AQA

DRAFT SPECIFICATION

A-LEVEL GEOGRAPHY

DRAFT 7037

Specification

For teaching from September 2016 onwards

For A-level exams in 2018 onwards

Version 0.1 28 May 2015

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Are you using the latest version of this specification?

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at aqa.org.uk/7037
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to the specification.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Why choose AQA for A-level Geography

Our new specification will excite your students' minds, challenge perceptions and stimulate their investigative and analytical skills.

Whilst new units have been added to reflect the world today, you'll see it's retained much of the topics you and your students enjoy, including hazards and population.

We created it with help of experienced teachers, so we're confident you'll find it practical to teach too. Content enables you to teach AS simultaneously with the first year of A-level, allowing for maximum flexibility in lesson timetabling and teaching resources.

We want to make the transition to this new qualification as smooth for you as possible, so we've created a number of resources. These include clear and inspiring schemes of work, lesson plans and a toolkit designed to help you with the new fieldwork requirements.

All of this will help you provide your students with the knowledge, skills and enthusiasm sought by higher education and employers.

If you've any queries or concerns, our subject experts are just an email or phone call away.

You can find out about all our Geography qualifications at aqa.org.uk/geography

1.2 Support and resources to help you teach

We've worked with experienced teachers to provide you with a range of resources that will help you confidently plan, teach and prepare for exams.

Teaching resources

Visit aqa.org.uk/7037 to see all our teaching resources. They include:

- dedicated students textbooks approved by AQA
- specimen question papers and mark schemes to show you what the exam will look like
- enhanced schemes of work to provide you with a range of suggestions for lesson activities, resources and more
- fieldwork toolkit to support your delivery of this key element of the specification
- a dedicated advisor to help you deliver the fieldwork and non-exam assessment requirements
- training courses to help you deliver AQA Geography qualifications
- subject expertise courses for all teachers, from newly-qualified teachers who are just getting started to experienced teachers looking for fresh inspiration.

Preparing for exams

Visit aqa.org.uk/7037 for everything you need to prepare for our exams, including:

- past papers, mark schemes and examiners' reports
- specimen papers and mark schemes for new courses
- Exampro: a searchable bank of past AQA exam questions
- exemplar student answers with examiner commentaries.

Analyse your students' results with Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA)

Find out which questions were the most challenging, how the results compare to previous years and where your students need to improve. ERA, our free online results analysis tool, will help you see where to focus your teaching. Register at aqa.org.uk/era

For information about results, including maintaining standards over time, grade boundaries and our post-results services, visit aqa.org.uk/results

Keep your skills up-to-date with professional development

Wherever you are in your career, there's always something new to learn. As well as subject-specific training, we offer a range of courses to help boost your skills.

- Improve your teaching skills in areas including differentiation, teaching literacy and meeting Ofsted requirements.
- Prepare for a new role with our leadership and management courses.

You can attend a course at venues around the country, in your school or online – whatever suits your needs and availability. Find out more at coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk

Help and support available

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/7037

If you'd like us to share news and information about this qualification, sign up for emails and updates at aqa.org.uk/keepinformedgeography

Alternatively, you can call or email our subject team direct.

E: geography@aqa.org.uk

T: 01483 477 791

1.3 Draft specification

This draft qualification has not yet been accredited by Ofqual. We have published it now, to show you our proposal for the new A-level Geography. Further changes may be required and no assurance can be given that this proposed qualification will be made available in its current form, or that it will be accredited in time for first teaching in September 2016 and first award in August 2018.

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2 Specification at a glance

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams and submit all their non-exam assessment at the end of the course.

