



ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Secondary Education

General Studies 3761 2010

Material accompanying this Specification

- Specimen and Past Papers and Mark Schemes
- Reports on the Examination
- Teachers' Guide
- Distance Learning Material for Improving Student Performance

SPECIFICATION

This specification will be published annually on the AQA Website (www.aqa.org.uk). If there are any changes to the specification centres will be notified in print as well as on the Website. The version on the Website is the definitive version of the specification.

| Vertical black lines indicate a significant change or addition to the specification published for 2009.

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Contents

Background Information

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | The Revised General Certificate of Secondary Education | 5 |
| 2 | Specification at a Glance | 7 |
| 3 | Availability of Assessment Units and Entry Details | 8 |

Scheme of Assessment

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----|
| 4 | Introduction | 10 |
| 5 | Aims | 11 |
| 6 | Assessment Objectives | 12 |
| 7 | Scheme of Assessment | 13 |

Subject Content

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----|
| 8 | Summary of Subject Content | 15 |
| 9 | Areas of Study | 16 |

Key Skills and Other Issues

- | | | |
|----|---|----|
| 10 | Key Skills – Teaching, Developing and Providing Opportunities for Generating Evidence | 19 |
| 11 | Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social, Cultural and Other Issues | 24 |

Centre-Assessed Component

12	Nature of the Centre-Assessed Component	26
13	Guidance on Setting the Centre-Assessed Component	27
14	Assessment Criteria	28
15	Supervision and Authentication	31
16	Standardisation	32
17	Administrative Procedures	33
18	Moderation	34

Awarding and Reporting

19	Grading, Shelf-Life and Re-Sits	35
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Appendices

A	Grade Descriptions	36
B	Record Forms	37
C	Overlaps with Other Qualifications	37

Background Information

1

The Revised General Certificate of Secondary Education

Following a review of the National Curriculum requirements, and the establishment of the National Qualifications Framework, all the unitary awarding bodies have revised their GCSE syllabuses for first examination in 2003.

1.1 Changes at GCSE

Key Skills

All GCSE specifications must identify, as appropriate, opportunities for generating evidence on which candidates may be assessed in the “main” Key Skills of Communication, Application of Number and Information Technology at the appropriate level(s). Also, where appropriate, they must identify opportunities for developing and generating evidence for addressing the “wider” Key Skills of Working with Others, Improving own Learning and Performance, and Problem Solving. (See Section 10)

Spiritual, moral, ethical, social, cultural, environmental, health and safety and European Issues

All specifications must identify ways in which the study of the subject can contribute to an awareness and understanding of these issues. (See Section 11)

ICT

The National Curriculum requires that students should be given opportunities to apply and develop their ICT capacity through the use of ICT tools to support their learning. In each specification, candidates will be required to make effective use of ICT in ways appropriate to the needs of the subject.

Tiering

In most subjects the scheme of assessment must include question papers, targeted at two tiers of grades, ie A* - D and C – G.

A safety net of an allowed Grade E will be provided for candidates entered for the higher tier who just fail to achieve Grade D. The questions will still be targeted at A* - D.

Citizenship

From 2002, students in England will be required to study Citizenship as a National Curriculum subject. Each GCSE specification must signpost, where appropriate, opportunities for developing citizenship knowledge, skills and understanding. (See Section 11.4)

2


Specification at a Glance

General Studies

There are two tiers of assessment: Foundation (Grades G-C) and Higher (Grades D-A*).

GCSE	
Paper 1 F and 1 H	
<p>Written Paper 80% of total marks 2 hours</p> <p>Split into three sections Section A (20%) Objective Test questions Section B (30%) Problem-solving exercise Section C (30%) Extended writing Similar material for Foundation and Higher Tiers but leading to differentiated questions</p>	
Paper 2 F and 2 H	
20% of total marks	
Either	OR
<p>1 hour written paper</p> <p>Case Study. Pre-release material. Similar material for Foundation and Higher Tiers but leading to differentiated questions.</p>	<p>Coursework</p> <p>Issues-based. Coursework assignment approximately 1500-2000 words.</p>

Foundation Tier
3761F
Higher Tier
3761H



3

Availability of Assessment Units and Entry Details

3.1 Availability of Assessment Units

Examinations based on this Specification are available in the June examination series only.

3.2 Entry Codes

Normal entry requirements apply, but the following information should be noted.

The **Subject Code** for entry to the GCSE award is 3761F for Foundation Tier and 3761H for Higher Tier.

3.3 Classification Codes

Each 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 GCSE qualification with the same classification code will have only one grade (the highest) counted for the purpose of the School and College Performance Tables.

The classification code for this specification is 7810.

3.4 Private Candidates

This specification is available for private candidates in the following situations:

- for candidates who have not previously entered for the specification, the written component option only is available;
- where candidates have already received a result for the coursework component, entry for the coursework option may be made;
- the coursework component result may be carried forward if the rest of the qualification is being taken.

Private candidates should write to AQA for a copy of “*Supplementary Guidance for Private Candidates*”.

3.5 Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

AQA pays due regard to the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in its administration of this specification.

Arrangements may be made to enable candidates with disabilities or other difficulties to access the assessment. An example of an access arrangement is the production of a Braille paper for a candidate with a visual impairment. Special consideration may be requested for candidates whose work has been affected by illness or other exceptional circumstances.

Further details can be found in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document:

Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examination

GCE, AEA, VCE, GCSE, GNVQ, Entry Level & Key Skills

This document can be viewed via the AQA web site (www.aqa.org.uk)

Applications for access arrangements and special consideration should be submitted to AQA by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

3.6 Language of Examinations

All assessment will be provided through the medium of English. Assessment materials will not be provided in Welsh or Gaelic.

