



**This specification is for first teaching from September 2026.
First assessment will be from summer 2028.**

Specification

A LEVEL

SOCIOLOGY

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Sociology

H582

For first assessment in 2028

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This qualification is in draft form and has not yet been accredited by The Regulator, Ofqual. It is published to enable teachers to have an early sight of our proposed approach to this qualification. Further changes may be required and no assurance can be given at this time that the proposed qualification will be made available in its current form, or that it will be accredited in time for first teaching in 2026.

Disclaimer

Specifications are updated over time. Whilst every effort is made to check all documents, there may be contradictions between published resources and the specification, therefore, please use the information on the latest specification at all times. Where changes are made to specifications these will be indicated within the document, there will be a new version number indicated, and a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource please contact us at: resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk

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Summary of updates

Date	Version	Section	Title of section	Change
xxx 2025	1.0	All	-	Creation of specification.

DRAFT

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1. Why choose OCR?

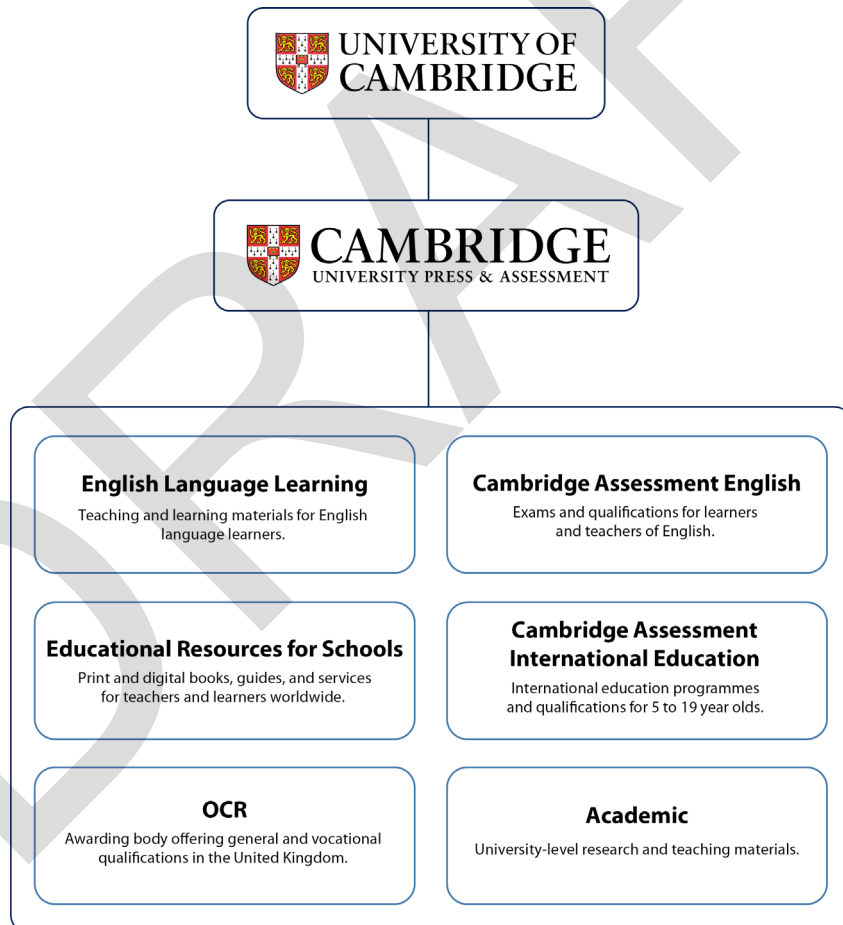
Choose OCR and you have the reassurance that you are working with one of the UK’s leading examination boards.

We collaborate with teachers, employers and Higher Education representatives to develop qualifications which are relevant and meet the needs of students.

We work with a range of education providers, including schools, colleges, workplaces and other institutions in both the public and private sectors. Over 13,000 centres choose our A Levels, GCSEs and vocational qualifications, including Cambridge Nationals and Cambridge Technicals.

We are part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, Europe’s largest assessment agency and a department of the University of Cambridge. We play a leading role in developing and delivering assessments worldwide, operating in over 150 countries.

We listen. The decisions we make when we develop our specification are based on teacher and student feedback. To tell us more about your experiences of teaching OCR, join our teacher [panel](#) and help shape the future of our assessments.



All A Level qualifications offered by OCR are accredited by Ofqual, the Regulator for qualifications offered in England. The accreditation number for the OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Sociology is QNxxx/xxxx/x

1.1 Teacher support

We have a range of support services to help you at every stage, from preparation to delivery.

Our teacher support is designed to make teaching our qualifications straightforward, whether you are an experienced teacher, new to teaching, new to OCR, or not a subject specialist of the qualification you are teaching.

- **Teach Cambridge:** our teacher website, providing access to everything you need in one place.
- **Teacher resources:** extensive resources to download or watch. Plan and structure your teaching with curriculum planners, schemes of work and teacher guides, and prepare for assessment with examiner reports, exemplars and NEA guidance.
- **Professional development:** a comprehensive programme of assessor-led courses and Q&A sessions with our experts, plus free teacher network events.
- **Online training courses:** on-demand NEA support and marking practice to complete at your own pace.
- **ExamBuilder:** our free test-maker platform. Access past papers and build your own customised formative assessments for your students.
- **Access to Scripts:** a free service for exams officers to download copies of your students' completed question papers.
- **Active Results:** our free online results analysis service to help you review exam performance.

Request trial access to [Teach Cambridge](#) to explore the range or ask your exams officer to set up your account.

