

AS and A Level Geography – Key messages

The information outlined below applies to both AS and A level, unless indicated otherwise.

Assessment

Practice papers for mock exams

A new set of practice papers and mark schemes will be produced for you to use in mock exams. These will be made available late in the autumn term on Interchange and will consist of full sets of papers and mark schemes (like the SAMS).

Guides to Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs)

Guides to the SAMs for both AS and A Level are a detailed overview of the assessment objectives and question styles. These will be available late in the autumn term and can be used for exam preparation.

Synoptic questions

These are contained within the Geographical Debates paper. At AS Level there are two questions both worth 8 marks each, the first question will always link to a resource. At A Level there is one, 12 mark question. The synoptic questions will link each Geographical Debate to another topic within the AS content e.g. Landscape and Place or A Level content (Physical Systems or Human Interactions) but not another Geographical Debate.

Extended response questions

Quality of extended responses (QER) is in 14, 16, 20 and 33 mark questions. Quality of extended responses is part of the levels and is assessed holistically along with the rest of the descriptors in each level.

There are no set marks available for quality of extended responses – it is one thing to consider in the holistic review of the answer. But the ‘geography’ in the answer should always be the main concern when awarding a level to a student’s response. The guides to the SAMs will explain the descriptors for the QER.

A Level - Human Interaction (02)

In the Sample Assessment Material (SAMs) the essay questions (16 markers) are currently shown for Human Rights as well as Power and Borders however these questions could be swapped around so that Trade and Migration have the 16 mark questions and Human Rights and Power and Borders have the structured questions. This is so that we can assess the full range of content in these options. The structured questions could vary in tariff over time however the section totals and total marks for the paper cannot change.

Geographical Skills

These skills are listed in the specifications (AS Level p35/A Level p48). Any geographical skills questions in the examinations will be derived from these lists. The geographical skills questions vary in tariff and will be included in all components (exam papers). Geographical skills exam questions can exclusively assess AO3 (skills assessment objective) or they can be in combination with other assessment objectives in the SAMs for example there are AO2 / AO3 combinations.

Fieldwork Skills

Fieldwork skills are listed in the specifications – page 36 for AS Level and page 49 for A Level.

For **AS Level** the fieldwork skills are assessed in component 01 (section c) of the examination. All of the exam questions will be derived from the list of skills in the specification and they all target assessment objective A03, see page 39 in the specification.

For **A Level** the fieldwork skills are assessed through the Independent Investigation (Non –examined assessment). The list of skills in the specification (p49) are included with the marking criteria (see pages 59-64).

Marking guidance

At the beginning of each mark scheme there is a table to help you understand the level based mark scheme (for question tariffs of 6 marks and above). The wording in each level (from basic to comprehensive) indicates how answers develop and progress within each assessment objective (AO1 – AO3).

Command terms and definitions

This is discussed in a blog article along with command term definitions, which can be found in [geography news](#).

Non Examined Assessment (NEA)

The students must complete the Investigation proposal form, this can be found online on the A Level Geography page under the NEA tab. This form must be included in the student's work when submitted for moderation. The completion of the proposal form does not have marks attached however it can be credited / included in the marking for section one in the marking criteria e.g. planning, purpose and introduction.

The marking criteria for the NEA can be found on pages 59 – 65 of the specification. When marking students work remember it is a best fit approach within each section (1-6) and level of the marking criteria. The student does not have to cover every single bullet point to reach a level however this will determine where they are placed within that level.

There are a number of support resources online which have developed in collaboration between all 4 exam boards and this includes:

- [Independent Investigation FAQ](#)

- [Independent Investigation – guide to developing titles and the proposal form](#) (includes 12 completed proposal forms with exam board commentary)

Further resources from OCR include a student guide and three exemplar investigations with marking commentary e.g. [coastal landscapes](#), [glaciated landscapes](#) and [place](#).

Grade boundaries

These are not set until after the students complete their examinations. What is important to note is that there need to be comparative outcomes between the legacy and reformed qualifications in terms of what grades students achieve. Further information about this can be found on the [Ofqual website](#).

Specification

Within the topics of the specification we have used the terms ‘such as’ and ‘including’. The term ‘such as’ is used to exemplify bullet points in the specification however ‘including’ means students could be directly examined on this content. This arose when the spec was being developed and teacher feedback was to have clarity with some of the content areas.

Case studies are clearly indicated and these vary in depth and complexity across topics.

Fieldwork

The requirements for fieldwork are at least two days at AS Level (p36) and 4 days at A Level (p49). Fieldwork must include both physical and human geography. Some but not all of this may include people and environment issues or questions. For A Level - fieldwork undertaken by the student, may contribute to the 4 days of fieldwork. Schools and colleges need to complete a fieldwork statement to confirm this requirement has been met. The forms can be downloaded from the [AS and A Level assessment web pages](#)

CPD

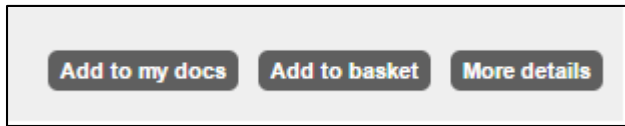
The [CPD hub](#) contains all the information for booking CPD (the most current are listed at the top) and there are a mixture of face to face and webinars available. Half termly FREE Q& A webinars with the Geography Subject Advisor where you can ask anything about the qualifications: [Independent Investigation clinic](#) and [Subject Advisor Q&A](#)

Getting students prepared for their first assessments – CPD

This training course in Jan & Feb 2018, explores a variety of techniques with which teachers can get students prepared for their examinations. The day will include discussions on revision techniques, styles and demands of exam questions including command terms, varying tariffs and case studies. How students can prepare for questions which target geographical and fieldwork skills. There will be opportunities to discuss extended response questions which include the 8 and 12 mark questions. [Information on the CPD hub](#)

Prior CPD courses

You can also download materials from previous CPD courses, this is indicated by the following buttons:



Useful materials for download include

- [Tackling The Independent Investigation](#)
- [Human Fieldwork](#)
- [Physical Fieldwork](#)
- [Embedding Geographical Skills](#)

Teaching and learning resource

Delivery Guides

These delivery guides are online and can be found under planning and teaching. Each delivery guide gives an overview of the topic, ideas for teaching and learning as well as bespoke resources.

Scheme of work builder

This online tool enables you to create and export your own schemes of work. You can move the specification content into a suitable order for your teaching and the Delivery Guide teaching and learning resources will be embedded within your scheme of work. The Scheme of Work Builder can be found under the Planning and Teaching tab on the relevant AS or A Level page.

Support

[Schoology](#) online platform for teachers to share resources / ideas / questions. Log in details can be found here: [Schoology the NEW Geography 'ning'](#).

[New country classifications](#) listed and geography [news article](#) to explain the new country classifications

The [curriculum planner](#) gives you an overview of the topics and potential organisation for teaching