Scheme of Assessment

4

Introduction

4.1 National Criteria

This GCSE General Studies Specification complies with the following:

- The GCSE, GCE and AEA Code of Practice April 2008;
- The GCSE Qualification Specific Criteria;
- The Arrangements for the Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: Common Criteria.

4.2 Rationale

This specification aims to provide an opportunity to deal with a range of contemporary issues in ways which take account of their interdisciplinary nature. Recognising that in the remainder of students' curricula they are usually focussing on subject matter in narrower, more specialised contexts, General Studies at this level attempts to broaden their awareness of the interrelationships which in reality often encompass some of those discrete contexts. The specification also provides opportunities in which (a) the designated Key Skills can be developed, without the constraints of precisely prescribed subject content, (b) more systematic thinking skills may be introduced, and (c) study of issues raised in Citizenship and PSHE lessons may be consolidated.

4.3 Prior level of attainment and recommended prior learning

No stipulated prior learning or level of attainment is necessary for candidates to undertake a course of study based on this specification. However, as this is a specification which leads to a GCSE qualification, there is a broad assumption that candidates will have acquired a reasonable competence in written communication, numeracy and data handling.

4.4 Progression

This qualification is a recognised part of the National Qualifications Framework. As such, this specification provides progression from Key Stage 3 and lays an appropriate foundation for post-16 work in General Studies.

In addition it provides a worthwhile course for candidates of various ages and from diverse backgrounds in terms of general education and lifelong learning.

5

Aims

A course based on this specification should encourage candidates to:

- a. develop the ability to view concepts, discrete knowledge and situations from a wider standpoint than that of a single discipline and to form a synoptic view.
- b. develop an awareness of contemporary issues and their importance nationally and/or internationally.
- c. develop critical and logical powers of thought and expression, and demonstrate an ability to justify ideas.
- d. obtain and comprehend information from a wide variety of sources and to extend such studies by discussion, reading and working independently.

6

Assessment Objectives

All assessment objectives apply to both the written papers and to the internal assessment of coursework, although the relative emphasis will differ in each component of the examination.

The scheme of assessment will assess candidates' ability to:

6.1	A01	demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of contemporary issues. (<i>Knowledge</i>)
6.2	A02	comprehend and make use of stimulus material presented in a variety of forms including text, number, statistics, diagrams and pictures. (<i>Comprehension</i>)
6.3	A03	marshal evidence by selecting, interpreting, and integrating information, data and concepts, and by communicating clearly in an accurate, logical and relevant way. (<i>Application and Communication</i>)
6.4	A04	interrelate information and ideas in a coherent and structured manner, evaluate evidence, form reasoned judgements, and recognise bias and prejudice. (<i>Synthesis and Evaluation</i>)
6.5	Quality of Written Communication	<p>Where candidates are required to produce extended written material in English, they will be assessed on the quality of written communication. Candidates will be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• present relevant information in a form that suits its purposes;• ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate, so that meaning is clear. <p>The quality of written communication will be assessed as part of Assessment Objective 3 in Sections B and C in Paper 1, and in Paper 2.</p>

7.2 Weighting of Assessment Objectives

The approximate relationship between the relative percentage weighting of the Assessment Objectives (AOs) and the overall Scheme of Assessment is shown in the following table:

Assessment Objectives	Component Weightings (%)		Overall Weighting of AOs (%)
	Paper 1	Paper 2	
Demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of contemporary issues. (AO1)	20	5	25
Comprehend and make use of stimulus material presented in a variety of forms including text, number, statistics, diagrams and pictures. (AO2)	20	5	25
Marshal evidence by selecting, interpreting, and integrating information, data and concepts, and by communicating clearly in an accurate, logical and relevant way. (AO3)	20	5	25
Interrelate information and ideas in a coherent and structured manner, evaluate evidence, form reasoned judgements, and recognise bias and prejudice. (AO4)	20	5	25
Overall Weighting of Units (%)	80	20	100

