



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Rewarding Learning

Draft GCSE subject criteria for ICT

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Introduction

1. GCSE subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all GCSE specifications in ICT. 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 qualifications in ICT
 - 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 ICT must be consistent with the relevant parts of these subject criteria.

Aims and learning outcomes

5. GCSE specifications in ICT 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. They should prepare learners to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices.
6. GCSE specifications in ICT must enable learners to:
 - become effective, independent and discerning users of ICT, able to make informed decisions about its use and aware of its implications for individuals, organisations, society and the wider world

- acquire and apply skills, knowledge and understanding of ICT in a range of contexts
- develop ICT-based solutions to address challenges and solve problems
- develop their awareness and understanding of current and emerging technologies
- develop their understanding of the legal, social, ethical and environmental issues associated with using ICT
- recognise potential risks when using ICT, and develop safe, secure and responsible practice
- develop the skills to work collaboratively
- evaluate ICT-based solutions.

Subject content

7. The content of GCSE specifications in ICT must reflect the learning outcomes.
8. GCSE specifications in ICT must be consistent with the national curriculum key stage 4 programme of study requirements in the orders for England, and the statutory requirements for key stage 4 in Northern Ireland and Wales.
9. GCSE specifications in ICT must require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
 - current and emerging technologies
 - a range of ICT tools and the ways in which they are used in different contexts to develop ideas and solve problems
 - legal, social, ethical and environmental implications of the use of ICT for individuals, organisations and society
 - issues of risk, safety, security and responsible use of ICT
 - the transformational effect of technology on individuals, organisations, society and the wider world.
10. GCSE specifications in ICT must require learners to demonstrate the ability to:

- think creatively, logically and critically
- independently select, use and integrate ICT tools to meet needs
- find, select and evaluate information for its relevance, value, accuracy and plausibility
- manipulate and process data and other information, model situations and explore ideas
- communicate data and information in a form fit for purpose and audience
- adopt safe, secure and responsible practice when using ICT
- develop appropriate and effective ICT-based solutions in a range of contexts
- work individually and collaboratively
- iteratively review, evaluate and, where appropriate, modify the effectiveness of their own and others' use of ICT.

Assessment objectives

11. All specifications must require candidates to demonstrate their ability to:

Assessment objectives		% weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of ICT, including its wider effects.	25–35
AO2	Apply knowledge, understanding and skills in a variety of contexts and in producing ICT-based solutions.	40–50
AO3	Analyse and evaluate data and information, make reasoned judgements and present conclusions.	15–25

Scheme of assessment

12. GCSE specifications in ICT 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. In order to qualify for the award of grades A*–C in England, candidates must achieve a functional skills qualification at level 2 in ICT.

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 ICT applications, including the effects of their use in the wider world.</p> <p>They apply relevant knowledge, understanding and skills to a variety of situations, selecting and using a range of ICT tools effectively to solve problems and produce ICT-based solutions. They manipulate and process data effectively. They model situations, interpret information and creatively explore and develop ideas. They work systematically and understand and adopt safe, secure and responsible practices.</p> <p>They critically analyse and evaluate the way they and others use ICT, reviewing and modifying their work appropriately when necessary.</p> <p>They use ICT to communicate effectively, demonstrating a clear sense of purpose and audience.</p>

C	<p>Candidates recall, select and communicate sound knowledge and understanding of ICT applications, including the effects of their use in the wider world.</p> <p>They apply knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of situations, using ICT tools appropriately to address problems and provide ICT-based solutions. They select information and process data. They model situations, select and use information, and explore ideas. They work using safe, secure and responsible practices.</p> <p>They review and evaluate the way they and others use ICT, modifying their work when necessary. They use ICT to communicate, demonstrating awareness of purpose and audience.</p>
F	<p>Candidates recall, select and communicate some knowledge and understanding of basic aspects of ICT applications, including their use in the wider world.</p> <p>They apply limited knowledge, understanding and skills to address simple problems and create basic solutions using ICT tools. They select and present straightforward data, with some awareness of the need for safe, secure and responsible practices.</p> <p>They sometimes review and provide comments on the way they and others use ICT. They make simple modifications to their work in the light of progress. They use ICT to communicate, with limited awareness of purpose and audience.</p>