

GCE General Studies

OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE in General Studies H079

OCR Advanced GCE in General Studies H479

version 4 – September 2013
specification

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Vertical black lines indicate a significant change to the previous printed version.

1 About these Qualifications

This booklet contains OCR's Advanced Subsidiary GCE and Advanced GCE specifications in General Studies for teaching from September 2013.

General Studies aims to give candidates the opportunity to extend their interests to a wide range of disciplines; recognise the interdependence of different areas of study and experience; think critically and logically; develop the skills of study, analysis and evaluation of chosen issues, and provide clear, accurate and effective communication of information and evaluation.

1.1 The Two-Unit AS

The Advanced Subsidiary GCE is both a 'stand-alone' qualification and also the first half of the corresponding Advanced GCE. The AS GCE is assessed at a standard appropriate for candidates who have completed the first year of study (both in terms of teaching time and content) of the corresponding two-year Advanced GCE course, ie between GCSE and Advanced GCE.

From September 2013 the AS GCE is made up of **two** mandatory units of assessment that are externally assessed and form 50% of the corresponding four-unit Advanced GCE.

The AS GCE General Studies specification gives an introduction to the concepts of the three domains: social; culture, arts and humanities; and science, mathematics and technology. It offers candidates studying these domains an insight into all aspects of society and the way the three domains interact in their lives. It constitutes a discrete package of material for those candidates who do not wish to progress to A2, at the same time providing a foundation for greater analysis for those who choose to move on to further study.

1.2 The Four-Unit Advanced GCE

From September 2013 the Advanced GCE is made up of **two** external mandatory units of assessment at AS and **two** further units of assessment at A2. These A2 units are also external and mandatory.

The A2 part of the Advanced GCE General Studies specification allows candidates to analyse aspects of the three domains more critically. Candidates are required to make direct links between the three domains.

1.3 Qualification Titles and Levels

These qualifications are shown on a certificate as:

- OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE in General Studies.
- OCR Advanced GCE in General Studies.

Both qualifications are Level 3 in the National Qualification Framework (NQF).

1.4 Aims

The aims of these specifications are to encourage students to:

- view issues from a wider range of perspectives than those offered by subject specialisms;
- integrate knowledge from a range of disciplines in order to:
 - develop an understanding of the interrelationship between them
 - encourage a broader and deeper understanding of issues;
- think logically and creatively in order to:
 - assess the relative merits of evidence
 - make informed decisions
 - reach justifiable conclusions.

1.5 Prior Learning/Attainment

No prior knowledge of the subject is required, although candidates are encouraged to apply their knowledge gained from other disciplines. It is recommended that candidates have attained communication and literacy skills at a level equivalent to GCSE Grade C in English.

2 Summary of Content

2.1 Teaching Modules

Teaching Module 1: *The Social Domain*

- Political systems, processes and goals (AS Unit F731)
- Social and economic trends and constraints (AS Unit F731)
- Explanation and evaluation of human behaviour (AS Unit F731)
- Examination and appreciation of ideologies and values in society (A2 Units F733 & F734)
- The nature of objectivity in social sciences (A2 Units F733 & F734)
- The relationship between law, society and ethics (A2 Units F733 & F734)

Teaching Module 2: *Culture, Arts and Humanities*

- Beliefs, values and moral reasoning (AS Unit F731)
 - Media and communication 1 (AS Unit F731)
 - Creativity and innovation (AS Unit F731)
 - Religious belief and experience, and connections between them (A2 Units F733 & F734)
 - Media and communication 2 (A2 Units F733 & F734)
 - An understanding and appreciation of the changing nature and importance of culture (A2 Units F733 & F734)
 - Aesthetic evaluation (A2 Units F733 & F734)
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Teaching Module 3: *Science, Mathematics and Technology*

- Characteristics of the sciences (physical, life and earth) (AS Unit F732)
- Understanding of scientific methods, principles, criteria and their application (AS Unit F732)
- Mathematical reasoning and its application (AS Unit F732)
- The nature of scientific objectivity and the question of progress (A2 Units F733 & F734)
- Social, ethical and environmental implications and consequences of scientific discoveries and technological development (A2 Units F733 & F734)
- The moral responsibility of scientists (A2 Units F733 & F734)
- The relationship between technology, science, society (past and/or present) and ideology (A2 Units F733 & F734)

