

GCE A LEVEL

WJEC Eduqas GCE A LEVEL in
SOCIOLOGY

ACCREDITED BY OFQUAL

SPECIFICATION

Teaching from 2015
For award from 2017



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For award from 2017

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A LEVEL SOCIOLOGY

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

Component 1: Socialisation and Culture

Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes

40% of qualification

120 marks

Section A - 20 marks

One structured question on the key concepts and processes of cultural transmission, socialisation and the acquisition of identity.

Section B - 50 marks

This section offers a choice between two options:

- families and households
- youth cultures

Each option includes a compulsory question and a choice between two essay questions.

Section C - 50 marks

This section offers a choice between three options:

- education
- media
- religion

Each option includes a compulsory question and a choice between two essay questions.

Component 2: Methods of Sociological Enquiry

Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes

20% of qualification

60 marks

Two compulsory questions. One question will be based on stimulus material which will be a synopsis of a piece of sociological research.

The questions will include extended writing and one question will require learners to design, justify and evaluate a piece of sociological research.

Component 3: Power and Stratification

Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes

40% of qualification

120 marks

Section A - 60 marks

One question on the theme of social differentiation and stratification. This will include a compulsory question and a choice between two essay questions.

Section B - 60 marks

The questions in this section are on the theme of power.

There is a choice between four options:

- crime and deviance
- health and disability
- politics
- world sociology

Each option includes a compulsory question and a choice between two essay questions.

This linear qualification will be available in the summer series each year. It will be awarded for the first time in summer 2017.

Qualification Accreditation Number: 601/4748/9

A LEVEL SOCIOLOGY

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims and objectives

The study of A level Sociology must focus on contemporary society. Studying sociology must foster the development of critical and reflective thinking with a respect for social diversity. It must provide an awareness of the importance of social structure and social action in explaining social issues. Learners should be encouraged to develop their own sociological awareness through active engagement with the contemporary social world.

The WJEC Eduqas A level in Sociology encourages learners to:

- acquire knowledge and a critical understanding of contemporary social processes and social changes
- appreciate the significance of theoretical and conceptual issues in sociological debate
- understand and evaluate sociological methodology and a range of research methods through active involvement in the research process
- develop skills that enable individuals to focus on their personal identity, roles and responsibilities within society
- develop a lifelong interest in social issues.

This specification guides teachers and learners towards the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of key sociological issues and debates. It is designed to encourage the development of higher order skills such as analysis and evaluation. Learners will be challenged to demonstrate their ability to use their sociological knowledge appropriately in the context of the demands of the questions.

The emphasis on skills makes this specification an excellent vehicle for the development of transferrable capabilities which could be utilised by the learner in both academic and professional arenas alike. Questions will allow learners to respond in non-prescriptive ways, to develop and demonstrate their "sociological imagination" through their commentary on sociological theories and evidence.

1.2 Prior learning and progression

There are no prior learning requirements. Any requirements set for entry to a course following this specification are at the discretion of centres. It is reasonable to assume that many learners will have achieved qualifications equivalent to Level 2 at KS4. Skills in Numeracy/Mathematics, Literacy/English and Information Communication Technology will provide a good basis for progression to this Level 3 qualification.

Some learners will have already gained knowledge, understanding, and skills through their study of sociology at GCSE or AS and this specification will build on these; however, it does not exclude learners studying sociology for the first time.

This specification provides a suitable foundation for the study of sociology or a related area through a range of higher education courses, progression to the next level of vocational qualifications or employment. In addition, the specification provides a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study for learners who do not progress to further study in this subject.

This specification is not age specific and, as such, provides opportunities for learners to extend their life-long learning.

1.3 Equality and fair assessment

This specification may be followed by any learner, irrespective of gender, ethnic, religious or cultural background. It has been designed to avoid, where possible, features that could, without justification, make it more difficult for a learner to achieve because they have a particular protected characteristic.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The specification has been discussed with groups who represent the interests of a diverse range of learners, and the specification will be kept under review.

Reasonable adjustments are made for certain learners in order to enable them to access the assessments (e.g. candidates are allowed access to a Sign Language Interpreter, using British Sign Language). Information on reasonable adjustments is found in the following document from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ): *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration: General and Vocational Qualifications*.

This document is available on the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk). As a consequence of provision for reasonable adjustments, very few learners will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

2 SUBJECT CONTENT

This specification fosters development of critical and reflective thinking with a respect for social diversity. It provides an awareness of the importance of social structure and social action in explaining social issues. Learners are encouraged to develop their own sociological awareness through the study of contemporary UK society.

All components require the learner to demonstrate essential skills developed through their study of sociology; that is, the ability to show their knowledge and understanding of key concepts and issues in the context of sociological theory and methodology. Learners are also expected to select, interpret, apply and evaluate their knowledge and understanding in a range of theoretical and practical contexts.