Our [OCR subject advisors](#) provide support and information to centres, including:

- Specification and non-exam assessment advice.
- Updates on resource developments and training opportunities.
- Information on our subject networks giving an opportunity to share ideas and expertise.

Further help and support

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Work with us

As one of the major UK exam boards, OCR is responsible for creating and marking exams taken by over a million students each year. We work with over 10,000 professionals to create, check, mark and moderate our assessments.

If you would like to find out more about becoming an OCR examiner, please visit [our website](#) for more information.

1.2 People and Planet

OCR is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, which has clear commitments to champion sustainability, diversity, trust and respect for our people and planet.

We are committed to supporting a curriculum that helps young people develop an ethical view of the world. This enables them to take social responsibility, understand environmental issues and prepare them for the green jobs of the future.

Our equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging principles are that we:

- are respectful and considerate
- celebrate differences and promote positive attitudes to belonging
- include perspectives that reflect the diverse cultural and lifestyle backgrounds of our society
- challenge prejudicial views and unconscious biases
- promote a safe and supportive approach to learning
- are accessible and fair, creating positive experiences for all
- provide opportunities for everyone to perform at their best
- are contemporary, relevant and equip everyone to live and thrive in a global, diverse world
- create a shared sense of identity in a modern mixed society with one humanity.

To learn more, including our work on accessibility in our assessment materials, visit our [People and Planet page](#).

If you prefer to use a printed copy of the specification, consider printing a selection of pages instead of the full specification. The following are the pages which you might find useful to print:

Specification at a glance

Pages x-x

Subject content

Pages x-x

Forms of assessment

Pages x-x

2. Specification at a glance

2.1 Assessment overview

Students must complete all question papers (01, 02 and 03) to be awarded the OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Sociology.

Content	Assessment
Compulsory section on introducing socialisation, culture and identity. Students will also study one of the following options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • families and relationships • youth subcultures • media. 	Socialisation, culture and identity (01) 80 marks 2 hours Written paper 33.3% of total A Level
Introduces research methods and researching and understanding social inequalities.	Researching and understanding social inequalities (02) ¹ 80 marks 2 hours Written paper 33.3% of total A Level
Compulsory section on globalisation and the digital social world. Students will also study one of the following options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crime and deviance • education • religion, belief and faith. 	Debates in contemporary society (03) 80 marks 2 hours Written paper 33.3% of total A Level

¹ Indicates inclusion of synoptic assessment.

2.2 Content overview

Sociology focuses on the study of social life and how our environment shapes our futures. Looking at how society is organised and how humans experience their lives, helps students to be able to question why our world is as it is.

Socialisation, culture and identity (H582/01)

Introduces learners to the key themes of socialisation, culture and identity.

Learners will also study **one** out of the following sociology options:

- Families and relationships.
 - How are family life and relationships changing?
 - To what extent are roles and relationships within families and households changing?
- Youth subcultures
 - How are youth subcultures formed? Why do they develop?
 - Why do some young people participate in deviant subcultures?
- Media
 - How are different social groups represented in the media?
 - What effect do the media have on audiences?

Researching and understanding social inequalities (H582/02)

Learners will need to be familiar with research methods and researching/understanding social inequalities. This will include the relationship between theories and methods, the main stages of the research process, methods used in sociological research, and patterns and trends in social inequality and difference.

Debates in contemporary society (H582/03)

Learners will study globalisation and the digital social world and **one** of the following options:

- Crime and deviance
 - How are crime and deviance defined and measured in the UK?
 - What are the patterns and trends in crime?
 - How can crime and deviance be explained and reduced?
- Education
 - What is the role of education in society?
 - What are the patterns and trends of educational inequalities?
 - How can differential educational achievement and experiences be explained?
 - How has the UK education system changed?
- Religion, belief and faith
 - How are religion, belief and faith defined and measured?
 - What is the role of religion, belief and faith in contemporary society?
 - What are the patterns and trends of religion, belief and faith?
 - Is secularisation occurring?

3. Subject content

3.1 Socialisation, culture and identity (H582/01)

This component introduces students to the core themes of socialisation, culture and identity, and develops these themes through the context of **one** of three options, either: families and relationships, youth subcultures or media. These options develop skills that enable individuals to focus on their personal identity, roles and responsibilities within society and develop a lifelong interest in social issues. Within the specified content, for each key question the concepts and theoretical issues that should be explored is included and content should be delivered in relation to that area.

The box below highlights the research method focus for this unit and content should be linked where appropriate.

Students must be able to apply, analyse and/or evaluate the following to the key questions in each section in order to present evidence and argument:

- the collection of primary and secondary data
- quantitative and qualitative data using appropriate concepts
- factors influencing the design and conduct of sociological research
- practical, ethical and theoretical issues arising in sociological research
- methodological approaches in sociological research

3.1.1 Section A: Introducing socialisation, culture and identity

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
1. What is culture?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social change • The role of values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The relative nature of culture, norms and values. <input type="checkbox"/> Types of culture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ subculture ○ high culture ○ popular culture ○ global culture (e.g., Mcdonaldisation, global village) ○ consumer culture (e.g., conspicuous consumption) ○ cultural diversity (e.g., intercultural and intracultural diversity) ○ cultural hybridity (e.g., code switching, Brasian).
2. What is socialisation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict and consensus • Social order, social control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Definitions of primary and secondary socialisation and how they link to agencies of socialisation. <input type="checkbox"/> Agencies of socialisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ family (e.g., manipulation, canalisation, verbal appellation) ○ peer group (e.g., peer pressure) ○ media (e.g., male gaze, beauty myth) ○ religion (e.g., assimilation) ○ education (e.g., formal curriculum, hidden curriculum)