Teaching Module 4: *Thinking and Analytical Skills*

- Skills (A2 Unit F733)
 - Thinking and Analytical Skills (A2 Unit F733)
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3 Teaching Module Content

3.1 Teaching Module 1: *The Social Domain*

This content is assessed in:

- AS Unit F731: *The Cultural and Social Domains*
- A2 Unit F733: *Domain Exploration: Applying Synoptic Skills*
- A2 Unit F734: *Culture, Science and Society: Making Connections*

Political processes and goals (AS)

Candidates should be able to make informed judgements and to demonstrate appropriate skills and the extent of their understanding of:

The British political system

- how a government is formed;
- the roles of
 - the monarch
 - the prime minister
 - the cabinet
 - parliament
 - local government.

Political parties

- political parties in
 - England
 - Scotland
 - Wales
 - Northern Ireland;
- leading political figures;
- areas of political controversy;
- the role of pressure groups.

Voting issues

- why people vote in a particular way;
- first-past-the-post versus proportional representation;
- voter turnout;
- the use of referenda;
- the use and value of opinion polls.

The European Union

- EU origins;
- EU organisation;
- the Euro;
- political issues relevant to the EU.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to study the political systems of Britain and the EU.

Social and economic trends and constraints (AS)

Candidates should be given the opportunity to make informed judgements and to demonstrate appropriate skills and the extent of their knowledge and understanding of:

The public sector

- the British education system;
- the National Health Service;
- the emergency services;
- problems in providing these services.

The private sector

- private enterprise;
- privatisation;
- problems of private provision.

Work and leisure

- changes in employment patterns;
- unemployment;
- the world of work and work experience;
- changing patterns of leisure and leisure opportunities.

Division of wealth

- the division of wealth among different social classes;
- wage and salary levels for different jobs and why they vary.

Transport issues

- provision and quality of services;
- the use of private transport;
- commuting;
- causes of, and solutions for, congestion.

Explanation and evaluation of human behaviour (AS)

Candidates should be given the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate skills and the extent of their knowledge and understanding in the analysis and evaluation of:

Influences on human behaviour

- how far social conditioning affects individuals and communities.

How people can effect change

- how people can effect change in the social, political and economic life within the local, national and global community.

Tension and harmony

- tension and harmony within communities.

Examination and appreciation of ideologies and values in society (A2)

Candidates should be given the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate skills, the extent of their knowledge and a critical awareness in the analysis and evaluation of:

Political ideologies

- important political ideologies;
- how they may influence values held by individuals and groups;
- policies promoted by different political parties.

Social, economic and political issues

- important current social, economic and political issues and the way in which they are influenced by different views, values and beliefs.

Influence on everyday life

- how different political and economic ideologies and values can influence everyday life.

The nature of objectivity in social sciences (A2)

Candidates should be given the opportunity to:

Research methods

- research methods used in the social sciences;
- investigate their reliability.

Explore and explain different viewpoints within the social sciences

- distinguish between facts and opinions;
- make informed judgements on social, economic and political issues.

The relationship between law, society and ethics (A2)

Candidates should be given the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate skills and the extent of their knowledge and understanding and their awareness of the implications of:

Crime, law enforcement and the criminal justice system

- crime, law enforcement and the criminal justice system;
- the causes of crime and how they might be tackled;
- the police, the courts and the difficulties of law enforcement.

The law and important ethical and social dilemmas

- privacy;
- secrecy;
- abortion;
- euthanasia;
- discrimination against groups, races or individuals;
- the legalisation of drugs;
- animal rights.

Opposition to the law and how it is expressed

- legal and illegal forms of opposition, dissent and protest;
- arguments for and against breaking the law.

3.2 Teaching Module 2: *Culture, Arts and Humanities*

This content is assessed in:

- AS Unit F731: *The Cultural and Social Domains*
- A2 Unit F733: *Domain Exploration: Applying Synoptic Skills*
- A2 Unit F734: *Culture, Science and Society: Making Connections*

Beliefs, values, and moral reasoning (AS)

Candidates should be given the opportunity to make informed judgements within the following subject areas:

Knowledge, belief and unbelief

- knowledge, belief and unbelief.

Instinct, indoctrination, personal experience, reason, faith and revelation

- the roles, relevance, importance and influence of
 - instinct
 - indoctrination
 - personal experience
 - reason
 - faith
 - revelation.

