

# GCE Qualification Level Conditions and Requirements

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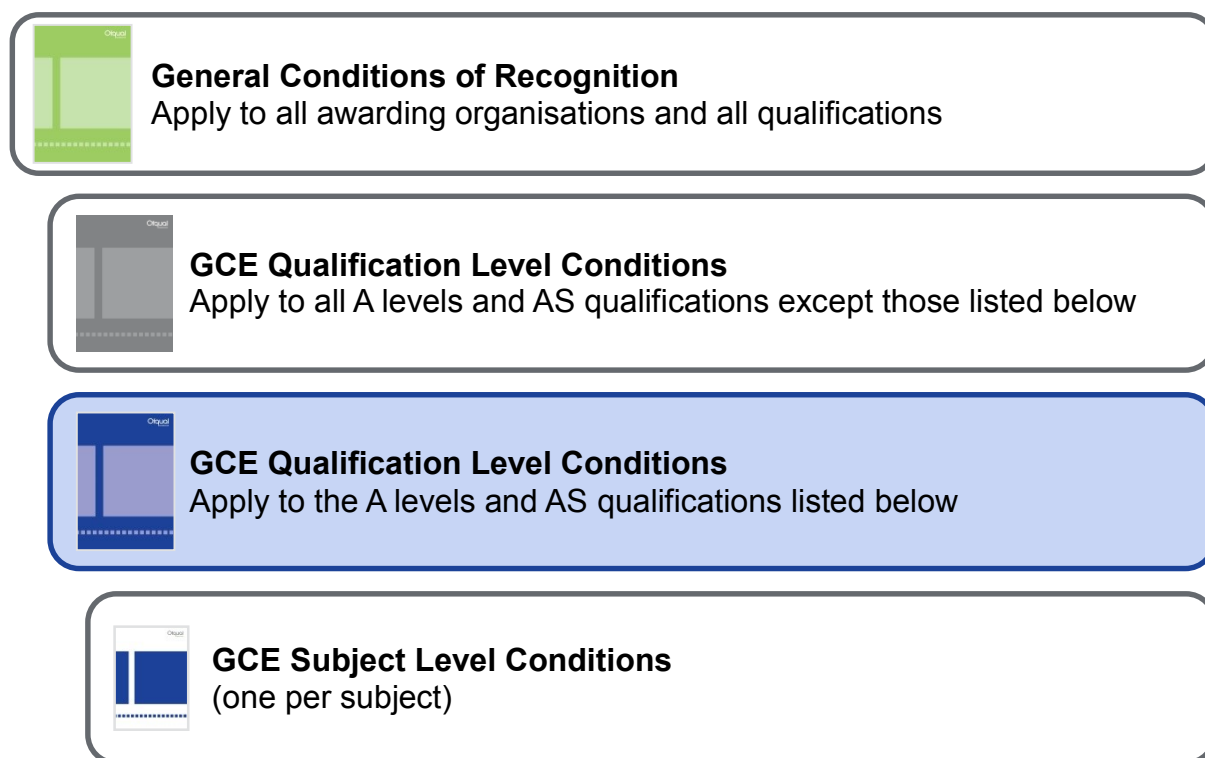
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# Introduction

## About this document

This document (highlighted in the figure below) is part of a suite of documents which sets out the regulatory requirements for awarding organisations offering GCE qualifications.



We have developed all our requirements for GCE qualifications with the intention that AS and A level qualifications should fulfil the purposes set out in the table below:

A levels	AS qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ define and assess achievement of the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be needed by students planning to progress to undergraduate study at a UK higher education establishment, particularly (although not only) in the same subject area;</li> <li>■ set out a robust and internationally comparable post-16 academic course of study to develop that knowledge, skills and understanding;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ provide evidence of students' achievements in a robust and internationally comparable post-16 course of study that is a sub-set of A level content;</li> <li>■ enable students to broaden the range of subjects they study.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ permit UK universities to accurately identify the level of attainment of students;</li><li>■ provide a basis for school and college accountability measures at age 18; and</li><li>■ provide a benchmark of academic ability for employers.</li></ul>	
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## Requirements set out in this document

This document sets out the GCE Qualification Level Conditions. These conditions apply to the following qualifications:

- all GCE A levels awarded on or after 1 April 2017, and all standalone GCE AS qualifications awarded on or after 1 April 2016 in:
  - Art and Design
  - Biology
  - Business
  - Chemistry
  - Computer Science
  - Economics
  - English Language
  - English Literature
  - English Literature and Language
  - History
  - Physics
  - Psychology
  - Sociology
- all GCE A levels awarded on or after 1 April 2018, and all standalone GCE AS qualifications awarded on or after 1 April 2017 in:
  - Classical Greek
  - Dance
  - Drama and Theatre
  - French
  - Geography

- German
- Latin
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Spanish
- all other GCE A levels awarded on or after 1 April 2019; and
- all other standalone GCE AS qualifications awarded on or after 1 April 2018.