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ workplace (e.g., canteen culture). <input type="checkbox"/> Formal agencies of social control: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ criminal justice system (e.g., police, military style policing) ○ Government (e.g., prison system). <input type="checkbox"/> Informal agencies of social control: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ family ○ peer groups/subcultures ○ media ○ religion ○ education ○ workplace. <input type="checkbox"/> The overlap of formal and informal social control in work, education and religion.
3. What is identity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conflict and consensus ● Social change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How identities are created and can change. <input type="checkbox"/> Aspects of identity and the associated cultural characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ethnicity (e.g., generational differences) ○ gender (including non-binary and trans identity) (e.g., femininity, masculinity, patriarchy) ○ social class (e.g., forms of capital (cultural, economic, social), upper, middle and working) ○ sexuality (e.g., changing sexual identities) ○ age (e.g., old age, middle age, youth, childhood, toxic childhood) ○ disability (e.g., medical and social model). <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid identities and how identity can be fluid (e.g., cultural code switching, Brasians, white mask, neighbourhood nationalism).

3.1.2 Section B

3.1.2.1 Option 1: Families and relationships

This option focuses on the family as a central agency of socialisation and a main transmitter of culture in contemporary society. The core themes of socialisation, culture, identity, social differentiation, power and stratification are threaded through this section and content should be studied in relation to these themes. It allows students to explore contemporary family structures and relationships.

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
1. How are family life and relationships changing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conflict and consensus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The diversity of family and household types in the contemporary UK including blood and marriage-based relationships as well as chosen relationships.

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social structure and social action • Social change • Social order, social control • The role of values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ nuclear families ○ extended families ○ lone parent families ○ reconstituted families ○ same-sex families ○ non-family households ○ lone-person households. □ Changing sociological understanding of family life and diversity in the contemporary UK (the last 30 years), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ emerging family types ○ trends in marriage, divorce and cohabitation ○ same-sex relationships ○ demographic changes. □ Consider key demographic changes and the reasons for these: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ birth rate ○ family size ○ age at marriage ○ age of childbearing ○ ageing population. □ Theoretical perspectives, consensus versus conflict and structural debates on the role of the family and the desirability of the nuclear family in contemporary UK society: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ functionalism (e.g., Universal Family, Socialisation, stabilisation of adult personalities, warm bath theory) ○ New Right (e.g., traditional marriage) ○ Marxism (e.g., capitalism) ○ feminism (e.g., Marxist, Liberal and Radical Feminism, Post-Feminism) ○ postmodernism (e.g., Individualisation, confluent love).
2. To what extent are roles and relationships within families and households changing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict and consensus • Social change • Social order, social control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Roles and relationships in the family and how they are changing including the application of functionalist, Marxist and feminist theoretical approaches. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ domestic division of labour including housework/paid domestic work ○ paid work and working practices (e.g., division of labour, symmetrical family, joint conjugal roles) ○ emotional work (e.g., triple shift) ○ childcare/caring for elderly relatives (e.g., paranoid parenting, sandwich generation)

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the 'dark side' of the family (e.g., domestic abuse) ○ finances/decision making ○ power and control (e.g., lagged adaptation, toxic childhood) ○ the role of children, friends and extended family ○ the growth of child-centred families ○ the extension of childhood.

3.1.2.2 Option 2: Youth subcultures

This option focuses on youth as an important period in the socialisation process when individuals are developing a sense of identity within their peer groups. The core themes of socialisation, culture, identity, social differentiation, power and stratification are threaded through this section and content should be studied in relation to these themes. It allows students to explore different types of youth subcultures and the roles they may play in society.

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
1. How are youth subcultures formed? Why do they develop?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conflict and consensus, ● Social structure and social action ● The role of values, ● Social change ● Social order, social control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Theoretical views of the role of youth culture and subcultures and how and why they are formed, considering issues of consensus versus conflict, social order and control. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ functionalism (e.g., transitional stage) ○ Marxism/neo-Marxism (e.g., spectacular subcultures, resistance, magical solutions) ○ feminism (e.g., bedroom culture, malestream sociology) ○ postmodernism (e.g., neo-tribes, supermarket of style). <input type="checkbox"/> Subcultures and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ social class (e.g., resistance, bricolage) ○ gender (e.g., male and female subcultures) ○ ethnicity (e.g., white mask, white wannabes) ○ hybridity (e.g., Brasians, cultural appropriation).
2. Why do some young people participate in deviant subcultures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conflict and consensus ● Social change ● Social order, social control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Deviant subcultures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ delinquent subcultures (e.g., delinquency) ○ criminal subcultures (e.g., focal concerns, gangs) ○ anti-school subcultures (e.g., opposition to pro-school norms and values) ○ urban music subcultures (e.g., racial neoliberalism) ○ female subcultures (e.g., new wave girls). <input type="checkbox"/> Patterns within the last 30 years in sociological research and official statistics on youth subcultural deviance in terms of:

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ social class ○ gender ○ ethnicity ○ location. <input type="checkbox"/> Explanations for why some young people participate in deviant subcultures, including structural and social action theory as well as issues of gender and ethnic identity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ functionalism/New Right (e.g., strain, status frustration) ○ Marxism/neo-Marxism (e.g., relative deprivation, marginalisation, subculture) ○ interactionism (e.g., labelling, self-fulfilling prophecy) ○ feminism (e.g., double deviance). <input type="checkbox"/> The role of the media, contemporary folk devils, moral panics and youth deviance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ deviancy amplification ○ social/digital media influence.

