



GCE AS Examiners' Report

Sociology
AS Level
Summer 2024

Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each component.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.edugas.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner Eduqas

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Executive Summary

The outcomes in this qualification remain stable, with both Components being of a similar level of accessibility compared with the 2023 series.

Component 1 is a demanding assessment comprising of three sections, combining a range of question types including short and extended response questions, as well as data analysis. The examining team saw some high quality, commendable work from candidates who were able to create discussions utilising relevant Sociological empirical evidence. On the other hand, the team also found the brief answers to essay questions by some candidates had a significant impact on the marks awarded overall. A notable concern was the number of candidates offending the rubric and it is important that candidates are well versed in the examination instructions.

It was observed that a number of candidates did not have a clear knowledge or understanding of key sociological terminology and concepts across a range of options, and this is an important area for development.

Component 2 was very accessible with nearly all candidates attempting all questions. The strongest candidates were able to utilise appropriate methodological terminology effectively throughout, but this was found to be lacking in many other responses. A common theme observed was candidates' lack of understanding of the demands of each question. For example, many failed to make meaningful reference to the item despite being a requirement of all parts of question 1. This appeared to vary between centres rather than individual candidates. This again is a key area for development.

Area for development	Classroom resource	Description of resource
Understand the demands of individual questions	OER website (online exam review)	Marked exemplars of past examination questions.
Use of relevant sociological evidence/research	A level Feedback Summer 2023 (Secure Portal)	Recorded PL presentation. Advice and exemplars can be applied to AS.
Use and understanding of methodological language	GCE Research Skills	Teaching and learning resource

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Component 1 Socialisation and Culture

Overview of the Component

This is a demanding paper covering a range of question types in a two-and-a-half-hour exam. However, overall, the examining team was satisfied with the standards achieved in this series of examinations. Indeed, standards achieved by some candidates were exceptional. Strong candidates were able to construct discussions effectively utilising empirical evidence and contemporary debates. Many essays were well structured, logical and focussed. On the other hand, there were some very brief responses to essay questions and where this was the case, it had a significant impact on the total mark for the paper.

All assessment objectives are covered in the paper with the lower tariff 5-,10- and 15-mark questions covering AO1 and AO2 and the extended response 25-mark essay questions covering all three, with 12 marks available for AO3.

One of the problems observed this year was candidates offending the rubric. Many candidates answered every question on the paper. This obviously meant that the answers were, at best, brief. It is essential that candidates have a clear understanding of the examination instructions.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A- Compulsory Section

Most candidates were able to demonstrate some knowledge of the meaning of the term values. Candidates were required to use the item effectively and not just copy a sentence or extract into their response to achieve the highest marks. Many failed to do this.

The issues seen with the 10-mark question have been noted in previous reports and again, some candidates did not meet the requirements of this question. There were many very accomplished responses to this question that demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding of the process of how agents of socialisation transmit values. However, a number of candidates wrote in very general terms about what socialisation is rather than how it happens. Candidates did not always talk about role models, sanctions and so on and relied on generic descriptions of what socialisation is.

Section B and C

10-mark questions

Questions 2a(i) 4b(i) 4c(i)

A number of candidates did not understand these terms and wrote in general about the nuclear family, equality or marketing rather than the sociological terms in the question. It is important that candidates gain a detailed understanding of all key terms.

Question 3a(i)

Many of the answers to this question were well written and obtained top mark-band.

Questions 4a(i) 5a(i) 6a(i)

Most candidates appeared to be prepared well for this question style. They were able to read the data, pick out a range of points and then support those points with the statistical evidence.

15-mark questions 2a(ii) 3a(ii) 4a(ii)

Most candidates were able to identify two reasons and the best were able to access the top mark bands by providing detailed explanation of the reasons. Candidates should be reminded that they should always elaborate on a point they make in reference to the question. It was not enough for example, to say there have been changes in the law, they needed to specify at least what law(s) have changed and how it has led to women delaying having children. Similarly, in 3a(ii), to say an increase in resistance to capitalism as a reason needs detail on what is meant by capitalism and how it explains the link between social class and youth subcultures.