Matters of conscience

- the individual's moral response to matters of conscience such as
 - abortion
 - euthanasia
 - drugs
 - animal rights.

Media and communication 1 (AS)

Candidates should be given the opportunity to consider and evaluate:

Current developments

- current developments within the media and communications.

Strengths and weaknesses

- the strengths and weaknesses of the media and its ability to communicate.

Candidates should consider a range of media including newspapers, magazines, periodicals, film, video, television and the internet.

Creativity and innovation (AS)

Candidates should be able to communicate their awareness of:

Creative process

- the creative process.

Development of artists' styles

- the development of styles, forms and techniques adopted by artists.

Role of the arts*

- the role of the arts* and their benefit to people.

Arts include architecture, fashion, photography, painting, sculpture, stage, screen, music, and the written word – candidates should be familiar with **two of these **nine** areas.*

Religious belief and experience and connections between them (A2)

Candidates should focus on the following topics:

Central tenets

- central tenets of any **one** religion and how they are translated into day-to-day living.

Alternatives to religion

- alternatives to religion including
 - humanism
 - nationalism
 - materialism
 - hedonismand their practical implications in everyday life.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to make connections, analyse and evaluate both religious and non-religious views of life and to recognise and develop sensitive attitudes to the deep convictions of the various groups within any society.

Media and communication 2 (A2)

Candidates should consider and apply themselves to:

Moral activities

- moral activities arising from the activity of the media.

Influence on public opinion

- ways in which the media influence public opinion.

Candidates should consider further the media sources outlined in 'Media and communication 2'.

An understanding and appreciation of the changing nature and importance of culture (A2)

Candidates should be able to identify the salient features of:

Cultures

- western culture;
- popular culture;
- high culture.

Minority Groups

- the culture and values of any minority group, whether determined by
 - age
 - locality
 - race
 - religion
 - special interests (including sports popular culture hobbies).

Candidates should be given the opportunity to work out what various cultures have in common as well as understand and appreciate their distinctive characteristics.

Aesthetic evaluation (A2)

Candidates should be given the opportunity to show an informed personal response to the arts*, referring to such considerations as:

Appeal and effect of art

- the quality and extent of its appeal to individuals and a wider audience;
- the effect of art forms on individuals and on society as a whole.

Message of art

- whether art carries a message or is sufficient in itself.

Response to art

- how we respond to and evaluate the arts, including the differing experiences of seeing or hearing exhibitions, performances and shows 'live'.

Arts include architecture, fashion, photography, painting, sculpture, stage, screen, music, and the written word – candidates should be familiar with **two of these **nine** areas.*

3.3 Teaching Module 3: *Science, Mathematics and Technology*

This content is assessed in:

- AS Unit F732: *The Scientific Domain*
- A2 Unit F733: *Domain Exploration: Applying Synoptic Skills*
- A2 Unit F734: *Culture, Science and Society: Making Connections*

Characteristics of the sciences (physical, life and earth) (AS)

Candidates should be given the opportunity to make informed judgements on such contemporary issues as:

- greenhouse gases and global warming;
- energy;
- space and its exploration;
- population dynamics;
- genetic engineering and biotechnology, fertility control, organ transplantation;
- health and fitness, disease control;
- pollution and its management;
- conservation and environmental management.

Understanding of scientific methods, principles, criteria and their application (AS)

Candidates should be given the opportunity to understand a variety of scientific methods including:

- induction and classification;
- hypothesis testing, experimental and investigative design, deduction, theory and law;
- modelling, forecasting and reliability;
- the role of timescale;
- evaluation and limitations of such methods.

Mathematical reasoning and its application (AS)

Candidates should be given the opportunity to understand and be able to interpret a variety of mathematical techniques and their applications, including:

- the use and application of mathematics in everyday life;
- numbers and algebra including number patterns, special numbers and the use of formulae;
- shape, space and measurement including perimeter, area, volume, angles and directions;
- handling data and statistics including data representation, charts, sampling, probability and the use of data to support or refute arguments;
- informal logic puzzles.

The nature of scientific objectivity and the question of progress (A2)

Candidates should be given the opportunity to analyse and evaluate scientific objectivity with a sensitive appreciation of the development of science through the study of such topics as:

- the influence of developing scientific techniques on progress;
- how science progresses;
- the influence of social demands, needs and beliefs on science;
- the influence of science on society and its beliefs;
- the biographies and autobiographies of important scientists, eg Darwin, Hawking, Curie.