The following concepts and theoretical issues will be covered within the specification:

- social order, social control
- social change
- conflict and consensus
- social structure and social action
- the role of values
- the relationship between social and contemporary social policy.

Learners will also demonstrate knowledge and understanding of methods of sociological enquiry and the relationship between theory and methods. They will also be expected to apply and evaluate this knowledge and understanding to a range of related methodological issues.

Learners will study concepts and theoretical issues through two themes:

- socialisation, culture and identity
- social differentiation, power and stratification.

These themes must be understood and applied to particular substantive areas of sociology in contemporary society and in a global context where appropriate. The themes will be interpreted as threads running through the compulsory and optional areas of the specification. For this reason they should not be regarded as discrete topics; for example, the theme of socialisation, culture and identity might be addressed through aspects of family but equally through aspects of the media or youth activities. Similarly the theme of social differentiation, power and stratification might be addressed through the study of education but equally through the study of politics or world sociology.

At A level, learners will be expected to demonstrate:

- a wide range and depth of knowledge and understanding
- highly developed skills of application, analysis, interpretation and evaluation.

Through the subject content learners will be provided with opportunities to develop these skills.

2.1 Component 1

Socialisation and Culture

Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes

40% of qualification

This component focuses on the theme of socialisation, identity and culture and is divided into three sections.

Section A of the component is compulsory and focuses on the key concepts and processes of cultural transmission, including socialisation and the acquisition of identity.

Section B of the component develops the compulsory key concepts and processes through detailed study of one of the two options.

Section C also develops knowledge and understanding of socialisation, identity and culture. This section of the component also includes consideration of social differentiation, power and stratification.

Learners will be assessed on their depth of knowledge and understanding of the subject content and on their ability to analyse, apply and evaluate sociological theories and evidence.

Section A

Compulsory

Content	Amplification
The social construction of culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of culture as a way of life and of terms such as norms, values, beliefs, roles, status • Aspects of culture such as dress, language, food, music • Meaning of the social construction of culture such as feral children, social change and the nature/nurture debate • Cultural diversity and sub-culture/s
The process and agencies of socialisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of primary and secondary socialisation through role models, imitation, sanctions and processes linked to specific agencies of socialisation • The process of cultural transmission through primary socialisation – families • The process of cultural transmission through secondary socialisation – peers, education, religion, the media and work • Formal/informal social control
Examples of the influence of socialisation on identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity: personal and social • Gender • Class • Ethnicity • Nationality

Section B

This section requires the study of one of the following options:

- families and households
- youth cultures.

Option	Amplification
Families and households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family forms and diversity • Demographic changes including marriage, divorce, co-habitation, life expectancy, fertility, singlehood • Relationships in families and households with reference to social change • Theoretical perspectives of families and households: functionalist, Marxist, feminist, postmodernist, New Right
Youth cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors influencing the formation of youth cultures including the media, economic changes, globalisation and the impact of class, gender and ethnicity • The changing nature of youth culture and the growth of neo tribes • Youth subcultures, deviance, with reference to delinquency, crime, education and media • Theoretical perspectives of youth cultures: functionalist, Marxist, feminist, postmodernist, interactionist

Section C

This section requires the study of one of the following options:

- education
- media
- religion

Option	Amplification
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role and function of education in contemporary society • Patterns and trends of differential attainment and participation with reference to social class, gender and ethnicity • Contemporary social policy with regard to education in society • The influence of material factors, cultural factors and processes such as labelling within the education system and in wider society on patterns and trends in educational attainment • Theoretical perspectives of education: functionalist, Marxist interactionist, feminist, New Right, postmodernist
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the media in contemporary society including the effect of the media on audiences, the way that audiences use the media, moral panics, new media and globalisation and models of media effects • Ownership and control of the media including the role of media professionals, news values, the content of the media, newsworthiness and agenda setting • Patterns and trends in the representation of social groups with reference to social class, gender, ethnicity, age and disability • Contemporary social policy with regard to the media in society • Theoretical perspectives of the media: functionalist, Marxist, neo-Marxist, feminist, postmodernist, pluralist
Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role and function of religion in contemporary society • Patterns and trends of participation and religiosity with reference to social class, gender, ethnicity and age • Religious structures and organisations including churches, denominations, new-age movements, new religious movements, fundamentalism and secularisation • Contemporary social policy with regard to religion in society • Theoretical perspectives of religion: functionalist Marxist, neo-Marxist, feminist, Weberian, postmodernist

2.2 Component 2

Methods of Sociological Enquiry

Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes

20% of qualification

This component focuses on methods of sociological enquiry.

Learners will be required to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of methods and sources of data
- demonstrate their ability to apply their knowledge and understanding of research methods
- demonstrate their ability to design, analyse and evaluate their own research design
- use examples from contemporary sociological research to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological concepts and key methodological issues.

