

GCE Subject Criteria for Applied Health and Social Care

For first teaching from September 2009



September 2011

Ofqual/11/4972

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The criteria

Introduction

GCE subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all GCE specifications in a given subject.

They provide the framework within which the awarding organisation creates the detail of the specification.

Aims and objectives

1. The subject criteria define the relationships between the AS (3-unit), the AS double award (6-unit), the A level (6-unit), and the A level double award (12-unit).
2. Any GCE specification that contains significant elements of health and social care must be consistent with the relevant parts of these subject criteria. Awarding organisations must ensure that GCE specifications and external assessment approaches are clearly differentiated from other qualifications they offer in this and similar subject(s) at this level.
3. The titles of the qualifications are:
 - Advanced Subsidiary General Certificate of Education in Health and Social Care;
 - Advanced Subsidiary General Certificate of Education in Health and Social Care (double award);
 - Advanced General Certificate of Education in Health and Social Care;
 - Advanced General Certificate of Education in Health and Social Care (double award).
4. These subject criteria will be applied to the care sector whose contexts include health, early years care and education, and social care. All specifications should take account of the integration of services. Throughout these criteria the term 'care sector' will be taken to include all the contexts specified.
5. AS and A level specifications in Health and Social Care should encourage learners to:

- develop and sustain an interest in health, early years care and education, social care and issues affecting the care sector;
 - acquire knowledge and understanding of health, early years care and education, and issues affecting the health and social care sector;
 - develop skills that will enable them to make an effective contribution to the care sector, including skills of research, evaluation and problem solving in a work-related context;
 - apply knowledge, understanding and skills;
 - prepare for further study and training.
6. The content at AS will focus on the needs of service users and the techniques and professional services aimed at meeting those needs. Learners will be assessed in the following areas of study:
- rights, responsibilities and values;
 - communication in care settings;
 - health and wellbeing.
7. The content at A2 will develop AS areas of study through addressing the factors affecting and issues involved in service delivery. Learners will be assessed on the following areas of study:
- service provision and practitioner roles;
 - understanding human behaviour;
 - their ability to draw together aspects of these areas in a variety of contexts.

Specification content

8. AS and A level specifications should build on the knowledge, understanding and skills that may be acquired in level 2 qualifications in health and social care or through equivalent experience.
9. The core content, which is common to all awarding organisation specifications, is grouped into areas of study, with amplification. The core content to be included in AS is in normal type; the core content to be included in A2 is in **bold** type. Area of study titles do not necessarily

constitute unit titles. All areas of study and associated amplification must be covered in awarding organisation specifications.

10. The areas of study define:
 - all of the content of AS (three-unit) specifications (areas of study 1–3);
 - one-half of the content of AS (double award) specifications (areas of study 1–3);
 - two-thirds of the content of A level (six-unit) specifications (areas of study 1–4);
 - five-twelfths of the content of A level double award (12-unit) specifications (areas of study 1–5).
11. A2 content should further develop higher-level skills and extend beyond AS in terms of depth, complexity and application of knowledge, skills and understanding of health and social care.
12. Awarding organisation specifications must indicate other areas of study that relate to the care sector and build on the knowledge, skills and understanding set out in these subject criteria in the remaining proportions of the specifications listed below:
 - AS: no awarding organisation devised content;
 - AS (double award): one-half awarding organisation devised content;
 - A level: one-third awarding organisation devised content;
 - A level (double award): seven-twelfths awarding organisation devised content.
13. Specifications must present content in a coherent and appropriate manner, fit for teaching, learning and assessment purposes.
14. Throughout these subject criteria 'work-related' encompasses but is not necessarily restricted to work experience.
15. All specifications must:
 - include guidance for teachers on the provision of the vocational context;

- set out for learners the purpose and vocational relevance of the content (knowledge, skills and understanding);
- set out for learners the knowledge, skills and understanding that they will need to demonstrate to achieve the assessment units;
- set out for learners the evidence that they will need to produce for the internally assessed units;
- set out for learners the marking criteria for the internally assessed units against which they will be assessed.

Area of study	Amplification
<p>1. Rights, responsibilities and values</p> <p>AS core content for AS (three-unit) award.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Value base of care ■ Rights and responsibilities of service users and providers ■ Facilitating access to services ■ Safe working ■ Attitudes and prejudices
<p>2. Communication in care settings</p> <p>AS core content for AS (three-unit) award.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Types of communication ■ Factors affecting the effectiveness of communication ■ Barriers to communication, communication difficulties and strategies for overcoming these ■ Evaluating communication skills ■ The importance of communication when working in teams
<p>3. Health and wellbeing</p> <p>AS core content for AS (three-unit) award.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concepts and models of health and wellbeing ■ Social, physical, environmental and psychological factors

	<p>affecting health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promoting health, including preventative measures ■ Concepts and effects of ill health ■ Attitudes and prejudices
<p>4. Service provision and practitioner roles</p> <p>A2 core content for A level (six-unit) award.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The effects of national policy and legislation ■ Identifying and meeting local needs ■ Meeting individual needs ■ Practitioner roles ■ Working in teams ■ Quality assurance
<p>5. Understanding human behaviour</p> <p>A2 core content for A level double award (12-unit).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Theories of human development ■ Theories of personality ■ Social influence processes ■ Understanding and applying psychological and sociological perspectives to understanding and meeting service user needs.

Assessment objectives

16. All specifications must require learners to demonstrate the following objectives in a range of work-related contexts.
17. The weighting of the assessment objectives must be within the ranges specified below:

Assessment objective		Weighting (%)		
		AS	A2	A level / A level (double award)
AO1	Knowledge, understanding and skills Learners demonstrate relevant knowledge, understanding and skills.	30–40	10–30	20–35
AO2	Application of knowledge, understanding and skills Learners apply knowledge, understanding and skills.	20–30	20–30	20–30
AO3	Research and analysis Learners use appropriate research techniques to obtain information from a range of sources and analyse work-related issues and problems.	15–25	25–35	20–30
AO4	Evaluation Learners evaluate evidence, make judgements and draw conclusions about work-related issues.	15–25	25–35	20–30

Scheme of assessment

18. Assessment units must be assessed either internally or externally.
19. AS content and A2 content must be assessed separately.
20. In each AS specification, at least one assessment unit must be assessed externally.

21. In each AS (double award) specification, at least two assessment units must be assessed externally.
22. In each A level specification, at least two assessment units must be assessed externally, one of which must be in A2.
23. In each A level (double award) specification, at least four assessment units must be assessed externally, two of which must be in A2.
24. The external written assessments must include extended writing.¹ The proportion of extended writing to other assessment instruments should reflect the weighting of the assessment objectives in AS units and A2 units respectively.
25. Extended writing and the quality of written communication must be assessed primarily through assessment objective 3 and assessment objective 4.
26. The chosen assessment instruments for both internal and external assessments must be suitable for assessing learners on how they apply knowledge and skills in relevant work-related contexts.
27. A level and A level (double award) specifications should include synoptic assessment at A2 level. Synoptic assessment will involve the learner bringing together and making connections between the areas of knowledge, skills and understanding covered within the specification.

¹ Any reference to 'writing' or 'written communication' should be interpreted as the production of text by any means, for example pen, word processor and so on.

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First published by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation in 2011

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