2.1 Subject content

Physical geography

1. Water and carbon cycles (page 11)
2. Hot desert environments and their margins (page 12)
3. Coastal systems and landscapes (page 13)
4. Hazards (page 14)
5. Ecosystems under stress (page 16)
6. Cold environments (page 17)

Human geography

7. Global systems and global governance (page 18)
8. Changing places (page 20)
9. Contemporary urban environments (page 21)
10. Population and the environment (page 23)
11. Resource security (page 24)

Geography investigation

12. Fieldwork requirements (page 26)
13. Investigation requirements (page 26)

Geographical skills

14. Geographical skills checklist (page 34)

2.2 Assessments

Component 1: Physical geography
What's assessed Section A: Water and carbon cycles Section B: either Hot desert environments and their margins **or** Coastal systems and landscapes Section C: either Hazards **or** Ecosystems under stress **or** Cold environments
How it's assessed • Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes • 96 marks • 40% of A-level
Questions • Section A: answer all questions (27 marks) • Section B: answer either question 3 or question 4 (27 marks) • Section C: answer either question 5 or question 6 or question 7 (42 marks) • Question types: multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response and extended prose

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Component 2: Human geography
What's assessed Section A: Global systems and global governance Section B: Changing places Section C: either Contempoary urban environments **or** Population and the environment **or** Resource security
How it's assessed • Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes • 96 marks • 40% of A-level
Questions • Section A: answer all questions (27 marks) • Section B: answer all questions (27 marks) • Section C: answer either question 5 or question 6 or question 7 (42 marks) • Question types: multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose

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Component 3: Geographical investigation
What's assessed Students complete an individual investigation which must include data collected in the field. The individual investigation must be based on a question or issue defined and developed by the student relating to any part of the specification content.
How it's assessed • 3,000–4,000 words • 35 marks • 20% of A-level • marked by teachers • moderated by AQA

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3 Subject content

3.1 Physical geography

3.1.1 Water and carbon cycles

We've designed this section of our specification to focus on the major stores of water and carbon at or near the Earth's surface and the dynamic cyclical relationships associated with them. These are major elements in the natural environment and understanding them is fundamental to many aspects of physical geography.

This section specifies a systems approach to the study of water and carbon cycles. The content invites students to contemplate the magnitude and significance of the cycles at a variety of scales, their relevance to wider geography and their central importance for human populations. The section offers the opportunity to exercise and develop geographical skills including observation, measurement and geospatial mapping skills, together with data manipulation and statistical skills including those associated with and arising from fieldwork.

3.1.1.1 Water and carbon cycles as natural systems

Systems in physical geography: systems concepts and their application to the water and carbon cycles inputs – outputs, energy, stores/components, flows/transfers, positive/negative feedback, dynamic equilibrium.

3.1.1.2 The water cycle

Global distribution and size of major stores of water – lithosphere, hydrosphere, cryosphere and atmosphere.

Factors driving change in the magnitude of these stores, including flows and transfers at hill slope, drainage basin and global scales with reference to varying timescales involved.

Drainage basins as open systems – inputs and outputs, to include precipitation, evapo-transpiration and runoff; stores and flows, to include interception, surface, soil water, groundwater and channel storage; stemflow, infiltration overland flow, and channel flow. Concept of water balance.

Runoff variation and the flood hydrograph.

Changes in the water cycle over time to include natural variation (including storm events, seasonal changes) and human impact (including farming practices, land use change and water abstraction).

3.1.1.3 The carbon cycle

Global distribution, and size of major stores of carbon – lithosphere, hydrosphere, cryosphere biosphere, atmosphere.

Factors driving change in the magnitude of these stores, including flows and transfers at plant, sere and continental scales. Photosynthesis, respiration, decomposition, combustion, burial, compaction, carbon sequestration, weathering.

Changes in the carbon cycle over time, to include natural variation (including wild fires, volcanic activity) and human impact (including hydrocarbon fuel extraction and burning, farming practices, deforestation, land use changes).

The carbon budget and the impact of the carbon cycle upon land, ocean and atmosphere, including global climate.

3.1.1.4 Water, carbon and climate

The relationship between the water cycle and carbon cycle in the atmosphere. The role of feedbacks within and between cycles and their link to climate change.

Human interventions in the carbon cycle designed to influence carbon transfers and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

3.1.1.5 Case studies

Case study of a tropical rainforest setting to illustrate and analyse key themes in water and carbon cycles and their relationship to environmental change and human activity.