25-mark questions

2b 2c 3b 3c 4b 4c

These questions are essay style and as such candidates were expected to write a clearly structured discursive response. To access the higher mark bands candidates were expected to use sociological evidence. There were some excellent answers where candidates demonstrated detailed and wide-ranging knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological material. Weaker candidates tended to offer generalised answers. Where the command in a question is to evaluate a theory, such as 3(b), responses should begin with a detailed exposition of the theory.

Evaluation was sometimes juxtaposed or added on at the end of paragraphs. The strongest responses took an evaluative tone throughout the essay and consequently were able to access the higher mark bands.

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Component 2 – Methods Of Sociological Enquiry

Overview of the Component

The 2024 paper was very accessible and nearly all candidates were able to answer all four questions testing all three assessment objectives.

Candidates need to be reminded of the demands of each question as, in too many instances, the commands in the question such as referring to the item or using sociological studies were ignored, restricting the marks that could be achieved. This varied between centres rather than individuals.

Knowledge and understanding of methodological language/terminology and the ability to utilise it effectively is essential in this component and whilst stronger candidates were able to demonstrate this, it was often lacking in weaker responses.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question (a)

Top band answers could:

- Define focus groups, making comments on the specific nature of focus groups e.g. discover/bounce/share new ideas
- Explain the term using methodological language such as rapport, validity, interpretivist.
- Make a meaningful reference to the item i.e. not just copy it. Candidates should be reminded to see 'referring to the item' as an opportunity to apply additional knowledge.

Some answers focussed too much on additional studies which is not a requirement of the question, and this meant they failed focus on the item.

Question (b)

Top band answers could:

- Give two distinct ethical issues (candidates are encouraged to leave a line after their first reason, making them clearer and more distinct).
- Use the item in BOTH issues given to contextualise their ethical issues

Weaker answers would give more than two issues or their chosen ethical issues were too similar e.g. harm and sensitive topic, leading to repetition. Again, there is no need to refer to other studies and candidates need reminding of this as it takes away from contextualising to the topic/researchers in the item.

Question (c)

Top band answers could:

- Show understanding of the term qualitative data (weaker answers didn't define it or their understanding was implicit).
- Use and show understanding of methodological language. For example, if their strength was detail, they should be able to link to terms such as rapport, validity, verstehen.
- Contextualize to the researchers in the item in both the strength and the weakness.
- Consider the topic/researchers/participants and explain why qualitative data was more appropriate over quantitative for the researchers in the item.

Question (d)

While there were a lot of excellent answers, many failed to recognise that the use of more than one method is a way of compensating for the problems of using one and instead listed different research methods.

Top band answers could:

- Recognise that the use of more than one method helps to provide a holistic view of the group.
- Explain the principles of methodological pluralism/triangulation/the realist approach.
- Consider the benefits of obtaining both quantitative and qualitative data.
- Refer to studies that used more than one method e.g. Barker, Willis or Humphreys, instead of listing studies that used individual methods.
- Make strengths and weaknesses explicit using link words such as 'another strength....'
- Explain concepts to show understanding.

Overall, the key to the first three parts of the exam is contextualising to the item rather than giving generic reasons or strengths and weaknesses, as well as being able to apply and explain methodological language. Weaker candidates would use key terms without showing understanding such as saying, 'valid and reliable'. Candidates must provide answers which meet the demands of the question to reach the top band.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 20922 404279

Email: GCESociology@edugas.co.uk

Qualification webpage: [AS and A Level Sociology | Edugas](#)

See other useful contacts here: [Useful Contacts | Edugas](#)

CPD Training / Professional Learning

Access our popular, free online CPD/PL courses to receive exam feedback and put questions to our subject team, and attend one of our face-to-face events, focused on enhancing teaching and learning, providing practical classroom ideas and developing understanding of marking and assessment.

Please find details for all our courses here: <https://www.edugas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/>

Regional Rep Team

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We support our education communities by providing trusted qualifications and specialist support, to allow our students the opportunity to reach their full potential.



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