With respect to these qualifications, awarding organisations must also comply with:

- our *General Conditions of Recognition*,<sup>1</sup> which apply to all awarding organisations and qualifications; and
- our *GCE Subject Level Conditions*;<sup>2</sup> and
- all relevant Regulatory Documents.<sup>3</sup>

With respect to all other GCE qualifications, awarding organisations must continue to comply with the General Conditions of Recognition, the *GCE Qualification Level Conditions for Pre-reform GCE Qualifications*,<sup>4</sup> and the relevant Regulatory Documents.

## Revisions to this document

We have revised this document since it was originally published (see Appendix 1 for details), most recently in April 2015.

The April 2015 version of this document replaces all previous versions of *GCE Qualification Level Conditions and Requirements* with effect from 12.01am on Thursday 23 April 2015.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-conditions-of-recognition](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-conditions-of-recognition)

<sup>2</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/collections/new-a-level-and-as-level-qualifications-requirements-and-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/new-a-level-and-as-level-qualifications-requirements-and-guidance)

<sup>3</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-documents-list](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-documents-list)

<sup>4</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-for-pre-reform-qualifications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-for-pre-reform-qualifications)

## Summary of requirements

Qualification Level Conditions	
GCE1	<a href="#">[Not used]</a>
GCE2	<a href="#">Assessment strategies</a>
GCE3	<a href="#">Specified levels of attainment</a>
GCE4	<a href="#">Assessment by Examination</a>
GCE5	<a href="#">Question types</a>
GCE6	<a href="#">Timing of assessments</a>
GCE7	<a href="#">Level of Demand</a>
GCE8	<a href="#">Interpretation and Definitions</a>

# Qualification Level Conditions

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## GCE Qualification Level Conditions

### Condition GCE1 [not used]

This Condition is set out in a separate document, *GCE Qualification Level Conditions for Pre-reform GCE Qualifications*<sup>5</sup> and applies to all GCE Qualifications except for:

- all GCE A levels awarded on or after 1 April 2017, and all standalone GCE AS qualifications awarded on or after 1 April 2016 in:
  - Art and Design
  - Biology
  - Business
  - Chemistry
  - Computer Science
  - Economics
  - English Language
  - English Literature
  - English Literature and Language
  - History
  - Physics
  - Psychology
  - Sociology
- all GCE A levels awarded on or after 1 April 2018, and all standalone GCE AS qualifications awarded on or after 1 April 2017 in:
  - Classical Greek
  - Dance
  - Drama and Theatre
  - French
  - Geography
  - German
  - Latin

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<sup>5</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-for-pre-reform-qualifications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-for-pre-reform-qualifications)



- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Spanish
- all other GCE A levels awarded on or after 1 April 2019; and
- all other standalone GCE AS qualifications awarded on or after 1 April 2018.

**Condition GCE2    Assessment strategies**

- GCE2.1            In respect of each GCE Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must –
- (a) establish and maintain an assessment strategy for that qualification,
  - (b) ensure that the assessment strategy complies with any requirements which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time, and
  - (c) have regard to any guidance in relation to assessment strategies which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.
- GCE2.2            In particular, an awarding organisation must ensure that the assessment strategy for a GCE Qualification sets out how the awarding organisation intends to secure, on an ongoing basis, compliance with its Conditions of Recognition in respect of the assessments for that qualification.
- GCE2.3            An awarding organisation must ensure that all assessments for a GCE Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, are designed, set, delivered and marked in compliance with its assessment strategy for that qualification.
- GCE2.4            An awarding organisation must –
- (a) keep under review its assessment strategy for a GCE Qualification, and revise it where necessary, so as to satisfy itself that the assessment strategy meets at all times the requirements of Conditions GCE2.1 and GCE2.2,
  - (b) review its assessment strategy for a GCE Qualification promptly upon receiving a request from Ofqual to do so, and subsequently ensure that its assessment strategy complies with any requirements that Ofqual has communicated to it in writing, and
  - (c) promptly notify Ofqual of any revisions made by it to any assessment strategy.
- GCE2.5            An awarding organisation must –
- (a) upon receiving a request from Ofqual to do so, demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction that it has complied with its assessment strategy for a GCE Qualification in respect of any particular

assessment for that qualification, or provide an explanation to Ofqual as to why it has not so complied, and

- (b) give effect to any recommendation that Ofqual may make in respect of its compliance with its assessment strategy.

**Condition GCE3    Specified levels of attainment**

GCE3.1            An awarding organisation must ensure that the specification for each GCE Qualification which it makes available or proposes to make available sets out specified levels of attainment which comply with any requirements which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.