Case study of a river catchment(s) at a local scale to illustrate and analyse the key themes above, engage with field data and consider the impact of precipitation upon drainage basin stores and transfers and implications for sustainable water supply and/or flooding.

3.1.2 Hot desert environments and their margins

We've designed this section of our specification to focus on drylands which occur at all latitudes and are characterised by limited soil moisture caused by low precipitation and high evaporation. The focus is on hot deserts and their margins, where the operation of characteristic aeolian and episodic fluvial processes with their distinctive landscape outcomes are readily observable. In common with water and carbon cycles, a systems approach to study is specified.

Student engagement with content fosters informed appreciation of the beauty and diversity of deserts and the challenges they present as human habitats. The section offers the opportunity, in the right settings, to exercise and develop geographical skills, including observation, measurement and geospatial mapping skills, together with data manipulation and statistical skills, including those associated with and arising from fieldwork.

3.1.2.1 Deserts as natural systems

Systems in physical geography: systems concepts and their application to the development of desert landscapes – inputs, outputs, energy, stores/components, flows/transfers, positive/negative feedback, dynamic equilibrium. The concepts of landform and landscape and how related landforms combine to form characteristic landscapes.

The global distribution of mid and low latitude deserts and their margins (arid and semi-arid).

Characteristics of hot desert environments and their margins: climate, soils and vegetation (and their interaction). Water balance and aridity index.

The causes of aridity: atmospheric processes relating to pressure, winds, continentality, relief and cold ocean currents.

3.1.2.2 Systems and processes

Sources of energy in hot desert environments: insolation, winds, runoff.

Sediment sources, cells and budgets.

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Geomorphological processes: weathering, mass movement, erosion, transportation and deposition.

Distinctively arid geomorphological processes: weathering (thermal fracture, exfoliation, chemical weathering, block and granular disintegration).

The role of wind – erosion: deflation and abrasion; transportation; suspension, saltation, surface creep, deposition.

Sources of water: exogenous, endoreic and ephemeral; the episodic role of water; sheet flooding, channel flash flooding.

3.1.2.3 Arid landscape development

Origin and development of landforms of mid and low latitude deserts: aeolian – deflation hollows, desert pavements, ventifacts, yardangs, zeugen, barchans and sief dunes; water – wadis, bahadas, pediments, playas, inselbergs.

The relationship between process, time, landforms and landscapes in mid and low latitude desert settings: characteristic desert landscapes.

3.1.2.4 Desertification

The changing extent and distribution of hot deserts over the last 10,000 years. The causes of desertification – climate change and human impact; distribution of areas at risk; impact on ecosystems, landscapes and populations. Predicted climate change and its impacts; alternative possible futures for local populations.

3.1.2.5 Case studies

Case study of a hot desert environment setting to illustrate and analyse key themes set out above and engage with field data (exemplifying field data may be gathered in settings that experience some of the aeolian processes associated with mid and low latitude desert environments such as coastal dunes).

Case study of a relevant setting at a local scale to illustrate and analyse key themes of desertification, causes and impacts, implications for sustainable development. Evaluation of human responses of resilience, mitigation and adaptation.

3.1.3 Coastal systems and landscapes

We've designed this section of our specification to focus on coastal zones, which are dynamic environments in which landscapes develop by the interaction of winds, waves, currents and terrestrial and marine sediments. The operation and outcomes of fundamental geomorphological processes and their association with distinctive landscapes are readily observable. In common with water and carbon cycles, a systems approach to study is specified.

Student engagement with content fosters an informed appreciation of the beauty and diversity of coasts and their importance as human habitats. The section offers the opportunity to exercise and develop observation skills, measurement and geospatial mapping skills, together with data manipulation and statistical skills, including those associated with and arising from fieldwork.

3.1.3.1 Coasts as natural systems

Systems in physical geography: systems concepts and their application to the development of coastal landscapes – inputs, outputs, energy, stores/components, flows/transfers, positive/negative feedback, dynamic equilibrium. The concepts of landform and landscape and how related landforms combine to form characteristic landscapes.