3.1.2.3 Option 3: Media

This option focuses on how media plays an increasingly important role as an agent of socialisation in contemporary society. The core themes of socialisation, culture, identity, social differentiation, power and stratification are threaded through this section and content should be studied in relation to these themes. It allows students to explore a range of evidence relating to media representations and media effects.

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
1. How are different social groups represented in the media?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conflict and consensus ● Social structure and social action ● The role of values ● Social change ● Social order, social control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence and explanations for the representation and effects of misrepresentations of the following groups in the media and how far these are changing in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ethnicity (e.g., stereotypes, tokenism) ○ gender (including non-binary and trans identity) (e.g., symbolic annihilation) ○ sexuality (e.g., heteronormative lens) ○ social class (e.g., upper, middle, working and under-class) ○ age (e.g., youth, childhood, old age). <input type="checkbox"/> How these factors can overlap to produce distorted views. <input type="checkbox"/> Theoretical views on media representations:

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Marxism/neo-Marxism (e.g., ruling-class hegemonic view) ○ pluralism (e.g., supply and demand, diversity and choice, Fourth Estate) ○ feminism (e.g., male gaze, beauty myth) ○ postmodernism (e.g., saturation, globalisation, hyper-reality).
2. What effect do the media have on audiences?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conflict and consensus ● Social change ● Social order, social control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Theoretical views of media effects including hypodermic syringe, two step flow, cultural effects, uses and gratifications. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ direct ○ indirect ○ active audience. <input type="checkbox"/> The role of the new media and the impact of social media on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ deviancy amplification and the creation of moral panics (e.g., folk devils, labelling, self-fulfilling prophecy).

3.2 Researching and understanding social inequalities (H582/02)

This component explores the methods of sociological enquiry and uses the context of social difference and inequality to develop knowledge and understanding of contemporary social processes. The core themes of social differentiation, power and stratification are threaded through this section and content should be studied in relation to these themes. This component aims to foster the development of critical and reflective thinking with a respect for social diversity in terms of social class, gender, and ethnicity. Although not directly assessed, this component encourages students to carry out their own small-scale research projects as a way of enhancing their sociological understanding of methodology linking to the key content and students are encouraged to practice research to aid with understanding this topic.

Where possible and appropriate, synoptic links should be made with the content of the other components throughout teaching and assessment (e.g., in the application of evaluative issues).

It should also be noted that the content of Component 02 can also be assessed in the contexts of Components 01 and 03.

Within the specified content, for each key question the concepts and theoretical issues that should be explored is included and content should be delivered in relation to that area.

3.2.1 Section A: Research methods and researching social inequalities

In this section, students are introduced to a range of research methods and sources of data as well as the factors influencing the design of sociological research and the relationship between theory and methods. Students are encouraged to consider the ethical, practical and theoretical issues arising in sociological research and to apply knowledge of research methods to the particular contexts of Section B.

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
1. What is the relationship between theory and methods?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict and consensus • Social structure and social action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How social research is guided by theory. <input type="checkbox"/> Positivism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ patterns ○ trends ○ objectivity ○ the role of values (value freedom) ○ quantitative data. <input type="checkbox"/> Interpretivism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ meanings and experiences ○ Verstehen and empathy ○ rapport ○ subjectivity ○ researcher imposition and bias ○ reflexivity ○ the role of values (value freedom) ○ qualitative data. <input type="checkbox"/> Key research concepts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ validity

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reliability ○ representativeness ○ generalisability.
2. What are the main stages of the research process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationship between sociology and contemporary social policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The research process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ factors influencing the choice of research topic including funding, the researcher and the funding body ○ factors influencing the choice of research methods ○ aims/hypothesis/research questions ○ primary/secondary data ○ operationalisation ○ pilot studies ○ data collection ○ interpretation of data. <input type="checkbox"/> The relationship between sociology and contemporary social policy <input type="checkbox"/> Sampling process including the ethical, practical and theoretical factors influencing its choice- <input type="checkbox"/> Sampling techniques and the advantages and disadvantages of each technique <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ random ○ systematic ○ stratified ○ snowball ○ volunteer ○ opportunity ○ quota. <input type="checkbox"/> Access and gatekeeping. <input type="checkbox"/> Consideration of ethics in the research process.
3. Which methods are used in sociological research?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Research methods in the context of social inequalities and the advantages and disadvantages of each. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ questionnaires ○ structured interviews ○ statistical data (official and non-official) ○ content analysis ○ observations (participant/non-participant/covert/overt) ○ unstructured interviews ○ semi structured interviews ○ ethnography. <input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative and qualitative data. <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed methods

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ triangulation ○ methodological pluralism ○ longitudinal studies.

3.2.2 Section B: Understanding social inequalities

Within this section students will have the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of contemporary patterns and trends of social inequality. The core themes of socialisation, culture, identity, social differentiation, power and stratification are threaded through this section and content should be studied in relation to these themes. Students should be able to engage in theoretical debate, explore conceptual issues and develop skills of analysis and evaluation of sociological research and evidence. Students are encouraged to think synoptically in this unit and should be able to apply concepts learned in other topics areas to the final question in the assessment from this component.

