

GCE AS

WJEC Eduqas GCE AS in SOCIOLOGY

ACCREDITED BY OFQUAL

SPECIFICATION

Teaching from 2015
For award from 2016

Version 2 January 2019

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS

Version	Description	Page number
2	'Making entries' section has been amended to clarify resit rules.	12

WJEC Eduqas GCE AS in Sociology

For teaching from 2015
For award from 2016

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AS Sociology

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

Component 1: Socialisation and Culture
Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes
70% of qualification 120 marks

Section A - 15 marks
One structured question on the theme of socialisation, culture and 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 - 55 marks
This section offers a choice between three options

- education
- media
- religion

Each option includes a compulsory question.

Component 2: Methods of Sociological Enquiry
Written examination: 1 hour 15 minutes
30% of qualification 50 marks

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

This linear qualification will be available in the summer series each year. It will be awarded for the first time in summer 2016.

Qualification Accreditation Number: 601/4604/7

AS SOCIOLOGY

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims and objectives

The WJEC Eduqas AS 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 a range of skills including higher order skills such as analysis and evaluation. Learners will be expected to demonstrate their ability to use their sociological knowledge appropriately in the context of the questions. The emphasis on skills makes this specification an excellent vehicle for the development of transferable capabilities which could be utilised by the learner in both academic and professional arenas alike. Some 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 qualification.

Some learners will have already gained knowledge, understanding and skills through their study of sociology at GCSE 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 at A level. 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 candidates 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 provides an awareness of the importance of social structure and social action in explaining social issues. Learners will be encouraged to develop their own sociological awareness.

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 the 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 media or religion.

Learners will be expected to demonstrate skills of application, analysis, interpretation and evaluation.

Through the subject content learners will be provided with opportunities to develop their ability to interpret and evaluate evidence.

2.1 Component 1

Socialisation and Culture

Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes,
70% of qualification

This component focuses on the themes of:

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

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 study of one of the two options.

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

Learners will be assessed on their knowledge and understanding of the subject content and on their ability to apply, analyse, 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 life and 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, sanction 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	Content 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 with reference to 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 factors, globalisation and the impact of: class, gender and ethnicity • The changing nature of youth culture and the growth of neo tribes • Youth sub-cultures, deviance with reference to: delinquency, crime, education and media • Theoretical perspectives of youth cultures with reference to functionalist, Marxist, feminist, postmodernist, interactionist

Section C

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

- education
- media
- religion

Option	Content and 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, processes such as labelling within the education system and on patterns and trends in educational attainment • Theoretical perspectives of education with reference to 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, audiences use of 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 media in society • Theoretical perspectives of the media with reference to 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: secularisation, social class, gender, ethnicity 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 with reference to functionalist to Marxist, neo-Marxist, feminist, postmodernist, Weberian

2.2 Component 2

Methods of Sociological Enquiry

Written examination: 1 hour 15 minutes

30% 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 to a specific scenario
- 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 samples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – sampling frame – simple random – stratified random – systematic random – quota • non representative sampling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – snowball – volunteer – purposive and opportunity samples – target population – gatekeeper – access

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• realist

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	35%	21%	14%
Component 2	15%	9%	6%
Total	50%	30%	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 2016 will be the first assessment opportunity.

A qualification may be taken more than once. Candidates must resit all examination components in the same series.

The entry code appears below.

WJEC Eduqas AS Sociology: B200QS

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

4.2 Grading, awarding and reporting

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

AS qualifications are free-standing and are awarded in their own right. Assessments at AS cannot contribute to an A level grade.