3.1.3.2 Systems and processes

Sources of energy in coastal environments: winds, waves (constructive and destructive), currents and tides. Low energy and high energy coasts.

Sediment sources, cells and budgets.

Geomorphological processes: weathering, mass movement, erosion, transportation and deposition.

Distinctively coastal processes: marine: erosion – hydraulic action, wave quarrying, corrasion/abrasion, cavitation, solution, attrition; transportation: traction, suspension (longshore/littoral drift) and deposition; sub-aerial weathering, mass movement and runoff.

3.1.3.3 Coastal landscape development

The relationship between process, time, landforms and landscapes in coastal settings.

Origin and development of landforms and landscapes of coastal erosion: cliffs and wave cut platforms, cliff profile features including caves, arches and stacks; factors and processes in their development.

Origin and development of landforms and landscapes of coastal deposition. Beaches, simple and compound spits, tombolos, offshore bars, barrier beaches and islands and sand dunes; factors and processes in their development.

Estuarine mudflat/saltmarsh environments and associated landscapes; factors and processes in their development.

Eustatic, isostatic and tectonic sea level change: major changes in sea level in the last 10,000 years.

Coastlines of emergence and submergence. Origin and development of associated landforms: raised beaches, marine platforms; rias, fjords, Dalmatian coasts.

Recent and predicted climatic change and potential impact on coasts.

3.1.3.4 Coastal management

Human intervention in coastal landscapes. Traditional approaches to coastal flood and erosion risk: hard and soft engineering. Sustainable approaches to coastal flood risk and coastal erosion management: shoreline management/integrated coastal zone management.

3.1.3.5 Case studies

Case study(ies) of coastal environment(s) at a local scale to illustrate and analyse fundamental coastal processes, their landscape outcomes as set out above and engage with field data and challenges represented in their sustainable management.

Case study of a coastal environment beyond the United Kingdom (UK) to illustrate and analyse coasts as presenting risks and opportunities for human occupation and development. Evaluation of human responses of resilience, mitigation and adaptation.

3.1.4 Hazards

We've designed this optional section of our specification to focus on the lithosphere and the atmosphere, which intermittently but regularly present hazards to human populations, often in dramatic and sometimes catastrophic fashion. By exploring the origin and nature of these hazards and the various ways in which people respond to them, students are able to engage with many dimensions of the relationships between people and the environment they occupy. Study of this

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section offers the opportunity to exercise and develop observation skills, measurement and geospatial mapping skills, together with data manipulation and statistical skills, including those associated with and arising from fieldwork.

3.1.4.1 The concept of hazard in a geographical context

Nature, forms and potential impacts of natural hazards (geophysical, atmospheric and hydrological). Hazard perception and its economic and cultural determinants. Characteristic human responses – fatalism, prediction, adjustment/adaptation, mitigation, management, risk sharing – and their relationship to hazard incidence, intensity, magnitude, distribution and level of development.

3.1.4.2 Volcanic hazards

The nature of vulcanicity and its underlying causes: forms of volcanic hazard: nuées ardentes, lava flows, mudflows, pyroclastic and ash fallout, gases/acid rain, tephra. Spatial distribution, randomness, magnitude, frequency, regularity and predictability of hazard events.

Impacts (primary/secondary, environmental, social, economic, political). Short and long-term responses (risk management designed to reduce the impacts of the hazard through preparedness, mitigation, prevention and adaptation).

Impacts and human responses as evidenced by a recent volcanic event.

3.1.4.3 Seismic hazards

The nature of seismicity and its underlying causes: forms of seismic hazard: earthquakes, tsunamis. Spatial distribution, randomness, magnitude, frequency, regularity, predictability of hazard events.

Impacts: primary/secondary; environmental, social, economic, political. Short and long term responses; risk management designed to reduce the impacts of the hazard through preparedness, mitigation, prevention and adaptation.