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
1. What are the main patterns and trends in social inequality and difference?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Social inequality and difference, how they overlap and how they have changed in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ social class (e.g., relative poverty, social stratification, social mobility) ○ gender (e.g., vertical and horizontal segregation, gender pay gap, glass ceiling) ○ ethnicity (e.g., concrete ceiling, educational success). <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of social inequalities from a range of areas of social life including patterns and trends in relation to work and employment (e.g., education, social mobility, politics, power, poverty, health, family).
2. How can patterns and trends in social inequality and difference be explained?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict and consensus • Social structure and social action. • The role of values • Social change • Social order, social control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The main sociological explanations of social inequality and difference, how useful each theory is in explaining inequality and contemporary forms of inequality. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ functionalism (e.g., meritocracy, value consensus, social solidarity) ○ Marxism (e.g., class conflict, alienation, ideology) ○ feminism (e.g., dual burden, triple shift, patriarchy) ○ Weberian (e.g., status).

3.3 Debates in contemporary society (H582/03)

This component engages students in theoretical debates and how these relate to a contemporary global society. It develops links between the topics studied in this component, the nature of sociological thought, contemporary social policy and the core themes. The core themes of socialisation, culture, identity, social differentiation, power and stratification are threaded through this section and content should be studied in relation to these themes. Debates are introduced through a compulsory topic of ‘Globalisation and the digital social world’ in Section A, whilst Section B explores them in more depth from a detailed study of one of three options: either Crime and deviance, Education, or Religion, belief and faith. Within the specified content, for each key question the concepts and theoretical issues that should be explored is included and content should be delivered in relation to that area.

The box below highlights the research method focus for this unit and content should be linked where appropriate.

Students must be able to apply, analyse and/or evaluate the following to the key questions in each section in order to present evidence and argument:

- the collection of primary and secondary data
- quantitative and qualitative data using appropriate concepts
- factors influencing the design and conduct of sociological research
- practical, ethical and theoretical issues arising in sociological research
- methodological approaches in sociological research.

3.3.1 Section A: Globalisation and the digital social world

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
<p>1. What is the relationship between globalisation and digital forms of communication?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Definitions of globalisation and problems with this (e.g., social, economic and political factors). <input type="checkbox"/> Developments in digital forms of communication in a global society and how they are related to social capital and access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ digital revolution ○ global village ○ virtual communities ○ networked global society ○ social media. <input type="checkbox"/> Applying sociological theories to digital forms of communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Marxism/neo-Marxism (e.g., ownership and control, ideological control, means of production,) ○ Feminism (e.g., patriarchy, exploitation, fourth wave feminists)

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
2. What is the impact of digital forms of communication in a global context?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of values • Social change • Social order, social control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Postmodernism (e.g., diversity, identity, hyper-reality). <input type="checkbox"/> The impact of digital forms of communication and the positive and negative effects on people's identity, relationships and social inequalities. <input type="checkbox"/> How people's identity and social inequalities relate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ social class (e.g., upper, middle, working and under class) ○ gender ○ age (e.g., elderly, middle aged, young adults, youth, children) ○ location (e.g., internet regulation, censorship, digital norms). <input type="checkbox"/> The impact of digital forms of communication on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the digital divide (e.g., income/wealth, location) ○ conflict and change (e.g., religious fundamentalism) ○ cultural homogenisation (e.g., westernisation, capitalism, consumerism) ○ cultural defence/glocalisation (e.g., local cultures, reverse colonisation, indigenous)

3.3.2 Section B

3.3.2.1 Option 1: Crime and deviance

This option focuses on debates in contemporary society through a detailed study of crime and deviance. The core themes of socialisation, culture, identity, social differentiation, power and stratification are threaded through this section and content should be studied in relation to these themes. The social construction of crime and deviance are considered and the ways in which crime is socially distributed, explained and reduced. This option introduces a global dimension, with reference to patterns and trends. It aims to give an understanding of different theoretical approaches to the study of crime and deviance.

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
1. How are crime and deviance defined and measured in the UK?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social order, social control • Social change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Definitions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ crime and deviance ○ the relativity of crime and deviance over time, between and within societies ○ the social construction of crime and deviance (e.g., cultural, situation/circumstance). <input type="checkbox"/> Measuring crime including the advantages and disadvantages of each: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ official crime statistics (e.g., dark figure of crime, police discretion, coughing and cuffing) ○ victim surveys (e.g., CSEW, Islington Crime Survey, Merseyside Crime Survey) ○ self-report studies. (e.g., The Cambridge Study, Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime).
2. What are the patterns and trends in crime?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The social distribution of offending and victimisation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ social class (e.g., under, working, middle, upper class) ○ gender ○ age (e.g., elderly, middle aged, young adults, youth, children) ○ ethnicity (e.g., inter-racial, intra-racial). <input type="checkbox"/> Patterns of crime in a global context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ global organised crime including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new opportunities for crime • how countries in the global south may be used by transnational criminal groups and companies (e.g., global criminal economy, interconnectedness, exploitation) ○ green crime (e.g., primary, secondary).

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
<p>3. How can crime and deviance be explained?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict and consensus • Social structure and social action • The role of values • Social order, social control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Theoretical views of crime and deviance, how useful they are in relation to social class, gender, age and ethnicity, and how relevant they are for understanding crime in contemporary global society. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ functionalism (e.g., anomie, modes of adaptation, safety valve) ○ subcultural theories (e.g., status frustration, focal concerns, illegitimate opportunity structures) ○ Marxism (e.g., repressive state apparatus, alienation, capitalist ideology) ○ Interactionism (e.g., master status, self-fulfilling prophecy, subterranean values) ○ realism (left and right) (e.g., marginalisation, relative deprivation, rational choice theory) ○ Feminism. (e.g., chivalry thesis, masculinity, social control).
<p>4. How can crime and deviance be reduced?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social order, social control • The relationship between sociology and contemporary social policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Social policy and crime including the effectiveness of crime prevention and control policies using recent examples. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ social and community crime prevention and punishment (e.g., multi-agency working, consensual policing) ○ restorative justice (e.g., reintegrative shaming) ○ rehabilitation strategies (e.g., community sentencing, treatment programmes) ○ greater equality in society ○ situational crime prevention (e.g., target hardening, displacement theory, designing out) ○ environmental crime prevention (e.g., defensible space, zero tolerance, broken windows theory) ○ retributive justice (e.g., punitive, retribution, custodial sentence) ○ Surveillance (e.g., deterrence, actuarial justice, synoptic surveillance).