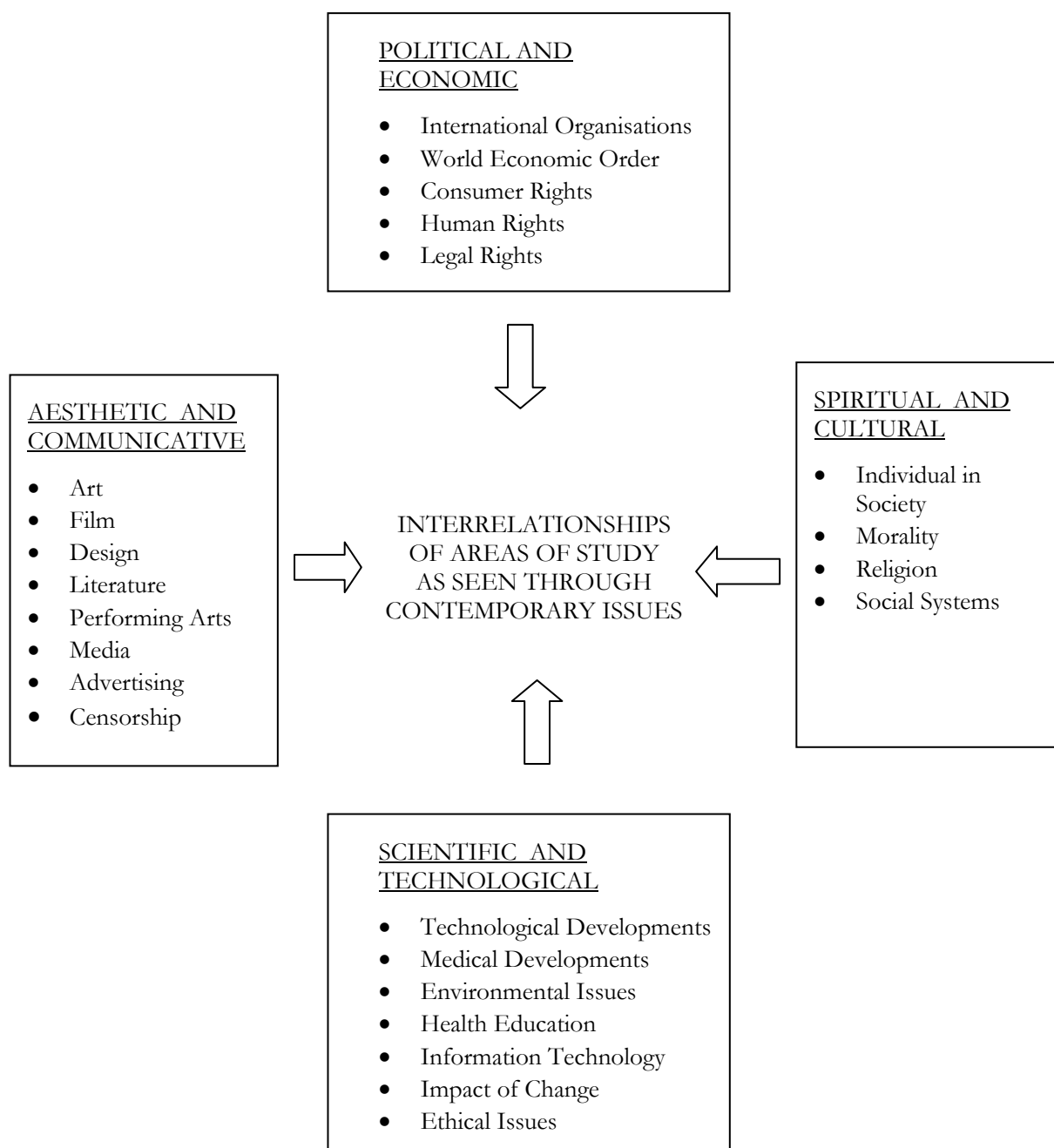
Candidates' marks for each assessment unit are scaled to achieve the correct weightings.

Subject Content

8

Summary of Subject Content

8.1 The following diagram outlines the range of Areas of Study applicable to the written papers and to coursework.



Areas of Study

9.1 Introduction

The interrelationships of Areas of Study is a central feature of the specification. The specification requires candidates to demonstrate a breadth of knowledge and make connections between, and integrate ideas across, Areas of Study. The specification takes an inter-disciplinary approach to General Studies, calling for the exercise of thinking and analytical skills, providing opportunities for examining questions, evaluating evidence, and making judgements from a broader standpoint than that of a single discipline.

Teachers, in choosing a topic which is inter-disciplinary, will draw material from a number of different subject areas. A teaching unit, for example, on the Internet, could examine a range of issues, which might include:

- the impact of the Internet on business
- how the Internet might affect the education system
- the impact of the Internet on the ownership and dissemination of knowledge
- the Internet as an aspect of increased globalisation
- issues of censorship and the Internet.

The examination of any of these issues could involve candidates in:-

- examining material presented in a number of different forms
- assessing a range of viewpoints demonstrated in the material
- understanding the terms and concepts used in the material
- communicating the outcomes of their learning in appropriate forms
- demonstrating the ability to form their reasoned response to the issues.

Candidates would be expected to recognise the nature and scope of the Internet, and the broad details of the debates examined, for example, how the Internet might affect the way in which pupils learned at school. They would not be expected to make a detailed analysis of, say, the technological or economic implications of the Internet. What is important is that candidates understand that a variety of subject areas will contribute to an understanding of, in this example, the impact of the Internet. It is the interrelationship of these subjects in their chosen area of study which is important, rather than an in-depth analysis of each component subject.

The specification recognises that candidates need to develop and maintain a broad and balanced curriculum that fosters and enhances their understanding of modern society and their Key Skills. Therefore, the specification content has been designed to facilitate the delivery of spiritual, moral, ethical, social, cultural, environmental, health and safety and Citizenship issues, as well as identifying opportunities for developing and generating evidence for all six Key Skills at Level 1 or Level 2.

Further ideas about how to approach this General Studies course can be found in the Teachers' Guide.

9.2		The numbers and letters in brackets below refer to the Citizenship Programme of Study. (See Section 11.4)
9.3	Political and Economic	<p>Candidates should be encouraged to explore issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the role of international organisations in the world eg the UN, WHO, World Bank, EU and NATO. The key issue here would be to examine global interdependence and responsibility. (1i)• the world economic order, how economies function, sustaining development in developing countries. The key issue here would be to examine the divided economic world. (1e, 1j)• consumer rights, changing relations between businesses and their customers. (1a, 1e)• essential human rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom of movement and including the role of organisations, such as Amnesty International. (1a, 1c)• legal rights, the workings of the criminal and civil justice systems, making law, the rights and duties of the individual in a democracy. (1a, 1c)
9.4	Spiritual and Cultural	<p>Candidates should be encouraged to explore issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the rights and responsibilities of the individual as a member of modern society, using rights wisely, the changing nature of the family and its impact on everyday life. (1h)• views of morality as expressed by different groups of society, in areas such as abortion, euthanasia, and the legalisation of drugs.• an awareness of different religious beliefs and the role of religion in society.• social systems: ways in which societies are organised on national, regional and local levels; structures in society such as the family and education system. (1b, 1f)