Social, ethical and environmental implications and consequences of scientific discoveries and technological development (A2)

Candidates should be given the opportunity to explore the implications for society of scientific discoveries and technological developments such as:

- the impact of ICT;
- the development of telecommunications;
- agricultural practice, herbicides, pesticides and organic production;
- food supply and distribution;
- the management of transport systems;
- waste disposal and recycling;
- weapons and peacekeeping;
- prospective inventions.

The moral responsibility of scientists (A2)

Candidates should be given the opportunity to consider ethical issues that have an impact on the ideals of scientists, including:

- the threats posed by scientific developments, eg the development of genetic understandings;
- the dilemmas of scientists in the area of medicine, eg the use and abuse of drugs;
- the impact of science upon the environment, eg the growing demand for energy;
- the impact of changing technology on society, eg the development of media devices.

The relationship between technology, science, society (past and/or present) and ideology (A2)

Candidates should be given the opportunity to explore the relationships between technology, science, society and ideology through such topics as:

- resource exploitation;
- sustainability and stewardship;
- industry and ecology;
- intermediate technology and development;
- natural hazards and disasters, relief and rescue.

3.4 Teaching Module 4: *Thinking and Analytical Skills*

This content is assessed in:

- A2 Unit F733: *Domain Exploration: Applying Synoptic Skills*

Skills

Candidates are expected to demonstrate the ability, within a multi-disciplinary context, extending over three domains to:

(a) Select relevant material. This may include the ability to:

- locate information;
- make and record measurements/observations;
- determine which pieces of information may be relevant to the solution of a particular problem.

(b) Communicate clearly. This includes the ability to:

- use the accepted conventions of spelling, punctuation and grammar;
- select an appropriate and concise way to convey information;
- use a range of methods such as prose, diagrams, maps, pictures, symbols and equations;
- present information in summary form;
- integrate knowledge from different domains in order to present a synoptic view.

(c) Demonstrate the ability to apply number. This includes the ability to:

- plan an activity and interpret information including that from large data sets;
 - estimate and observe over both time and measurement;
 - use the accepted conventions for the construction and labelling of charts, graphs, diagrams and scale drawings;
 - draw appropriate conclusions relating results to the purpose of the defined activity;
 - justify the choice of methods selected.
-

Thinking and Analytical Skills

These involve making considered judgements, forming opinions and drawing conclusions. This may include the ability to:

- think critically, logically and constructively about significant problems;
- evaluate information against available observations and data;
- solve problems, which may be both quantitative and qualitative;
- make predictions and propose hypotheses;
- present reasoned explanations for phenomena, patterns and relationships;
- interpret and evaluate opinions (judgements resting on grounds insufficient for complete demonstration);
- distinguish between knowledge (intellectual perception of fact or truth) and belief (acceptance of propositions on the grounds of authority or evidence);
- recognise common fallacies (deceptive arguments based on false premises and involving unsound reasoning);
- use deductive (from generals to particulars) and inductive (from particulars to generals) arguments.

Candidates are assessed on their ability to draw distinctions between knowledge, truth and belief, to recognise common fallacies, to use deductive and inductive arguments and arguments drawn from analogy, cause and authority. Not all of these skills are assessed in any one examination.

4 Schemes of Assessment

4.1 AS GCE Scheme of Assessment

AS GCE General Studies (H079)

AS Unit F731: *The Cultural and Social Domains*

70% of the total AS GCE marks
2 h written paper
120 marks

This paper has **four** sections:

Section A: Candidates focus on the Cultural Domain and are provided with focused resource material on which they answer a series of short, structured questions.

Section B: Candidates focus on the Cultural Domain and are required to write at greater length on **one of three** topics.

Section C: Candidates focus on the Social Domain and are provided with focused resource material on which they answer a series of short, structured questions.

Section D: Candidates focus on the Social Domain and are required to write at greater length on **one of three** topics.

Candidates answer all of Sections A and C, and one question in Sections B and D as indicated.

AS Unit F732: *The Scientific Domain*

30% of the total AS GCE marks
1 h written paper
60 marks

This paper has **two** sections:

Section A: Candidates focus on the Scientific Domain and are provided with focused resource material on which they answer a series of short, structured questions.

Section B: Candidates focus on the Scientific Domain and are required to write at greater length on **one of three** topics.