Impacts and human responses as evidenced by a recent seismic event.

3.1.4.4 Storm hazards

The nature of tropical storms and their underlying causes. Forms of storm hazard: high winds, storm surges, coastal flooding, river flooding and landslides. Spatial distribution, magnitude, frequency, regularity, predictability of hazard events.

Impacts (primary/secondary, environmental, social, economic, political). Short and long term responses (risk management designed to reduce the impacts of the hazard through preparedness, mitigation, prevention and adaptation).

Impacts and human responses as evidenced by two recent tropical storms in contrasting areas of the world.

3.1.4.5 Case studies

Case study of a multi-hazardous environment beyond the UK to illustrate and analyse the nature of the hazards and the social, economic and environmental risks presented, and how human qualities and responses such as resilience, adaptation, mitigation and management contribute to its continuing human occupation.

Case study at a local scale of a specified place in a hazardous setting to illustrate the physical nature of the hazard and analyse how the economic, social and political character of its community reflects the presence and impacts of the hazard and the community's response to the risk.

3.1.5 Ecosystems under stress

We've designed this optional section of our specification to focus on the biosphere and in particular the nature and functioning of ecosystems and their relationships to the nature and intensity of human activities. Study of the impact of population growth and economic development on ecosystems at various scales affords the opportunity for students to engage with fundamental contemporary people–environment issues including those relating to biodiversity and sustainability. Study of this section offers the opportunity to exercise and develop observation skills, measurement and geospatial mapping skills, together with data manipulation and statistical skills including those associated with and arising from fieldwork.

3.1.5.1 Ecosystems and sustainability

The concept of biodiversity. Local and global trends in biodiversity. Causes, rates and potential impacts of declining biodiversity.

Ecosystems and their importance for human populations in the light of continuing population growth and economic development. Human populations in ecosystem development and sustainability.

3.1.5.2 Ecosystems and processes

Nature of ecosystems – their structure, energy flows, trophic levels, food chains and food webs.

Application of systems concepts to ecosystems – inputs, outputs, stores and transfers of energy and materials. Concepts of biomass and net primary production.

Concepts of succession: seral stages, climatic climax, sub-climax and plagioclimax.

Nutrient cycling.

Nature of terrestrial ecosystems and the inter-connections between climate, vegetation, soil and topography which produce them. Ecosystem responses to changes in one or more of their components or environmental controls.

Factors influencing the changing of ecosystems, including climate change and human exploitation of the global environment.

3.1.5.3 Biomes

The concept of the biome. The global distribution of major terrestrial biomes.

The nature of two contrasting biomes, to include:

- the main characteristics of each biome
- ecological responses to the climate, soil and soil moisture budget – adaptations by flora and fauna
- human activity and its impact on each biome
- typical development issues in each biome to include changes in population, economic development, agricultural extension and intensification, implications for biodiversity and sustainability.

3.1.5.4 Local ecosystems

The main characteristics of a distinctive local ecosystem (such as an area of heathland, managed parkland, pond, dune system). Ecological responses to the climate, soil and soil moisture budget – adaptations by flora and fauna.

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Local factors in ecological development and change (such as agriculture, urban change, the planned and unplanned introduction of new species).

The impacts of change and measures to manage these impacts. Conservation strategies and their implementation in specific settings.

3.1.5.5 Case studies

Case study of a specified region experiencing ecological change to illustrate and analyse the nature of the change and the reasons for it, how the economic, social and political character of its community reflects its ecological setting and how the community is responding to change.

Case study of a specified ecosystem at a local scale to illustrate and analyse key themes set out above, including the nature and properties of the ecosystem, human impact upon it and the challenges and opportunities presented in its sustainable development.

3.1.6 Cold environments

We've designed this optional section of our specification to focus on the distinctive physical processes and landscapes associated with cold environments and the challenges and opportunities they present for human occupation and development. Study of human adaptations and responses to challenging circumstances at various scales affords the opportunity for students to engage with fundamental contemporary people–environment issues including biodiversity and sustainability aspects in fragile settings. Study of this section offers the opportunity to exercise and develop observation skills, measurement and geospatial mapping skills, together with data manipulation and statistical skills, including those associated with and arising from fieldwork.