9.5 Scientific and Technological

Candidates should be encouraged to explore issues such as:

- technological development – awareness of key inventions in areas such as communication, production and transport. (1f, 1i)
- medical developments in the areas of disease prevention and cure, genetic engineering and increased human longevity. (1f)
- environmental issues such as effects of pollution, climatic change and the use of natural resources. (1I, 1j)
- Health Education: lifestyle issues such as diet, exercise and the use and misuse of drugs including alcohol and tobacco.
- Information Technology: the Internet revolution; IT in the home and workplace; its effects on lifestyle/communication skills, and the nature of work.
- the impact of change: the key issue here would be a consideration of the benefits and dangers of an increasing reliance upon technology.
- ethical issues: a consideration of issues such as the allocation of scarce resources, eg in medical research (susceptible to democratic process or a business decision?), or whether limits should be placed on new research, and whose responsibility this would be.

9.6 Aesthetic and Communicative

Candidates should be encouraged to explore issues such as:

- art: the role of art in society, eg to reflect the society of its time, and/or to encourage innovation and new perspectives.
- film: the role of film in society, eg a consideration of the genre of science fiction as stimulus for discussion of scientific developments. (1g)
- design: importance of architectural and industrial design, eg in public buildings and spaces, or the functionality of devices in the home.
- literature: the role of literature in society, eg exploring issues of social change. (1f)
- Performing Arts: a consideration of issues such as the importance of the Arts to society, and the ways that these are funded.
- media: the importance of the media in shaping an individual's view of the world, eg a comparison of different news sources, a shift of importance from verbal to visual. (1g)
- advertising: ways in which advertising shapes and 'distorts' our views. (1g)
- censorship: the need for, and dangers of censorship – who censors the censor? (1a)

Key Skills and Other Issues

10

Key Skills – Teaching, Developing and Providing Opportunities for Generating Evidence

10.1 Introduction

The Key Skills Qualification requires candidates to demonstrate levels of achievement in the Key Skills of *Application of Number, Communication and Information Technology*.

The units for the ‘wider’ Key Skills of *Improving own Learning and Performance, Working with Others* and *Problem Solving* are also available. The acquisition and demonstration of ability in these ‘wider’ Key Skills is deemed highly desirable for all candidates, but they do not form part of the Key Skills Qualification.

Copies of the Key Skills Units may be down loaded from the QCA Website (www.qca.org.uk/keyskills).

The units for each Key Skill comprise three sections:

- A What you need to know.
- B What you must do.
- C Guidance.

Candidates following a course of study based on this Specification for General Studies can be offered opportunities to develop and generate evidence of attainment in aspects of the Key Skills of *Communication, Application of Number, Information Technology, Improving own Learning and Performance, Working with Others* and *Problem Solving*. Areas of study and learning that can be used to encourage the acquisition and use of Key Skills, and to provide opportunities to generate evidence for Part B of the units, are signposted below.

10.2 Key Skills Opportunities in General Studies

The broad interdisciplinary nature of a General Studies course at GCSE calls upon candidates’ abilities to demonstrate the transferability of their knowledge, understanding and skills. This makes such a course an ideal vehicle to assist candidates to develop their knowledge and understanding of the whole range of Key Skills, and to produce evidence of their application. The matrices which follow signpost opportunities for the acquisition, development and production of evidence for Section B of each of the Key Skills at Levels 1 and 2 which might arise in the teaching and learning which occur during the course of study. The degree of opportunity for any one Key Skill will depend upon a number of centre-specific factors, including teaching strategies and the level of resources.

Communication Level 1

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content
C1.1 Take part in discussions	✓
C1.2 Read and obtain information	✓
C1.3 Write different types of documents	✓

Communication Level 2

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content
C2.1a Contribute to discussions	✓
C2.1b Give a short talk	✓
C2.2 Read and summarise information	✓
C2.3 Write different types of documents	✓

Application of Number Level 1

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content
N1.1 Interpret information from different sources	✓
N1.2 Carry out calculations	✓
N1.3 Interpret results and present findings	✓

Application of Number Level 2

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content
N2.1 Interpret information from different sources	✓
N2.2 Carry out calculations	✓
N2.3 Interpret results and present findings	✓

Information Technology Level 1

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content
IT1.1 Find, explore and develop information	✓
IT1.2 Present information, including text, numbers and images	✓

Information Technology Level 2

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content
IT2.1 Search for and select information	✓
IT2.2 Explore and develop information and derive new information	✓
IT2.3 Present combined information, including text, numbers and images	✓

Working with Others Level 1

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content
WO1.1 Confirm what needs to be done and who is to do it	✓
WO1.2 Work towards agreed objectives	✓
WO1.3 Identify progress and suggest improvements	✓

Working with Others Level 2

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content
WO2.1 Plan work and confirm working arrangements	✓
WO2.2 Work co-operatively towards achieving identified objectives	✓
WO2.3 Exchange information on progress and agree ways of improving work with others	✓

Improving Own Learning and Performance Level 1

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content
LP1.1 Confirm short-term targets and plan how these will be met	✓
LP1.2 Follow plan to meet targets and improve performance	✓
LP1.3 Review progress and achievements	✓