**Condition GCE4      Assessment by Examination**

GCE4.1      An awarding organisation must ensure that every assessment for a GCE Qualification which it makes available is an Assessment by Examination.

GCE4.2      Condition GCE4.1 does not apply in respect of a GCE Qualification where a GCE Subject Level Condition states that its application is excluded in respect of that qualification.

**Condition GCE5      Question types**

- GCE5.1            In designing and setting the assessments for a GCE Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must ensure that, taken together, those assessments include questions or tasks which allow Learners to –
- (a) provide extended responses, and
  - (b) demonstrate their ability to draw together different areas of knowledge and/or understanding from across a full course of study for that qualification.
- GCE5.2            In designing and setting the assessments for a GCE Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must ensure that Learners are appropriately rewarded for providing such responses and demonstrating such an ability.
- GCE5.3            The requirements in Condition GCE5.1 may be met within the same question or task, or different questions or tasks.
- GCE5.4            For the purposes of Condition GCE5.1(a) an ‘extended response’ is evidence generated by a Learner which is of sufficient length to allow that Learner to demonstrate the ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

**Condition GCE6    Timing of assessments**

- GCE6.1            An awarding organisation must ensure that in respect of each GCE Qualification which it makes available each Learner completes, during the months of May and June in any single year, the Assessments by Examination to be taken for that qualification.
- GCE6.2            In respect of each GCE Qualification which it makes available an awarding organisation must ensure that –
- (a) it issues a single result, or a single set of results, in respect of each Learner following completion by that Learner of the assessments to be taken for that qualification,
  - (b) where confirmation of, or changes to, any mark for an assessment has been communicated to a Centre or a Learner in advance of the issue of that result or set of results, no further evidence generated by that Learner will be admissible as part of that assessment, and
  - (c) where any result for a unit has been communicated to a Centre or a Learner in advance of the issue of that result or set of results, no further evidence generated by that Learner will be admissible as part of the assessments for that unit.
- GCE6.3            Condition GCE6.1 does not apply in respect of a GCE Qualification where a GCE Subject Level Condition states that its application is excluded in respect of that qualification.

**Condition GCE7    Level of Demand**

- GCE7.1        An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that all assessments for a GCE A level qualification which it makes available are at a consistent Level of Demand.
- GCE7.2        An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the Level of Demand of each assessment for each GCE AS qualification which it makes available is appropriate to the knowledge, skills and understanding to be reasonably expected of Learners who have completed the first half of a course of study designed to lead to the award of a GCE A level qualification in the same subject.



## **Condition GCE8 Interpretation and Definitions**

- GCE8.1 The rules of interpretation and definitions outlined in General Condition J1 shall apply to the GCE Qualification Level Conditions and GCE Subject Level Conditions.
- GCE8.2 Except in the circumstances described in Condition GCE8.3, the requirements imposed by the GCE Qualification Level Conditions and the GCE Subject Level Conditions apply in addition to each other and to the requirements imposed by the General Conditions of Recognition.
- GCE8.3 To the extent that there is any inconsistency between –
- (a) a requirement of a GCE Subject Level Condition and a requirement of either a GCE Qualification Level Condition or a General Condition of Recognition, such that an awarding organisation could not comply with both such requirements, the awarding organisation must comply with the requirement of the GCE Subject Level Condition and is not obliged to comply with the requirement of the other Condition, or
  - (b) a requirement of a GCE Qualification Level Condition and a requirement of a General Condition of Recognition, such that an awarding organisation could not comply with both such requirements, the awarding organisation must comply with the requirement of the GCE Qualification Level Condition and is not obliged to comply with the requirement of the General Condition of Recognition.
- GCE8.4 In these Conditions, the following words shall have the meaning given to them below (and cognate expressions should be construed accordingly) –

### **Assessment by Examination**

An assessment which is -

- (a) set by an awarding organisation,
- (b) designed to be taken simultaneously by all relevant Learners at a time determined by the awarding organisation, and
- (c) taken under conditions specified by the awarding organisation (including conditions relating to the supervision of Learners during the assessment and the duration of the assessment).

**GCE Qualification**

Either a GCE A level qualification or a GCE AS qualification.

**GCE Qualification Level Condition**

A Condition of Recognition that applies to all GCE qualifications, except where a GCE Subject Level Condition states that its application is excluded in respect of a specific subject, and which uses the numbering format 'GCEn.n', where 'n' denotes a number.

**GCE Subject Level Condition**

A Condition of Recognition that applies to a GCE qualification in a specific subject only and which uses the numbering format 'GCE(x)n.n', where 'x' denotes a particular subject and 'n' denotes a number.

## Appendix 1 – Revisions to this document

The table below sets out all revisions to this document since it was first published, and the dates on which those revisions came into force.

Revision	Date in force
Updated list of qualifications to which the Conditions apply	23 April 2015
First published	9 April 2014

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