Content	Amplification
Key concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • validity • ethics • reliability • generalisability • representativeness • objectivity
Primary quantitative and qualitative research methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • questionnaires • interviews • focus groups • observational methods
Methodological approaches to research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • survey • ethnographic methods • longitudinal studies • methodological pluralism and also triangulation
Secondary methods and data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • existing sociological research • official statistics • documents such as letters, diaries and newspaper reports
Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representative sampling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – simple random – stratified random – systematic random – quota • non-representative sampling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – snowball – volunteer • purposive and opportunity samples • sampling frame • target population • gatekeeper • access

Content	Amplification
Ethical issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deception • sensitivity • confidentiality • informed consent and vulnerability • anonymity/privacy • the right to withdraw • protection from harm for both the researcher and the sample being studied
Practical issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operationalisation • choice of research topic • target population • access • time • cost
Theories of research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positivist • interpretivist • realism

2.3 Component 3

Power and Stratification

Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes

40% of qualification

This component focuses on the theme of social differentiation, power and stratification.

Learners will be assessed on their knowledge and understanding of the subject content and their ability to apply, analyse and evaluate sociology theories and evidence.

Section A

- evidence and examples of areas of inequality related to social class, gender, ethnicity and age in the contemporary UK; evidence and examples may be drawn from across the specification
- changing patterns of inequality including the distribution of income, wealth and social mobility in the contemporary UK
- theories and explanations for inequality and stratification related to social class, gender, ethnicity, age, for example functionalist, New Right, Marxist, neo-Marxist, Weberian, neo-Weberian, feminist, postmodernist and theories of racism.

Section B

This section focuses on the theme of power, issues of social order and social control studied through one of the following:

- crime and deviance
- health and disability
- politics
- world sociology.

Option	Amplification
Crime and deviance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • patterns of the social distribution of crime and deviance related to social class, gender, ethnicity and age • measuring crime; official government statistics including police statistics and the British Crime Survey, victim studies and self-report studies and the impact of contemporary social policies on crime rates • definitions of crime and deviance as social constructs including the role of the media • the influence of theories and explanations on social policy • theories and explanations of crime and deviance: functionalist, Marxist, neo-Marxist, interactionist, right and left realism, postmodernist, feminist, sub-cultural
Health and disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • official statistics and patterns and trends of the social distribution of health and illness related to social class, gender, ethnicity and age • explanations for patterns and trends in the distribution of health and illness including artefact, self-selection, cultural, material and inequalities in access to and provision of health care in the UK • definitions and the social construction of health, illness and disability; medicalisation, the role of health professionals and the impact of health policies on their role • the impact of social policies on the health of the nation • theories and explanations of health and disability: functionalist, Marxist, interactionist, feminist, postmodernist, biomedical model

Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • patterns and trends in the social distribution of political participation related to social class, gender, ethnicity and age • explanations of the distribution of political participation including partisan de-alignment, class, gender, age and ethnicity • the role of political organisations including pressure groups, parties, new social movements, anti-capitalist and anti-globalisation movements in policy making and the democratic process • theories and explanations of power and politics: functionalist, Marxist, neo-Marxist, postmodernist, Weberian, pluralist, elite theories
World sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • patterns of inequality related to health, education, employment, poverty • explanations for patterns of inequality including population, urbanisation, marginalisation, aid, debt and relevant policies, dependency, feminist explanations • the impact of globalisation, transnational corporations, world trade, non-governmental organisations on world policy in relation to development issues • theories and explanations of development: • Marxist, modernisation, dependency, world systems theory

3 ASSESSMENT

3.1 Assessment objectives and weightings

Below are the assessment objectives for this specification. Learners must:

AO1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- sociological theories, concepts and evidence
- sociological research methods

AO2

Apply sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods to a range of issues

AO3

Analyse and evaluate sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods in order to:

- present arguments
- make judgements
- draw conclusions

The table below shows the weighting of each assessment objective for each component and for the qualification as a whole.

	AO1	AO2	AO3
Component 1	18%	14%	8%
Component 2	9%	7%	4%
Component 3	18%	14%	8%
Total	45%	35%	20%

4 TECHNICAL INFORMATION

4.1 Making entries

This is a linear qualification in which all assessments must be taken at the end of the course. Assessment opportunities will be available in the summer series each year, until the end of the life of this specification. Summer 2017 will be the first assessment opportunity.

Where candidates wish to re-sit the qualification, all components must be re-taken.

The entry code appears below.

WJEC Eduqas A level Sociology: A200QS

The current edition of our *Entry Procedures and Coding Information* gives up-to-date entry procedures.

4.2 Grading, awarding and reporting

A level qualifications are reported as a grade from A* to E. Results not attaining the minimum standard for the award will be reported as U (unclassified).