Improving Own Learning and Performance Level 2

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content
LP2.1 Help set short-term targets and plan how these will be met	✓
LP2.2 Use plan and support from others, to meet targets	✓
LP2.3 Review progress and identify evidence of achievements	✓

Problem Solving Level 1

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content
PS1.1 Confirm understanding of given problems	✓
PS1.2 Plan and try out ways of solving problems	✓
PS1.3 Check if problems have been solved and describe the results	✓

Problem Solving Level 2

What you must do ...	Signposting of Opportunities for Generating Evidence in Subject Content
PS2.1 Identify problems and come up with ways of solving them	✓
PS2.2 Plan and try out options	✓
PS2.3 Apply given methods to check if problems have been solved and describe the results	✓

10.3 Further Guidance

More specific guidance and examples of tasks that can provide evidence of single Key Skills, or composite tasks that can provide evidence of more than one Key Skill, are given in the AQA specification support material, particularly the Teachers' Guide.

Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social, Cultural and Other Issues

11.1 Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social, Cultural and Other Issues

Since this specification is firmly rooted within a developing contemporary context, it offers candidates ample opportunity to explore and understand a wide range of spiritual, moral, ethical, social, cultural and other issues.

The course is structured around four Areas of Study (8.1), each of which will contribute significantly to such issues; eg the spiritual and cultural dimensions may be covered mainly through the Spiritual and Cultural area, but also through the Aesthetic and Communicative area. Similarly the ethical and moral dimensions may be covered in either or both of the Scientific and Technological area and the Spiritual and Cultural area, and the social dimension through any one of the Areas of Study, particularly Spiritual and Cultural, and Political and Economic.

11.2 European Dimension

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community in preparing this specification and associated specimen papers.

This specification offers ample opportunity for the European dimension to be included in the discussion of contemporary issues, particularly in the Political and Economic Area of Study, but also in the Aesthetic and Communicative area.

11.3 Environmental Issues

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community and the Report “*Environmental Responsibility: An Agenda for Further and Higher Education*” 1993 in preparing this specification and associated specimen papers.

The Area of Study entitled Scientific and Technological includes environmental issues, and aspects of environmental concern might also be covered in the Political and Economic Area of Study.

11.4 Citizenship

Knowledge, Skills and Understanding about becoming informed citizens can be acquired and applied through the study of contemporary issues during the course. The Areas of Study which will prove particularly useful are Political and Economic and Spiritual and Cultural. Candidates have the opportunity to develop skills of enquiry and communication throughout the course in class, home or coursework whilst:

- researching a contemporary political, moral, social or cultural issue from different sources, including ICT based sources, showing awareness of the use and abuse of statistics
- expressing, justifying and defending orally and in writing a personal viewpoint on such issues

- contributing to group and class discussions or taking part in formal debates.

The Citizenship Programme of Study can be supported by this specification in the following way.

Citizenship Reference	<i>Citizenship Reference</i>	<i>Area of Study</i>
	1a Legal and human rights	Aesthetic and Communicative; Political and Economic
	1a Criminal and civil justice	Political and Economic
	1b National identities	Aesthetic and Communicative; Spiritual and Cultural
	1c Making the law	Political and Economic
	1d Democratic responsibility	Spiritual and Cultural; Scientific and Technological
	1e How the economy functions	Political and Economic
	1f Processes of social change	Aesthetic and Communicative; Spiritual and Cultural; Scientific and Technological
	1g Role of influence of the media	Aesthetic and Communicative
	1h Rights and responsibilities	Political and Economic; Spiritual and Cultural; Scientific and Technological
	1i Global interdependence and responsibility	Political and Economic; Scientific and Technological
	1j Sustainable development	Political and Economic; Scientific and Technological

11.5 Avoidance of Bias AQA has taken great care in the preparation of this specification and associated specimen papers to avoid bias of any kind.

11.6 Health and Safety Some opportunity for candidates to become aware of health and safety issues will arise during the study of scientific and technological issues, (in particular Health Education), the study of political and economic issues, (eg Legal Rights), and/or the study of Spiritual and Cultural issues (eg rights and responsibilities of the individual as a member of modern society).

11.7 ICT This specification can provide many opportunities for the effective use of ICT, from the retrieval of information downloaded electronically for research purposes, to the use of word-processing and spreadsheet software to produce coursework assignments.

Centre-Assessed Component

12

Nature of the Centre-Assessed Component

The specification for GCSE General Studies includes an optional coursework component. Candidates who choose this option should complete one assignment of approximately **1500-2000 words**. The assignment should be interdisciplinary in nature and be designed to encourage candidates to develop a deeper investigation of a particular issue.

NB This option is not available to private candidates.

12.1 Assignment Plan

The assignment should be set out in accordance with the following plan:

- Title
- Explanation of the link with chosen theme
- Statement of aims
- Presentation of content
- Bibliography

Candidates must be aware that they should not present their assignment in the form of an extended essay.

The assignment should not be solely text based but should include, where appropriate and relevant, diagrams, charts, graphs, photographs and other illustrative material. All sources of information, including those drawn from the Internet and CD-ROMs must be listed in a detailed bibliography. Candidates must present their findings in their own words.

Guidance on Setting the Centre-Assessed Component

13.1 Introduction

The assignment to be undertaken should be chosen by individual candidates in consultation with their teacher/tutor. The specific title for the assignment should be framed within one of the following broadly defined themes:

- Aspects of Freedom
- Town and Country
- The Changing Face of the World
- Problems and Solutions
- Quality of Life

The themes are offered primarily as stimulus in order to suggest lines of enquiry. The chosen assignment topic should be approached in an interdisciplinary manner. It is perfectly valid to interpret the suggestions literally or metaphorically.