3.1.6.1 The nature and distribution of cold environments

Physical characteristics of cold environments.

The global distribution of past and present cold environments (polar, alpine, glacial and periglacial) and of areas affected by the Pleistocene glaciations.

3.1.6.2 Processes and landscapes

Glacial systems including glacial budgets.

Ablation and accumulation – historical patterns of ice advance and retreat.

Warm and cold based glaciers: characteristics and development.

Geomorphological processes – weathering: frost action, nivation; ice movement: internal deformation, rotational, compressional, extensional and basal sliding; erosion: plucking, abrasion; transportation and deposition.

Erosional and depositional landforms: corries, arêtes, glacial troughs, hanging valleys, truncated spurs, roche moutonnee; drumlins, erratics, moraines, till plains. Characteristic glaciated landscapes.

Fluvioglacial processes: meltwater, erosion transportation and deposition.

Fluvioglacial landforms of erosion and deposition: meltwater channels, kames, eskers, outwash plains. Characteristic fluvioglacial landscapes.

Periglacial features: permafrost, active layer. Periglacial mass movement processes. Periglacial landforms: patterned ground, ice wedges, pingoes, blockfields, solifluction lobes, terracettes, thermokarst. Characteristic periglacial landscapes.

3.1.6.3 Human occupation and development of cold environments

Human impacts on cold environments. Concept of environmental fragility. The relationships between human activity, biodiversity and sustainability. Recent and prospective impact of climate change.

Cold environments as human habitats; opportunities and risks presented by cold environments for human occupation; human adjustments to extremity; typical forms of occupation and economic activity related to environmental characteristics (ie in different cold environment types).

Varying impacts of human activity on fragile cold environments over time and at a variety of scales in relation to the potential for sustainable development. Management of cold environments at present and in alternative possible futures.

3.1.6.4 Case studies

Case study of a specified tundra or alpine region to illustrate and analyse how its occupation presents social, economic and environmental challenges and how human responses such as adaptation, mitigation and management might contribute to its continuing sustainable development.

Case study at a local scale of a specified place in a cold environment to illustrate and analyse how the economic, social and political character of its community reflects the environmental circumstances and its impacts upon it and how the community is adjusting to the prospect of climatic and other environmental change.

3.2 Human geography

3.2.1 Global systems and global governance

We've designed this section of our specification to focus on globalisation – the economic, political and social changes associated with technological and other driving forces which have been a key feature of global economy and society in recent decades.

Increased interdependence and transformed relationships between peoples, states and environments have prompted more or less successful attempts at a global level to manage and govern some aspects of human affairs. Students engage with important dimensions of these phenomena with particular emphasis on international trade and access to markets and the governance of the global commons. Students contemplate many complex dimensions of contemporary world affairs and their own place in and perspective on them. Study of this section offers the opportunity to exercise and develop observation skills, measurement and geospatial mapping skills, together with data manipulation and statistical skills, including those associated with and arising from fieldwork.

3.2.1.1 International trade and access to markets

3.2.1.1.1 Globalisation

Factors and dimensions in globalisation: flows of capital, labour, products, services and information; global marketing; patterns of production, distribution and consumption.

3.2.1.1.2 Forms/patterns

Trends in the volume and pattern of international trade and investment associated with globalisation.

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The development of technologies, systems and arrangements supporting international trade, including financial, transport, security, communications, management and information systems and trade agreements.

The nature and role of transnational corporations (TNCs), including their spatial organisation, production, linkages, trading and marketing patterns, with a detailed study of a specified TNC.

World trade in at least one food commodity or one manufacturing product.

3.2.1.1.3 Impacts

Economic, political, social and environmental interdependence. Benefits of globalisation in terms of growth, development, integration, stability. Costs of globalisation in terms of inequalities, injustice, conflict and environmental impact.