Candidates answer all the questions in Section A and one question in Section B as indicated.

4.2 Advanced GCE Scheme of Assessment

AS Units as above, Unit F731 being 35% of the total Advanced GCE marks and Unit F732 being 15% of the Advanced GCE marks.

A2 Unit F733: *Domain Exploration: Applying Synoptic Skills*

25% of the total
Advanced GCE marks
1.5 h written paper
100 marks

This question paper has **two** sections:

Section A: Candidates are required to answer **four** mandatory questions covering all three domains. Each of these questions draws on the thinking and analytical skills listed in teaching module 4.

Section B: Candidates are required to answer **one** essay question from a choice of **three**. The question requires extended writing in essay form.

Candidates answer **five** questions.

This unit is synoptic.

A2 Unit F734: *Culture, Science and Society: Making Connections*

25% of the total
Advanced GCE marks
1.5 h written paper
100 marks

This question paper consists of **two** compulsory questions. The questions require interpretation of, and comment on, stimulus material provided and extended writing in essay form.

Candidates answer **two** questions.

This unit is synoptic.

4.3 Unit Order

The normal order in which the unit assessments could be taken is AS Units F731 and F732 in the first year of study, leading to an AS GCE award, then A2 Units F733 and F734 leading to the Advanced GCE award. However, the unit assessments may be taken in any order.

Alternatively, candidates may take unit assessments at the end of their Advanced GCE course in a linear fashion.

4.4 Unit Options (at AS/A2)

There are no optional units in the AS GCE specification; for AS GCE General Studies, candidates must take AS Units F731 and F732. Similarly there are no optional units in the Advanced GCE specification; for Advanced GCE General Studies candidates take AS Units F731 and F732, *and* A2 Units F733 and F734.

4.5 Synoptic Assessment (A Level GCE)

Synoptic assessment is included in A2 Unit F733: *Domain Exploration: Applying Synoptic Skills* and Unit F734: *Culture, Science and Society: Making Connections*, which fulfils the requirement of testing the candidates' understanding of the connections between different elements of the subject.

AS and A Level specifications in General Studies should encourage candidates to integrate knowledge from a range of disciplines in order to develop an understanding of the interrelationships between them, and to examine questions from a broader standpoint than that of a single discipline. Candidates should think logically and creatively in order to assess the relative merits of evidence, make informed judgements and reach justified conclusions. They should communicate clearly and accurately in a concise and logical way.

4.6 Assessment Availability

There is one examination series each year in June.

From 2014, both AS units and A2 units will be assessed in June only.

4.7 Assessment Objectives

All assessment objectives are assessed in all four units.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate the following in the context of the content described:

AO1 Demonstrate Knowledge and Understanding

- demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of issues, using skills from different disciplines;

AO2 Analysis and Evaluation

- marshal evidence and draw conclusions; select, interpret, evaluate and integrate information, data, concepts and opinions;

AO3 Understanding Knowledge

- demonstrate understanding of different types of knowledge, appreciating their strengths and limitations;

AO4 Communication

- communicate clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and relevant way.

AO weightings in AS GCE

Unit	% of AS GCE				Total
	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	
AS Unit F731: <i>The Cultural and Social Domains</i>	28	21	7	14	70%
AS Unit F732: <i>The Scientific Domain</i>	12	9	3	6	30%
	40%	30%	10%	20%	100%

AO weightings in Advanced GCE

Unit	% of AS GCE				Total
	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	
AS Unit F731: <i>The Cultural and Social Domains</i>	14	10.5	3.5	7	35%
AS Unit F732: <i>The Scientific Domain</i>	6	4.5	1.5	3	15%
A2 Unit F733: <i>Domain Exploration: Applying Synoptic Skills</i>	5	12.5	2.5	5	25%
A2 Unit F734: <i>Culture, Science and Society: Making Connections</i>	5	7.5	7.5	5	25%
	30%	35%	15%	20%	100%

4.8 Quality of Written Communication

Quality of written communication is assessed in all units within Assessment Objective 4 and credit may be restricted if communication is unclear.

Candidates will:

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear;
- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and to complex subject matter;
- organise information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate.

The emphasis in General Studies should be on candidates' ability to analyse the subject matter, structure logical arguments, organise and handle information accurately, using clear language and technical terms, when necessary.