Taking ‘the Changing Face of the World’ as an example, a candidate might choose to take a straightforward approach to this theme by looking at a particularly dramatic way in which the physical world can be changed through earthquake activity. This candidate’s assignment would draw upon the subject areas of geology and geography in the first place, but could also consider the disruption which earthquakes pose to human life, the attempts by scientists to ‘predict’ when earthquakes might occur and the ways in which technology could help to minimise some of the worst effects of earthquakes by, for example, influencing the construction of building in earthquake prone areas. There would also be scope for examining historical examples of earthquakes.

A different approach to the same theme – ‘the Changing Face of the World’ – might involve a candidate exploring the issue of Homelessness, explaining the link with the theme by reference to the growing extent of the problem, and the way in which it affects many young people. Although drawing largely on social issues for its content, such an assignment might also examine the political and economic dimensions to the problem, as well as issues of morality.

In the case of both assignments, it is important that candidates choose a clearly defined issue to explore, and in their statement of aims, show how they are going to examine that issue by reference to a number of different subject areas. Candidates cannot score highly if their assignment is not interdisciplinary in nature.

13.2 Coursework Advisers

Coursework Advisers will be available to assist centres with any matters relating to coursework. Details will be provided when AQA knows which centres are following the specification.

Assessment Criteria

14.1 Introduction

Assessment of the assignment addresses the identical range and weighting of Assessment Objectives as the examination for Paper 2.

14.2 Criteria

Assessment Objective 1

Demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of contemporary issues. (*Knowledge*)

In awarding marks in this section, teachers/tutors should ensure that the aims of the assignment are clearly identified and are based on the interrelationship of several areas of study, and that the factual content of the assignment is both accurate and relevant. A bibliography should be provided.

Basic 0 – 3 Assignment aims poorly stated or missing. Assignment contains some accurate information, which is relevant, though not necessarily contemporary. The bibliography, if present, will be very brief.

Substantial 4 – 7 Assignment states aims and there is some indication that a number of the Areas of Study have been interrelated, although this interrelationship is not fully developed. Link between title and chosen theme is explained. Assignment contains a significant amount of accurate and relevant contemporary information drawn from at least two identifiable Areas of Study. The candidate provides a bibliography, showing evidence of having consulted a number of sources.

Extensive 8 – 10 Assignment fully states the aims, and comprehensive interrelationships between Areas of Study are explained. Assignment contains wide-ranging, up to date, factual information presented in an intelligent and comprehensive manner. The bibliography demonstrates that a wide variety of sources has been consulted.

Assessment Objective 2

Comprehend and make use of stimulus material presented in a variety of forms including text, number, statistics, diagrams and pictures.

(Comprehension)

In awarding marks in this section, teachers/tutors should ensure that the assignment demonstrates the skills of presenting material in a way that can be readily understood by the non-specialist reader. The use of appropriate illustrative material (eg graphs, diagrams, quotations and pictures) is essential and such material should be linked to the text.

Basic 0 – 3 Material presented in the assignment should be clear and simple to understand. Some degree of illustrative material linked to the text should be present.

Substantial 4 – 7 Material presented in the assignment should be clear and simple to understand and readily understood by a non-specialist reader. Use should be made of some form of relevant illustrative material, which should be explained.

Extensive 8 – 10 Full use should be made of relevant illustrative material which should be annotated and explained clearly.

Assessment Objective 3

Marshal evidence by selecting, interpreting, and integrating information, data and concepts, and by communicating clearly in an accurate, logical and relevant way. *(Application and Communication)*

In awarding marks in this section, teachers/tutors should ensure that the assignment demonstrates the skills of presenting information, drawn from a wide-range of Areas of Study, in a logical way. Ideas should flow naturally from start to finish in the assignment, with quality of language presenting no barrier to communication. Conclusions should emerge logically from an analysis of the material presented.

Basic 0 – 3 Some attempt has been made to order facts/ideas in the assignment. Information presented will not always be relevant. Text will present some problems of legibility, and spelling, punctuation and grammar will be reasonably accurate.

Substantial 4 – 7 The material presented should have a clearly identified starting and finishing point, and should be logically ordered within these parameters. Information presented will be mostly accurate. Text will generally be legible, and spelling, punctuation and grammar will show considerable accuracy.

Extensive 8 – 10 The material should have a clearly identified starting and finishing point and should be logically ordered within these parameters. Text will be legible, and spelling, punctuation and grammar will be almost faultless.

Assessment Objective 4

Interrelate information and ideas in a coherent and structured manner, evaluate evidence, form reasoned judgements, and recognise bias and prejudice. (*Synthesis and Evaluation*)

In awarding marks in this section, teachers/tutors should ensure that a number of Areas of Study are interrelated in the assignment and that the candidate has been able to make judgements which demonstrate that they can distinguish between evidence and opinion.

Basic 0 – 3 Few, if any, supported personal judgements are offered by the candidate. Although a number of Areas of Study may have been presented, the candidate has done little, if anything, to demonstrate an awareness of the inter-relationship of these Areas of Study. There will be few if any conclusions drawn from the information presented.

Substantial 4 – 7 Candidate has demonstrated some awareness of the interconnections between a number of Areas of Study. Some personal judgements are offered which begin to demonstrate that the candidate can distinguish between evidence and opinion. There will be some conclusions drawn from an analysis of the information presented.

