intention	30%
AO3	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of choreographic processes and performing skills	15%
AO4	Critically appreciate own works and professional works, through making analytical, interpretive and evaluative judgements	25%

1.6 Design and technology

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
AO1	Identify, investigate and outline design possibilities to address needs and wants	10%
AO2	Design and make prototypes that are fit for purpose	30%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate –	20%

- design decisions and outcomes, including for prototypes made by themselves and others
- wider issues in design technology

AO4	Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of –	40%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technical principles • design and making principles 	

1.7 Drama

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
AO1	Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning for theatrical performance	20%
AO2	Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance	30%
AO3	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed	30%
AO4	Analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others	20%

1.8 English language

The assessment objectives for reformed GCSEs in English language are set out in the Department for Education's [subject content](#).

1.9 English literature

The assessment objectives for reformed GCSEs in English language are set

out in the Department for Education's [subject content](#).

1.10 Food preparation and nutrition

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of food, cooking and nutrition	20%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of food, cooking and nutrition	30%
AO3	Plan, prepare, cook and present dishes, combining appropriate techniques	30%
AO4	Analyse and evaluate different aspects of food, cooking and nutrition, including food made by themselves and others	20%

1.11 Geography

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge of locations, places, processes, environments and different scales.	15%
AO2	Demonstrate geographical understanding of concepts and how they are used in relation to places, environments and processes, and the inter-relationships between places, environments and processes.	25%
AO3	Apply knowledge and understanding to interpret, analyse and evaluate geographical information and issues and to make judgements.	25% 2 .
AO4	Select, adapt and use a variety of skills and techniques to investigate questions and issues and communicate findings.	25% 3 .

In each specification as a whole, 5 per cent of the marks must be used to

credit the accuracy of candidates' spelling, punctuation and grammar and their use of specialist terminology.

1.12 History

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied.	35%
AO2	Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order historical concepts.	35%
AO3	Analyse, evaluate and use sources (contemporary to the period) to make substantiated judgements, in the context of historical events studied.	15%
AO4	Analyse, evaluate and make substantiated judgements about interpretations (including how and why interpretations may differ) in the context of historical events studied.	15%

In each specification as a whole, 5 per cent of the marks must be used to credit the accuracy of candidates' spelling, punctuation and grammar and their use of specialist terminology.

1.13 Mathematics

The assessment objectives for reformed GCSEs in mathematics are set out in the Department for Education's [subject content](#).

Modern foreign languages

1.14

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
AO1	Listening: Understand and respond to different types of spoken language.	25%
AO2	Speaking: Communicate and interact in speech.	25%
AO3	Reading: Understand and respond to different types of written language.	25%
AO4	Writing: Communicate in writing.	25%

In each of AO2 and AO4 at least 10% of the marks available must be allocated to knowledge and accurate application of the grammar and structures of the language prescribed in the specification.

1.15 Music

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
AO1	Perform with technical control, expression and interpretation	30%
AO2	Compose and develop musical ideas with technical control and coherence	30%
AO3	Demonstrate and apply musical knowledge	20%
AO4	Use appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about music	20%

1.16 Physical education

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
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AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin performance and involvement in physical activity and sport	25%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin performance and involvement in physical activity and sport	20%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate the factors that underpin performance and involvement in physical activity and sport	15%
AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate and apply relevant skills and techniques in physical activity and sport • Analyse and evaluate performance 	40%

1.17 Religious studies

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, ⁴ including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beliefs, practices and sources of authority • influence on individuals, communities and societies • similarities and differences within and/or between religions and beliefs 	50%
AO2	Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence	50%

In each specification as a whole, 5 per cent of the marks must be used to credit the accuracy of candidates' spelling, punctuation and grammar and their use of specialist terminology.

1.18 Science

For consistency, we have set the same assessment objectives for reformed GCSEs in biology, chemistry, physics and combined science.

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scientific ideas • scientific techniques and procedures 	40%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scientific ideas • scientific enquiry, techniques and procedures 	40%
AO3	Analyse information and ideas to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpret and evaluate • make judgements and draw conclusions • develop and improve experimental procedures 	20%

2.

AS and A level assessment objectives

Assessment objectives are part of the assessment arrangements for these qualifications. We adopt them into our regulatory framework through the [subject-specific conditions](#) that exam boards must comply with when designing their specifications

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2.1 Ancient languages

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the language	50%	50%
AO2	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of literature	25 to 30%	20 to 25%
AO3	Critically analyse, evaluate and respond to literature	20 to 25%	25 to 30%

2.2 Art and design

Objective	Requirements	AS	A
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			level
AO1	Develop ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding	20-30%	20-30%
AO2	Explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops	20-30%	20-30%
AO3	Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress	20-30%	20-30%
AO4	Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements	20-30%	20-30%

2.3 Business

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge of terms, concepts, theories, methods and models to show an understanding of how individuals and organisations are affected by and respond to business issues	25-35%	20-30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding to various business contexts to show how individuals and organisations are affected by and respond to issues	20-30%	20-30%
AO3	Analyse issues within business, showing an understanding of the impact on individuals and organisations of external and internal influences	20-30%	20-30%
AO4	Evaluate quantitative and qualitative information to make informed judgements and propose evidence-based solutions to business issues	15-25%	20-30%

2.4 Computer science

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the principles and concepts of computer science, including abstraction, logic, algorithms and data representation	35-45%	30-40%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of the principles and concepts of computer science, including to analyse problems in computational terms	35-45%	30-40%
AO3	Design, program and evaluate computer systems that solve problems, making reasoned judgements about these and presenting conclusions	20-30%	30-40%