3.3.2.2 Option 2: Education

This option focuses on debates in contemporary society through a detailed study of education. The core themes of socialisation, culture, identity, social differentiation, power and stratification are threaded through this section and content should be studied in relation to these themes. Students have the opportunity to explore the role of education in society and patterns of educational achievement. Students can also reflect on global educational inequalities as well as inequalities within the contemporary UK. It aims to give an understanding of different theoretical approaches to the study of education.

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
1. What is the role of education in society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict and consensus • Social structure and social action • The role of values • Social change • Social order, social control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Theoretical views on the role of education and how relevant they are today. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ functionalism (e.g., social solidarity, meritocracy, division of labour) ○ Marxism (e.g., ideological state apparatus, social reproduction, myth of meritocracy) ○ Liberal (e.g., deschooling, child-centred approach) ○ social democratic (e.g., equality of opportunity) ○ New Right (e.g., marketisation) ○ Feminism (e.g., social reproduction, hidden curriculum, gender socialisation). <input type="checkbox"/> Theoretical explanations of the relationship between education and work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Functionalism (e.g., role allocation) ○ Marxism (e.g., correspondence principle, hidden curriculum) ○ New Right (e.g., vocationalism, individualism).
2. What are the patterns and trends of educational inequalities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Differential educational achievement according to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ social class (e.g., working, middle, upper class) ○ ethnicity ○ gender The interrelationship between these factors in considering educational achievement and their types of evidence. <input type="checkbox"/> Trends over time and issues of measurement. <input type="checkbox"/> The disparity in educational provision around the world, for example between the global North and South (e.g., gender apartheid, education poverty).
3. How can differential educational achievement and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict and consensus • Social structure and social action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Explanations for differential educational achievement and experience, including how useful sociological evidence is linking to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ inside and outside school factors (e.g., parental support, ethnocentric curriculum)

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
experiences be explained?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social order, social control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ structural, material and cultural factors (e.g., debt aversion, cultural capital) ○ social class, gender and ethnicity (e.g., subculture, socialisation) ○ theoretical approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • functionalism • Marxism • interactionism • social democratic • feminism • New Right.
4. How has the UK education system changed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social structure and social action • The role of values • The relationship between sociology and contemporary social policy • Social change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The diversity of educational provision including different types of institutions and schools. (e.g., academies, independent schools, free schools). <input type="checkbox"/> Government policies from 1988 onwards, including vocational and work-based training. (e.g., 1988 Education Reform Act, New Vocationalism, pupil premium) <input type="checkbox"/> Ideological influences on government educational policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New Right (e.g., specialist schools, education market, league tables) ○ social democratic. (e.g., social exclusion, Higher Education access, Education Action Zones) <input type="checkbox"/> The impact of educational policies on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ inclusion, access to education and opportunities ○ gender, class, ethnicity ○ competition, diversity and choice ○ raising standards.

3.3.2.3 Option 3: Religion, belief and faith

This option focuses on debates in contemporary society through a detailed study of religion, belief and faith. The core themes of socialisation, culture, identity, social differentiation, power and stratification are threaded through this section and content should be studied in relation to these themes. Students have the opportunity to explore the role of religion in an increasingly global society. Students can also consider patterns and trends of religiosity both in the UK and on a more global scale. It aims to give an understanding of different theoretical approaches to the study of religion, belief and faith.

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
1. How are religion, belief and faith defined and measured?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social change • Social order, social control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Defining religion, faith and belief. <input type="checkbox"/> Different types of religious institutions, organisations and movements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ churches and denominations ○ sects and cults ○ new religious movements ○ new age movements ○ religious fundamentalism. <input type="checkbox"/> Ways in which religion, faith and belief are measured: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ religious belief ○ participation ○ religiosity ○ belief without belonging.
2. What is the role of religion, belief and faith in contemporary society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict and consensus • Social structure and social action • The role of values • Social change • Social order, social control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Theoretical views on the role of religion, belief and faith for the individual and for society. To include whether it is a positive or negative, and whether it is a conservative force or a force for change. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Functionalism (e.g., social solidarity, religious rituals, collective conscience) ○ Marxism/neo-Marxism (e.g., false consciousness, conservative force) ○ Weberian (e.g., social change, protestant work ethic) ○ Feminism (e.g., patriarchy, gender-specific symbolism, conservative role) ○ postmodernism (e.g., choice, individualism, grand narratives). <input type="checkbox"/> Sociological views on the growth of fundamentalist groups and how these may challenge traditional theory. <input type="checkbox"/> Theoretical views of the relationship between religion and social change including conflict, revolution, fundamentalist ideologies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ functionalism