Extensive 8 – 10 The candidate has demonstrated a lively awareness of the interconnections between a wide range of Areas of Study. The assignment shows that the candidate has been able to clearly distinguish between evidence and opinion, and the way in which the conclusions are justified from the factual content itself. The conclusions drawn from an analysis of the information presented will be significant.

14.3 Evidence to Support the Award of Marks

Teachers should keep records of their assessments during the course, in a form which facilitates the complete and accurate submission of the final assessments at the end of the course.

When the assessments are complete, the marks awarded under each of the assessment criteria must be entered on the Candidate Record Form, with supporting information given in the spaces provided. A specimen Candidate Record Form appears in Appendix B; the exact design may be modified before the operational version is issued and the correct year's Candidate Record Forms should always be used.

15**Supervision and Authentication**

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- 15.1 Supervision of Candidates' Work** Candidates' work for assessment must be undertaken under conditions which allow the teacher to supervise the work and enable the work to be authenticated. If it is necessary for some assessed work to be done outside the centre, sufficient work must take place under direct supervision to allow the teacher to authenticate each candidate's whole work with confidence.
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- 15.2 Guidance by the Teacher** The work assessed must be solely that of the candidate concerned. Any assistance given to an individual candidate, which is beyond that given to the group as a whole, must be recorded on the Candidate Record Form.
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- 15.3 Unfair Practice** At the start of the course, the supervising teacher is responsible for informing candidates of the AQA Regulations concerning malpractice. Candidates must not take part in any unfair practice in the preparation of coursework to be submitted for assessment, and must understand that to present material copied directly from books or other sources without acknowledgement, will be regarded as deliberate deception. Centres must report suspected malpractice to AQA. The penalties for malpractice are set out in the AQA Regulations.
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- 15.4 Authentication of Candidates' Work** Both the candidate and the teacher are required to sign declarations confirming that the work submitted for assessment is the candidate's own. The teacher declares that the work was conducted under the specified conditions, and records details of any additional assistance.
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Standardisation

16.1 Standardising Meetings

Annual standardising meetings will usually be held in the autumn term. Centres entering candidates for the first time must send a representative to the meetings. Attendance is also mandatory in the following cases:

- where there has been a serious misinterpretation of the specification requirements;
- where the nature of coursework tasks set by a centre has been inappropriate;
- where a significant adjustment has been made to a centre's marks in the previous year's examination.

After the first year, attendance is at the discretion of centres. At these meetings support will be provided for centres in the development of appropriate coursework tasks and assessment procedures.

16.2 Internal Standardisation of Marking

The centre is required to standardise the assessments across different teachers and teaching groups to ensure that all candidates at the centre have been judged against the same standards. If two or more teachers are involved in marking a component, one teacher must be designated as responsible for internal standardisation. Common pieces of work must be marked on a trial basis and differences between assessments discussed at a training session in which all teachers involved must participate. The teacher responsible for standardising the marking must ensure that the training includes the use of reference and archive materials, such as work from a previous year or examples provided by AQA. The centre is required to send to the moderator the Centre Declaration Sheet, duly signed, to confirm that the marking of centre-assessed work at the centre has been standardised. If only one teacher has undertaken the marking, that person must sign this form.

Forms are available via the following link;
http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_course.php

17

Administrative Procedures

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- 17.1 Recording Assessments** The candidates' work must be marked according to the assessment criteria set out in Section 14. The marks and supporting information must be recorded in accordance with the instructions in Section 14. The completed Candidate Record Form for each candidate must be attached to the work and made available to AQA on request.
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- 17.2 Submitting Marks and Sample Work for Moderation** The total component mark for each candidate must be submitted to AQA on the mark sheets provided or by Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) by **5 May 2010**. Centres will be informed which candidates' work is required in the samples to be submitted to the moderator.
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- 17.3 Factors Affecting Individual Candidates** Teachers should be able to accommodate the occasional absence of candidates by ensuring that the opportunity is given for them to make up missed assessments.
- Special consideration should be requested for candidates whose work has been affected by illness or other exceptional circumstances. Information about the procedure is issued separately.
- If work is lost, AQA should be notified immediately of the date of the loss, how it occurred, and who was responsible for the loss. AQA will advise on the procedures to be followed in such cases. Where special help, which goes beyond normal learning support, is given, AQA must be informed so that such help can be taken into account when assessment and moderation take place.
- Candidates who move from one centre to another during the course sometimes present a problem for a scheme of internal assessment. Possible courses of action depend on the stage at which the move takes place. If the move occurs early in the course, the new centre should take responsibility for assessment. If it occurs late in the course, it may be possible to accept the assessments made at the previous centre. Centres should contact AQA at the earliest possible stage for advice about appropriate arrangements in individual cases.
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- 17.4 Retaining Evidence and Re-Using Marks** The centre must retain the work of all candidates, with Candidate Record Form attached, under secure conditions, from the time it is assessed, to allow for the possibility of an enquiry upon results. The work may be returned to candidates after the issue of results, provided that no enquiry upon result is to be made which will include re-moderation of the coursework component. If an enquiry upon result is to be made, the work must remain under secure conditions until requested by AQA.
- Candidates re-taking the examination may carry forward their moderated coursework marks. These marks have a shelf-life which is limited only by the shelf-life of the specification, and they may be carried forward an unlimited number of times within this shelf-life.
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Moderation

18.1 Moderation Procedures

Moderation of the coursework is by inspection of a sample of candidates' work, sent by post from the centre to a moderator appointed by AQA. The centre marks must be submitted to AQA and the sample of work must reach the moderator by 5 May in the year in which the qualification is awarded.