2.5 Dance

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Perform dance through the application of physical, technical, interpretative and performance skills	25%	25%
AO2	Create dance, applying choreographic skills, to communicate artistic intention	25%	25%
AO3	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of performance and choreography from different periods and genres	25 to 30%	20 to 25%
AO4	Critically appreciate and assess performance and choreography, through making analytical, interpretative and evaluative judgements	20 to 25%	25 to 30%

2.6 Drama and theatre

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning as part of the	20	20 to

	theatre making process, making connections between dramatic theory and practice	to 30%	30%
AO2	Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance	20 to 30%	20 to 30%
AO3	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed	20 to 30%	20 to 30%
AO4	Analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others	20 to 25%	20 to 25%

2.7 Economics

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge of terms/concepts and theories/models to show an understanding of the behaviour of economic agents and how they are affected by and respond to economic issues	25-35%	20-30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding to various economic contexts to show how economic agents are affected by and respond to economic issues	25-35%	20-30%
AO3	Analyse issues within economics, showing an understanding of their impact on economic agents	15-25%	20-30%
AO4	Evaluate economic arguments and use qualitative and quantitative evidence to support informed judgements relating to economic issues	15-25%	20-30%

2.8 English language

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
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AO1	Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression	20-30%	20-30%
AO2	Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use	20-30%	20-30%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning	20-30%	20-30%
AO4	Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic concepts and methods	10-15%	10-15%
AO5	Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways	10-15%	10-15%

Note: This assessment objective must be targeted with at least one of AO2, AO3 or AO4, either in the same task or in two or more linked tasks

2.9 English language and literature

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression	20-30%	20-30%
AO2	Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts	20-30%	20-30%
AO3	Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received	20-30%	20-30%
AO4	Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic and literary concepts and methods	10-15%	10-15%
AO5	Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways	10-15%	10-15%

Note: This assessment objective must be targeted with at least one of AO2, AO3 or AO4, either in the same task or in two or more linked tasks

2.10 English literature

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression	20-30%	20-30%
AO2	Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts	20-30%	20-30%
AO3	Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received	20-30%	20-30%
AO4	Explore connections across literary texts	10-15%	10-15%
AO5	Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations	10-15%	10-15%

2.11 Geography

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of places, environments, concepts, processes, interactions and change, at a variety of scales	30 to 40%	30 to 40%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding in different contexts to interpret, analyse, and evaluate geographical information and issues	30 to 40%	30 to 40%
AO3	Use a variety of relevant quantitative, qualitative and fieldwork skills to: investigate geographical questions and issues; interpret, analyse and evaluate data and evidence; construct arguments and draw conclusions	20 to 30%	20 to 30%

2.12 History

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance	50 to 60%	50 to 60%
AO2	Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within its historical context	20 to 30%	20 to 30%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted	20 to 30%	20 to 30%

2.13 Modern foreign languages

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Understand and respond: in speech to spoken language including face-to-face interaction; in writing to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources	20%	20%
AO2	Understand and respond: in speech to written language drawn from a variety of sources; in writing to written language drawn from a variety of sources	30%	30%
AO3	Manipulate the language accurately, in spoken and written forms, using a range of lexis and structure	30%	30%
AO4 (AS)	Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken	20%	
AO4 (A level)	Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically and analytically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken		20%

Up to 10% of the total marks for the specification may be used for responses in English as part of AO1 and AO2, including translation into English; Questions and rubrics must be written in the expected language of response

2.14 Music

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Interpret musical ideas through performing, with technical and expressive control and an understanding of style and context	30%	25 to 35%
AO2	Create and develop musical ideas with technical and expressive control and coherence	30%	25 to 35%
AO3	Demonstrate and apply musical knowledge	15%	10%
AO4	Use analytical and appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about music	25%	30%

2.15 Physical education

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin performance and involvement in physical activity and sport	20 to 25%	20 to 25%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin performance and involvement in physical activity and sport	20 to 25%	20 to 25%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate the factors that underpin performance and involvement in physical activity and sport	20 to 25%	20 to 25%
AO4	• Demonstrate and apply relevant skills and techniques in physical	30%	30%

activity and sport

- Analyse and evaluate performance

2.16 Psychology

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures	35-40%	30-35%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in a theoretical context • in a practical context • when handling qualitative data • when handling quantitative data 	30-35%	30-35%
AO3	Analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence, including in relation to issues, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make judgements and reach conclusions • develop and refine practical design and procedures 	30-35%	35-40%

2.17 Religious studies

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief ⁴ , including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching 	50%	40%

- influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies
- cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice
- approaches to the study of religion and belief

AO2	Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study	50%	60%
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2.18 Science

For consistency, we have set the same assessment objectives for reformed AS and A levels in biology, chemistry, and physics.

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures	35-40%	30-35%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in a theoretical context • in a practical context • when handling qualitative data • when handling quantitative data 	40-45%	40-45%
AO3	Analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence, including in relation to issues, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make judgements and reach conclusions • develop and refine practical design and procedures 	20-25%	25-30%

2.19 Sociology

Objective	Requirements	AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sociological theories, concepts and evidence • sociological research methods 	40-50%	35-45%
AO2	Apply sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods to a range of issues	30-35%	30-40%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present arguments • make judgements • draw conclusions 	20-25%	20-30%

1. 10% to 20% attributed to translation into the ancient language (or permitted alternative) —
2. 10% applied to fieldwork contexts —
3. 5% used to respond to fieldwork data and contexts —
4. the term 'belief' includes religious beliefs and non-religious beliefs as appropriate to the subject content requirements. — ² —

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