



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Rewarding Learning

GCSE subject criteria for construction and the built environment

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Introduction

1. GCSE subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all GCSE specifications in construction and the built environment. They provide the framework within which an awarding body creates the detail of the specification.
2. Specifications must also meet the regulators' general requirements, including the common and GCSE criteria as defined in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications* (QCA/04/1293).
3. Subject criteria are intended to:
 - help ensure consistent and comparable standards in the same subject across the awarding bodies
 - ensure that the rigour of GCSE is maintained
 - ensure that specifications build on the knowledge, understanding and skills established by the national curricula for England, Northern Ireland and Wales, and facilitate progression to higher level general or vocational qualifications in construction and the built environment or related sectors of employment
 - help higher education institutions, employers and other stakeholders such as learners and parents/guardians know what has been studied and assessed.
4. Any GCSE specification that contains significant elements of construction and the built environment must be consistent with the relevant parts of these subject criteria.

Aims and learning outcomes

5. GCSE specifications in construction and the built environment should encourage learners to be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study and gain an insight into related sectors, such as engineering. They should prepare learners to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices.
6. All specifications in construction and the built environment must enable learners to:
 - actively engage in the processes of construction to develop as effective and independent learners

- understand the contribution that construction and the built environment makes to society and the economy
- develop an awareness and appreciation of commercial and industry issues in the context of construction and the built environment
- develop an awareness that health and safety issues are integral to construction and the built environment
- develop an awareness and understanding of sustainable construction and environmental issues
- develop applied construction, evaluation and problem-solving skills as a foundation for future learning and progression.

Subject content

7. The content of GCSE specifications in construction and the built environment must reflect the learning outcomes.
8. GCSE specifications in construction and the built environment must allow learners to develop knowledge, skills and understanding in the areas specified below.

Introduction to the built environment

- definition of the built environment
- how the cycle of construction works
- structure of the industry and the diverse job roles and responsibilities within construction and the built environment
- contribution of the built environment to the economy and/or society

Technology and design in the built environment

- health and safety considerations and requirements
- main construction elements in the built environment
- implications of design and technology in construction and the built environment
- economic resource considerations

Construction principles, processes and resources

- a broad understanding of principles and processes
- how to utilise resources appropriately and safely

Sustainable construction

- interactions between the built and the natural environment
 - efficient use of resources and minimisation of waste, and related industry and business implications
 - sustainable construction methods
9. GCSE specifications in construction and the built environment must require learners to plan and carry out tasks in which they:
- understand and interpret briefs
 - Analyse issues and problems
 - Identify gather and record relevant information and evidence
 - Analyse and evaluate evidence
 - Make reasoned judgements and present conclusions.

Assessment objectives

10. The specification must require candidates to demonstrate the assessment objectives in an applied context.
11. All specifications must require candidates to demonstrate their ability to:

Assessment objectives		% weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of a range of contexts	25–35
AO2	Apply skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts and in planning and carrying out investigations and tasks	45–55
AO3	Analyse and evaluate evidence, make reasoned judgements and present conclusions	15–25

Scheme of assessment

12. GCSE construction and the built environment specifications must allocate a weighting of 40% to external assessment and a weighting of 60% to controlled assessment in the overall scheme of assessment.
13. Question papers must be targeted at the full range of GCSE grades.
14. Each scheme of assessment must require candidates to demonstrate achievement in a variety of ways, including writing and drawing.

Grade descriptions

15. Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.

16. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of candidates' performance in the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others.

Grade	Description
A	<p>Candidates recall, select and communicate detailed knowledge and thorough understanding of construction principles, processes and resources, and of the technology and design of the built environment in different contexts.</p> <p>They apply relevant knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of situations to plan and carry out investigations and tasks effectively. They test their solutions, working safely and with a high degree of precision.</p> <p>They analyse and evaluate the evidence available, reviewing and adapting their methods when necessary. They present information clearly and accurately, making reasoned judgements and presenting substantiated conclusions.</p>
C	<p>Candidates recall, select and communicate sound knowledge and understanding of construction principles, processes and resources, and of the technology and design of the built environment in different contexts.</p> <p>They apply knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of situations to plan and carry out investigations and tasks. They test their solutions, working safely and with precision.</p> <p>They review the evidence available, analysing and evaluating some information clearly, and with some accuracy. They make judgements and draw appropriate conclusions.</p>

F	<p>Candidates recall, select and communicate knowledge and understanding of basic construction principles, processes and resources, and of the technology and design of the built environment in some vocational situations.</p> <p>They apply limited knowledge, understanding and skills to plan and carry out simple investigations and tasks, with an awareness of the need for safety and precision. They modify their approach in the light of progress.</p> <p>They review their evidence and draw basic conclusions.</p>
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