Following the re-marking of the sample work, the moderator's marks are compared with the centre marks to determine whether any adjustment is needed in order to bring the centre's assessments into line with standards generally. In some cases, it may be necessary for the moderator to call for the work of other candidates. In order to meet this possible request, centres must have available the coursework and Candidate Record Form of every candidate entered for the examination and be prepared to submit it on demand. Mark adjustments will normally preserve the centre's order of merit, but where major discrepancies are found, AQA reserves the right to alter the order of merit.

18.2 Post-Moderation Procedures

On publication of the GCSE results, the centre is supplied with details of the final marks for the coursework component.

The candidates' work is returned to the centre after the examination, with a report form from the moderator giving feedback to the centre on the appropriateness of the tasks set, the accuracy of the assessments made, and the reasons for any adjustments to the marks.

Some candidates' work may be retained by AQA for archive purposes.

Awarding and Reporting

19

Grading, Shelf-Life and Re-Sits

19.1	Qualification Titles	The qualification based on this specification has the following title: AQA GCSE in General Studies.
19.2	Grading System	<p>The qualification will be graded on an 8 point grade Scale A*, A, B, C, D, E, F, G. Candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade G will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.</p> <p>Candidates must be entered for either the Foundation Tier or Higher Tier. For candidates entered for the Foundation Tier, grades C–G are available. For candidates entered for the Higher Tier, A*–D are available. There is a safety net for candidates entered for the Higher Tier, where an allowed Grade E will be awarded where candidates just fail to achieve Grade D. Candidates who fail to achieve a Grade E on the Higher Tier or Grade G on the Foundation Tier will be reported as unclassified.</p>
19.3	Re-Sits	Individual components may not be retaken but candidates may retake the whole qualification more than once.
19.4	Minimum Requirements	Candidates will be graded on the basis of work submitted for assessment.
19.5	Carrying Forward of Centre-Assessed Marks	Candidates re-taking the examination may carry forward their moderated coursework marks. These marks have a shelf-life which is limited only by the shelf-life of the specification, and they may be carried forward an unlimited number of times within this shelf-life.
19.6	Awarding and Reporting	This specification complies with the grading, awarding and certification requirements of the GCSE, GCE and AEA Code of Practice April 2008 and will be revised in the light of any subsequent changes for future years.

Appendices

A

Grade Descriptions

The following grade descriptors indicate the level of attainment characteristic of the given grade at GCSE. They give a general indication of the required learning outcomes at each specific grade. The descriptors should be interpreted in relation to the content outlined in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.

The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives (as in section 6) overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the examination may be balanced by better performances in others.

- Grade A** A candidate achieving this grade will have demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the specification content. Responses will indicate a depth of analysis and ability to synthesise and evaluate material and draw sound conclusions. Work will indicate a wide range of skills and processes, and be underpinned by a broad range of knowledge drawn from the specification. The work represents a high level of communication.
- Grade C** A candidate achieving this grade will have indicated a sound and reasonable knowledge of the specification content. Responses will indicate the ability to analyse and synthesise material critically, and draw some sound conclusions. Work will indicate a wide range of skills and processes appropriate to the task. The candidate should also be able to communicate effectively.
- Grade F** A candidate achieving this grade will have indicated some knowledge of the specification content. Work is mainly descriptive. Some conclusions and evaluation may be included, although they may not be linked to the body of the work, or to the question set.

B

Record Forms

Centre Declaration Sheets and Candidates Record Forms are available on the AQA website in the Administration area. They can be accessed via the following link http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_course.php

C

Overlaps with other Qualifications

There are no explicit overlaps between General Studies and other qualifications. By its interdisciplinary nature, however, a course in General Studies will involve candidates drawing from courses such as PSHE and Citizenship, and from the content of other qualifications such as GCSEs and Foundation/Intermediate GNVQs.

Examples of possible content overlap:

9.3 Political and Economic

- AQA Geography GCSE, Specification C
Managing Change in the Human Environment
- AQA Geography GCSE, Specification B
The European Union, The Wider World
- AQA GNVQ Business, Intermediate
Introduction to International Markets
- AQA GNVQ Leisure and Tourism, Intermediate
Impacts of Tourism - Economic
- AQA Business Studies GCSE, Specification A
People in Organisations

9.4 Spiritual and Cultural

- AQA Geography GCSE, Specification C
Managing Change in the Human Environment
- AQA GNVQ Leisure and Tourism, Intermediate
Impacts of Tourism – Social and cultural changes
- AQA Biology GCSE
Life Processes and Living Things: Controlling Inheritance
- AQA Geography GCSE Specification A
Human Geography topics

9.5 Scientific and Technological

- AQA GNVQ Media, Intermediate Communication and Production: *Technology and the Media*
- AQA Business Studies GCSE, Specification A
Information and Communication Technology, Organising to Achieve Objectives, People in Organisations
- AQA Geography GCSE, Specification B
Global Issues
- AQA Biology GCSE
Life Processes and Living Things
- AQA GNVQ Leisure and Tourism, Intermediate
Relating Exercise to Health and Fitness

9.6 Aesthetic and Communication

- AQA GNVQ Leisure and Tourism, Intermediate
Sport and Fitness Provision, Marketing in Leisure and Tourism
- AQA Geography GCSE, Specification C
Managing Change in the Human Environment
- AQA GNVQ Media, Intermediate
Planning and Producing a News Report
- AQA GNVQ Business, Intermediate
Promotion