5 Technical Information

5.1 Making Unit Entries

Please note that centres must be registered with OCR in order to make any entries, including estimated entries. It is recommended that centres apply to OCR to become a registered centre well in advance of making their first entries. Centres must have made an entry for a unit in order for OCR to supply the appropriate forms.

It is essential that unit entry codes are quoted in all correspondence with OCR. See Sections 4.1 and 4.2 for these unit entry codes.

5.2 Making Qualification Entries

Candidates must enter for qualification certification separately from unit assessment(s). If a certification entry is **not** made, no overall grade can be awarded.

Candidates may enter for:

- AS GCE certification (entry code H079).
- Advanced GCE certification (entry code H479).

A candidate who has completed all the units required for the qualification, and who did not request certification at the time of entry, may enter for certification either in the same examination series (within a specified period after publication of results) or at a later series.

AS GCE certification is available from June 2014.
Advanced GCE certification is available from June 2014.

5.3 Grading

All GCE units are awarded a-e. The Advanced Subsidiary GCE is awarded on the scale A-E. The Advanced GCE is awarded on the scale A-E with access to an A*. To be awarded an A*, candidates will need to achieve a grade A on their full A level qualification and an A* on the aggregate of their A2 units. Grades are reported on certificates. Results for candidates who fail to achieve the minimum grade (E or e) will be recorded as *unclassified* (U or u) and this is **not** certificated.

A Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) enables comparison of candidates' performance across units and across series and enables candidates' scores to be put on a common scale for aggregation purposes. The two-unit AS GCE has a total of 200 *uniform* marks and the four-unit Advanced GCE has a total of 400 *uniform* marks.

OCR converts each raw mark for each unit to a uniform mark. The maximum *uniform* mark for any unit depends on that unit's weighting in the specification. In these General Studies specifications, the four units of the Advanced GCE specification have UMS weightings of 35%/15%/25%/25% (and the two units of the AS GCE specification have UMS weightings of 70%/30%). The UMS totals are 140/60/100/100 respectively. Each unit's *raw* mark grade boundary equates to the *uniform* mark boundary at the same grade. Intermediate marks are converted on a pro-rata basis.

Uniform marks correspond to *unit* grades as follows:

(Advanced GCE) Unit Weighting	Maximum Unit Uniform Mark	Unit Grade					u
		a	b	c	d	e	
35%	140	140–112	111–98	97–84	83–70	69–56	55–0
25%	100	100–80	79–70	69–60	59–50	49–40	39–0
15%	60	60–48	47–42	41–36	35–30	29–24	23–0

OCR adds together the unit *uniform* marks and compares these with pre-set boundaries (see the table below) to arrive at *qualification* grades.

Total uniform marks correspond to qualification grades.

Qualification	Qualification Grade					U
	A	B	C	D	E	
AS GCE	200–160	159–140	139–120	119–100	99–80	79–0
Advanced GCE	400–320	319–280	279–240	239–200	199–160	159–0

Candidates achieving at least 320 UMS marks in their Advanced GCE, ie grade A and who also gain at least 180 UMS in their two A2 units will receive an A* grade.

5.4 Result Enquiries and Appeals

Under certain circumstances, a centre may wish to query the grade available to one or more candidates or to submit an appeal against an outcome of such an enquiry. Enquiries about unit results must be made immediately following the series in which the relevant unit was taken.

For procedures relating to enquiries on results and appeals, centres should consult the *Administration Guide for General Qualifications* and the document *Enquiries about Results and Appeals – Information and Guidance for Centres*, produced by the Joint Council. Copies of the most recent editions of these papers can be obtained from OCR.

5.5 Shelf-Life of Units

Individual unit results, prior to certification of the qualification, have a shelf-life limited only by that of the qualification.

5.6 Unit and Qualification Resits

There is no restriction on the number of times a candidate may resit each unit before entering for certification for an AS GCE or Advanced GCE.

Candidates may enter for the full qualifications an unlimited number of times.

5.7 Guided Learning Hours

AS GCE General Studies requires **180** guided learning hours in total.

Advanced GCE General Studies requires **360** guided learning hours in total.

5.8 Code of Practice/Subject Criteria/Common Criteria Requirements

These specifications comply in all respects with the revised *GCSE, GCE, GNVQ and AEA Code of Practice as available on the QCA website*, the subject criteria for GCE General Studies and *The Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications 2004*.