Key question	Concepts and theoretical issues:	Content – what we will assess
3. What are the key patterns and trends of religion, belief and faith?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Marxism/neo-Marxism ○ Weberianism. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Patterns and trends including reasons for the appeal of particular religions to different groups in society and in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ social class (e.g., disprivilege, relative deprivation) ○ gender (e.g., structural location, differential socialisation) ○ ethnicity (e.g., liberation theology, cultural adaptation) ○ age (e.g., spiritual marketplace, religious socialisation) ○ location (e.g., heritage, cultural defence/homogenisation). <input type="checkbox"/> Religion, belief, and faith in a global context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ change in the significance of religion in societies including its resurgence and decline ○ differences in the significance of religion between societies ○ links between industrialisation, migration and technology on levels of religiosity.
4. Is secularisation occurring?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict and consensus • The role of values • Social change • Social order, social control • The relationship between sociology and contemporary social policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Debates on the extent of secularisation in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Belief (e.g., privatisation, diversity) ○ practice (e.g., religious devotions, spirituality) ○ fundamentalism (e.g., cultural defence) ○ the influence of religion in society including global patterns of religion in relation to the secularisation debate. <input type="checkbox"/> Theoretical views on secularisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ pro-secularisation theorists (e.g., rationalisation, societalisation) ○ anti-secularisation theorists including postmodern views (e.g., spiritual growth). <input type="checkbox"/> Government policy/direction on religious equality, discrimination and freedom.

3.4 Aims and Learning outcomes

We believe in developing specifications that help you bring the subject to life and inspire your students to achieve more.

We've created teacher-friendly specifications based on extensive research and engagement with teachers. They're designed to be straightforward and accessible so that you can tailor the delivery of the course to suit your needs. We aim to encourage students to become responsible for their own learning, confident in discussing ideas, innovative and engaged.

The study of A level sociology focuses on contemporary society. Studying sociology fosters the development of critical and reflective thinking with a respect for social diversity. It provides students with an awareness of the importance of social structure and social action in explaining social issues. Students are encouraged to develop their own sociological awareness through active engagement with the contemporary social world.

This specification encourages students 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

Following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study allows students to reflect on their own experience of the social world to enhance their ability to play informed roles within different social contexts.

The main purpose of this qualification is to prepare students by providing a suitable foundation for the study of sociology or related courses in Higher Education. A further purpose of this qualification is to prepare and develop students' interest in and enthusiasm for the subject and inspire students intending to pursue careers or further study in social sciences, or as part of a general education.

4. Assessment

4.1 Forms of assessment

For this qualification students must take all components as detailed in the table below.

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Sociology	
(01) Socialisation, culture and identity	
2 hours Written paper Externally assessed 2 sections Students answer all questions 80 marks	Section A: Introducing socialisation, culture and identity Compulsory questions, some based on source material. Includes one 4-, 8-, and 16-mark question. Section B: Options Students choose one from a choice of three options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • families and relationships • youth subcultures • media.
33.3% of the total A Level	Includes one 4-, 8-, 16-, and 24-mark question
(02) Researching and understanding social inequalities	
2 hours Written paper Externally assessed 2 sections Students answer all questions from Section A and all questions from one option in Section B. 80 marks	Section A: Research methods and researching social inequalities Compulsory questions, some based on source material. Includes one 4-, 8-, and 16-mark question. Section B: Understanding social inequalities Compulsory questions. Includes one 4-, 8-, 16-, and 24-mark question.
33.3% of the total A Level	
(03) Debates in contemporary society	
2 hours Written paper Externally assessed 2 sections Students answer all questions from Section A and all questions from one option in Section B. 80 marks	Section A: Globalisation and the digital social world Compulsory questions, some based on source material. Includes one 4-, 8-, and 16-mark question. Section B: Options Students choose one from a choice of three options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crime and deviance • education • religion, belief and faith
33.3% of the total A Level	Includes one 4-, 8-, 16-, and 24-mark question.

4.2 Assessment of extended response

The assessment materials for this qualification provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained and coherent line of reasoning which is relevant, substantiated and logically structured. Marks for extended responses are integrated into the marking criteria.

4.3 Assessment objectives (AOs)

There are three assessment objectives in the OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Sociology and these are detailed in the table below.

Students are expected to:

Assessment Objectives	
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present arguments • make judgements • draw conclusions.

The relationship between the assessment objectives and the components are shown in the following table:

Component	% of overall A Level in Sociology		
	AO1	AO2	AO3
Socialisation, culture and identity (H582/01)	41.25%	31.25%	27.5%
Researching and understanding social inequalities (H582/02)	40%	30%	30%
Debates in contemporary society (H582/03)	40%	30%	30%

4.4 Command words

The table below highlights the command words used in this qualification's assessments.

Key command word	Mark Tariff	Assessment Objective
Outline	4	AO1
Explain	8	AO1 AO2
Evaluate	16	AO1 AO2 AO3
Explain/Discuss	16	AO1 AO2 AO3
Discuss	24	AO1 AO2 AO3

4.5 Synoptic assessment

Synoptic assessment is the students' understanding of the connections between different elements of the subject. It draws together the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt through study across the A Level Sociology course.

Synoptic assessment includes the explicit assessment of understanding of the connections between the nature of sociological thought; methods of sociological enquiry; and the two core themes using higher order skills.

Synoptic learning in sociology engages students in theoretical debate while encouraging an active involvement in the research process. It fosters a critical awareness of contemporary social processes and change.

Synoptic assessment is included in Section B on Component 02. Students are encouraged to think holistically and develop their skills of thinking as a sociologist. Students can identify opportunities to include synopticity in their answers where they see the statement 'Use your knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods from across your full course of study to support and justify your answer' as part of the question text.

Sociology is a highly synoptic subject so knowledge shown from across the course of study will be credited in any response providing it is valid. This is shown through the inclusion of 'and any other relevant points' on mark schemes.

4.6 Calculating qualification results

A student's overall qualification grade for the OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Sociology will be calculated by adding together their marks from the three question papers taken to give their total weighted mark.