5.9 Arrangements for Candidates with Particular Requirements

For candidates who are unable to complete the full assessment or whose performance may be adversely affected through no fault of their own, teachers should consult the *Access Arrangements and Special Consideration Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examinations* produced by the Joint Council. In such cases advice should be sought from OCR as early as possible during the course.

5.10 Prohibited Qualifications and Classification Code

Candidates who enter for the OCR GCE specifications may not also enter for any other GCE specification with the certification title *General Studies* in the same examination series.

Every specification is assigned to a national classification code indicating the subject area to which it belongs.

Centres should be aware that candidates who enter for more than one GCE qualification with the same classification code will have only one grade (the highest) counted for the purpose of the School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables.

The classification code for these specifications is 7810.

6 Other Specification Issues

6.1 Overlap with other Qualifications

There is overlap in subject matter with all other GCE qualifications. However, teaching and learning opportunities are particular to *General Studies* with its interdisciplinary approach.

6.2 Progression from these Qualifications

These specifications offer **two** main progression opportunities. They can form part of a Level 3 programme of study leading to Level 4 and 5 studies in Higher Education or directly into employment. Success in the study of *General Studies* is often an important factor in securing a place in a Higher Education institution.

6.3 Key Skills Mapping

These specifications provide opportunities for the development of the Key Skills of *Communication, Application of Number, Information Technology, Working with Others, Improving Own Learning and Performance* and *Problem Solving* at Levels 2 and/or 3. However, the extent to which this evidence fulfils the Key Skills criteria at these levels will be totally dependent on the style of teaching and learning adopted for each unit.

The following table indicates where opportunities *may* exist for at least some coverage of the various Key Skills criteria at Levels 2 and/or 3 for each unit.

Level 2

Unit	C				AoN			IT			WwO			IOLP			PS		
	.1a	.1b	.2	.3	.1	.2	.3	.1	.2	.3	.1	.2	.3	.1	.2	.3	.1	.2	.3
F731	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
F732	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F733	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F734	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓			

Level 3

Unit	C				AoN			IT			WwO			IOLP			PS		
	.1a	.1b	.2	.3	.1	.2	.3	.1	.2	.3	.1	.2	.3	.1	.2	.3	.1	.2	.3
F731	✓	✓	✓											✓	✓	✓			
F732	✓	✓	✓											✓	✓	✓			
F733	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F734	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓			

6.4 Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social, Legislative, Economic and Cultural Issues

General Studies attempts to integrate different fields of human knowledge. It therefore asks candidates to reflect on the nature of human knowledge and experience of the world. This introduces candidates to all these issues.

Studying human knowledge and experience raises many questions about, for example:

- artistic creativity and aesthetic appreciation;
- the uses and limitations of scientific method;
- ethical and social issues in science;
- debates about religious, political and economic issues;
- the role of moral and philosophical values in society.

Answers to such questions will inevitably differ widely. However, where appropriate, candidates should demonstrate:

- awareness of the issue concerned;
- factually-supported opinion;
- evaluation;
- a reasoned conclusion

6.5 Sustainable Development, Health and Safety Considerations and European Developments

These specifications support these issues, consistent with current EU agreements.

Examples from Teaching Module 3: *Science, Mathematics and Technology* include:

- greenhouse gases and global warming;
- health and fitness;
- conservation and environmental management;
- disease control;
- food supply and distribution;
- agricultural practice, herbicides, pesticides and organic production;
- waste disposal and recycling.

Examples from Teaching Module 1: *The Social Domain* include:

- the public (health services) and private sectors;
- transport issues.

The specifications also support European developments, in accordance with the report *Environmental Responsibility: An agenda for further and higher education* (HMSO 1993) and the Resolutions of the Council for Ministers (EC 1998). For example, in Teaching Module 2: *Culture, Arts and Humanities*, there are examples of content with a European perspective. Teaching Module 3: *Science, Mathematics and Technology* considers a range of environmental issues that have a European perspective as well as the work of European scientists. In Teaching Module 1: *The Social Domain* there is consideration of political issues in the context of the UK and EU.

6.6 Avoidance of Bias

OCR has taken great care in preparation of these specifications and assessment materials to avoid bias of any kind.

6.7 Language

These specifications and associated assessment materials are in English only.

6.8 Disability Discrimination Act Information Relating to these Specifications

AS/A levels often require assessment of a broad range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications and, as such, prepare candidates for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

The revised AS/A level qualification and subject criteria were reviewed to identify whether any of the competences required by the subject presented a potential barrier to any disabled candidates. If this was the case, the situation was reviewed again to ensure that such competences were included only where essential to the subject. The findings of this process were discussed with disability groups and with disabled people.

Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled candidates in order to enable them to access the assessments. For this reason, very few candidates will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment. Information on reasonable adjustments is found in *Access Arrangements and Special Consideration Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examinations* produced by the Joint Council (refer to Section 5.9 of this specification).

Candidates who are still unable to access a significant part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may still be able to receive an award. They would be given a grade on the parts of the assessment they have taken and there would be an indication on their certificate that not all of the competences have been addressed. This will be kept under review and may be amended in the future.

Appendix A: Performance Descriptions

Performance descriptions have been created for all GCE subjects. They describe the learning outcomes and levels of attainment likely to be demonstrated by a representative candidate performing at the A/B and E/U boundaries for AS and A2.

In practice most candidates will show uneven profiles across the attainments listed, with strengths in some areas compensating in the award process for weaknesses or omissions elsewhere. Performance descriptions illustrate expectations at the A/B and E/U boundaries of the AS and A2 as a whole; they have not been written at unit level.

Grade A/B and E/U boundaries should be set using professional judgement. The judgement should reflect the quality of candidates' work, informed by the available technical and statistical evidence. Performance descriptions are designed to assist examiners in exercising their professional judgement. They should be interpreted and applied in the context of individual specifications and their associated units. However, performance descriptions are not designed to define the content of specifications and units.

The requirement for all AS and A level specifications to assess candidates' quality of written communication will be met through one or more of the assessment objectives.

The performance descriptions have been produced by the regulatory authorities in collaboration with the awarding bodies.

AS performance descriptions for general studies

	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment Objective 4
Assessment Objectives	Demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of issues, using skills from different disciplines.	Marshal evidence and draw conclusions: select, interpret, evaluate and integrate information, data, concepts and opinions.	Demonstrate understanding of different types of knowledge, appreciating their strengths and limitations.	Communicate clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and relevant way.
AS A/B boundary Performance Descriptions	Candidates characteristically: a) demonstrate focused knowledge and understanding of a range of issues b) use skills from different disciplines with confidence and consistency.	Candidates characteristically: a) provide evidence of selecting, interpreting and applying relevant information, data, concepts and opinions b) organise evidence to support arguments c) draw reasoned conclusions.	Candidates characteristically: a) identify different types of knowledge and make relevant evaluative comments.	Candidates characteristically: a) communicate accurately, clearly and fluently, using appropriate language and structure.
AS E/U boundary Performance Descriptions	Candidates characteristically: a) demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of issues b) use skills from different disciplines with variable success.	Candidates characteristically: a) provide limited evidence of selecting and applying some relevant information, data and opinions b) draw simple conclusions.	Candidates characteristically: a) recognise examples of different types of knowledge.	Candidates characteristically: a) convey meaning clearly despite limited powers of expression.

A2 performance descriptions for general studies

	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment Objective 4
Assessment Objectives	Demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of issues, using skills from different disciplines.	Marshal evidence and draw conclusions: select, interpret, evaluate and integrate information, data, concepts and opinions.	Demonstrate understanding of different types of knowledge, appreciating their strengths and limitations.	Communicate clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and relevant way.
A2 A/B boundary Performance Descriptions	Candidates characteristically: a) deploy knowledge and understanding across a wide range of issues b) use skills from different disciplines with confidence and consistency.	Candidates characteristically: a) provide evidence of selecting, interpreting and applying relevant information, data, concepts and opinions b) organise and evaluate evidence to support arguments c) make connections and draw reasoned conclusions.	Candidates characteristically: a) identify correctly different types of knowledge b) offer a sound evaluation of different types of knowledge.	Candidates characteristically: a) communicate accurately, clearly, concisely, logically and fluently, using appropriate language and structure.
A2 E/U boundary Performance Descriptions	Candidates characteristically: a) deploy some knowledge and understanding across issues b) use skills from different disciplines with variable success.	Candidates characteristically: a) provide limited evidence of selecting and applying some relevant information, data and opinions b) make limited connections and draw simple conclusions.	Candidates characteristically: a) identify examples of different types of knowledge b) recognise some strengths and weaknesses of types of knowledge, but with limited success.	Candidates characteristically: a) convey meaning clearly.