This mark will then be compared to the qualification level grade boundaries for the relevant exam series to determine the student's overall qualification grade.

Further help and support

To find out more, you can also read our:

Assessment Story where we explain our assessment approach

Annotated sample assessment material (SAMs) where we explain the key points for each exam.

Request trial access to [Teach Cambridge](#) to explore the full range of teacher support or ask your exams officer to set up your account.

5. Admin

5.1 Before you start

5.1.1 Prior knowledge, learning and progression

No prior knowledge of the subject is required.

Throughout the course of study, students are encouraged to develop a critical awareness of sociological concepts and issues in contemporary society. This specification is designed to foster the development of critical and reflective thinking with a respect for social diversity; and to encourage an awareness of the importance of social structure and social action in explaining social issues.

5.1.2 Total qualification time

Total qualification time (TQT) is the total amount of time, in hours, expected to be spent by a student to achieve a qualification. It includes both guided learning hours and hours spent in preparation, study and assessment.

The total qualification time for A Level Sociology is 360 hours. The total guided learning time is 360 hours.

5.1.3 Overlap with other qualifications

There is no significant overlap between the content of this specification and those for other Advanced GCE qualifications.

5.1.4 Qualification availability outside of England

This qualification is available in England. It is also available in Northern Ireland. (Please note that for delivery in Northern Ireland, the qualification must have approval from the Department for Education. Schools and colleges must seek this before commencing the qualification. For further information please see the DfE website). It is not available in Wales.

5.1.5 Language

This qualification is available in English only. All assessment materials are available in English only and all candidate work must be in English.

5.1.6 Assessment availability

There will be one examination series available each year in May/June to **all** students.

This specification will be certificated from the June 2028 examination series onwards.

All examined question papers must be taken in the same examination series at the end of the course.

5.1.7 Special consideration

Special consideration is a post-assessment adjustment to marks or grades to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time the assessment was taken. Detailed information about eligibility for special consideration can be found in the JCQ A guide to the special consideration process.

5.1.8 Malpractice

Any breach of the regulations for the conduct of examinations may constitute malpractice (which includes maladministration) and must be reported to OCR as soon as it is detected. Detailed

information on malpractice can be found in the JCQ Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures.

5.1.9 Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments and access arrangements allow students with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do, without changing the demands of the assessment. Applications for these should be made before the examination series. Detailed information about eligibility for access arrangements can be found in the JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

5.1.10 External assessment arrangements

Regulations governing examination arrangements are contained in the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations.

5.1.10.1 Private candidates

Private candidates may enter for OCR assessments.

A private candidate is someone who pursues a course of study independently but takes an examination or assessment at an approved examination centre. A private candidate may be a part-time student, someone taking a distance learning course, or someone being tutored privately. They must be based in the UK.

Private candidates need to contact OCR approved centres to establish whether they are prepared to host them as a private candidate. The centre may charge for this facility and OCR recommends that the arrangement is made early in the course.

Further guidance for private candidates may be found on the [OCR website](#).

5.2 Making entries

5.2.1 Pre-assessment

5.2.1.1 Estimated entries

Estimated entries are your best projection of the number of students who will be entered for a qualification in a particular series. Estimated entries should be submitted to OCR by the specified deadline. They are free and do not commit your centre in any way.

5.2.1.2 Final entries

Final entries provide OCR with detailed data for each student, showing each assessment to be taken. It is essential that you use the correct entry code, considering the relevant entry rules.

Final entries must be submitted to OCR by the published deadlines or late entry fees will apply.

All students taking the OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Sociology must be entered for H582.

Entry code	Title	Component code	Component title	Assessment type
H582	Sociology	01	Socialisation, culture and identity	External Assessment
		02	Researching and understanding social inequalities	External Assessment
		03	Debates in contemporary society	External Assessment

5.2.1.3 Collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system

Ofqual has published guidance on collecting evidence of student performance as part of long-term contingency arrangements to improve the resilience of the qualifications system. You should review and consider this guidance when delivering this qualification to students at your centre.

For more detailed information on collecting of evidence of student performance please visit our website at www.ocr.org.uk/administration/general-qualifications/assessment.

5.2.2 Retaking the qualification

Students can retake the qualification as many times as they wish. They retake all components of the qualification.

5.3 After the exams

5.3.1 Results and certificates

5.3.1.1 Grade Scale

A Level qualifications are graded on the scale: A*, A, B, C, D, E, where A* is the highest. Students who do not reach the minimum standard of E will be Unclassified (U). Only subjects in which grades A* to E are attained will be recorded on certificates.

5.3.1.2 Results

Results are released to centres and students for information and to allow any queries to be resolved **before** certificates are issued.

Centres will have access to the following results information for each student:

- The grade for the qualification.
- The raw mark for each component.
- The total weighted mark for the qualification.

The following supporting information will be available:

- Raw mark grade boundaries for each component.
- Weighted mark grade boundaries for the qualification.

Until certificates are issued, results are deemed to be provisional and may be subject to amendment.

A student's final results will be recorded on an OCR certificate. The qualification title will be shown on the certificate as 'OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Sociology'.

5.3.2 Post-results services

A number of post-results services are available:

- **Review of results** – If you are not happy with the outcome of a student's results, centres may request a review of marking.
- **Missing and incomplete results** – This service should be used if an individual subject result for a student is missing, or the student has been omitted entirely from the results supplied.
- **Access to scripts** – Centres can request access to marked scripts.

Examine *with us*

- Build confidence supporting your students with assessment
- Enhance subject knowledge
- Great for professional development



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