The effect of globalisation on the international labour market, including outsourcing and the international movement of labour.

Issues associated with globalisation, including inequalities within and between countries to include contrasts in power relations between large, highly developed trading entities such as the United States, the European Union, emerging major economies such as China and India and smaller, less developed economies such as countries of sub-Saharan Africa, southern Asia and Latin America.

3.2.1.2 Global governance

3.2.1.2.1 Responses to globalisation

Attempts to tackle problems associated with globalisation including inequalities and access to markets. Regional and global international trading agreements, to include World Trade Organisation (WTO), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the European Union (EU). International development organisations and non-government organisations (NGOs). The promotion and development of fair trade and ethical investment.

3.2.1.2.2 The ‘global commons’

The concept of the ‘global commons’ with particular reference to Antarctica (including the Southern Ocean as far north as the Antarctic Convergence).

The rights of all to the benefits of the global commons.

Acknowledgement that the rights of all people to sustainable development must also acknowledge the need to protect the global commons.

The location of Antarctica and the Antarctic Convergence.

An outline of the physical geography and climate of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean.

3.2.1.2.3 Threats to Antarctica

Threats to Antarctica arising from:

- climate change
- fishing and whaling
- the search for mineral resources
- tourism and scientific research.

3.2.1.2.4 Protection of Antarctica

The concepts of resilience, mitigation and adaptation applied to the protection of threatened environments in Antarctica.

The governance of Antarctica to include the Antarctic Treaty (1959), the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (1991) – their purpose scope and systems for inspection and enforcement. International government organisations to include United Nations (UN) agencies such as United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Whaling Commission.

The roles of the British Antarctic Survey and the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research in increasing understanding of Antarctica.

The role of NGOs in monitoring threats and enhancing protection of Antarctica.

3.2.2 Changing places

We've designed this section of our specification to focus on people's engagement with places, their experience of them and the qualities they ascribe to them which are of fundamental importance in their lives. Students acknowledge this importance and engage with how places are known and experienced, how their character is appreciated and the factors and processes which bear upon these matters.

Students are required to embed their studies in two contrasting places, one to be local, using a variety of appropriate investigative techniques. They should come to know the nature and character of these places and how they reveal their meanings in the light of changing circumstances. Study of this section offers particular opportunities to exercise and develop qualitative (and quantitative) investigative techniques and practice-related observation, measurement and various mapping skills, together with data manipulation and statistical skills including those associated with and arising from fieldwork.

3.2.2.1 The nature and importance of places

The concept of place and the importance of place in human life and experience.

Insider and outsider perspectives on place.

Categories of place:

- far places and near places
- experienced places and media places
- public places and private places.

3.2.2.2 Knowing and understanding places

Acquiring, developing and communicating a sense of place: the role of direct experience as compared with representations of place by others (eg novelists, advertisers, economic development agencies, cartographers etc) in diverse media (eg film, photography, art, story, song etc).

Manipulation and management of the perception of place, eg to further policy ends, by agencies such as community groups, corporate entities, local and national governments etc.

Understanding places through collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2.2.3 The dynamics of changing places

The character of places and the communities that occupy them.

Factors contributing to the character of places:

- endogenous: location, topography, physical geography, history, land use, built environment and infrastructure, demographic and economic characteristics

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- exogenous: relationships with other places as shown by flows of people, goods, resources, capital, ideas and decisions
- agents of change: local individuals and populations, community groups, institutions, corporate entities, central and local government, the media and communication networks.

Places in context: the regional, national, international and global relationships which impact on places.

3.2.2.4 Place studies

Place study exploring the developing character of a place local to the home or study centre.

Place study exploring the developing character of a contrasting and distant place. This place could be in the same country or a different country but it should show significant contrast in terms of economic development and/or population density and/or cultural background and/or systems of political and economic organisation.

Both place studies must use a variety of sources to acquire knowledge and understanding of the places and their changing characters. Suitable data sources could include:

- statistics, such as census data
- maps
- geo-located data
- geospatial data, including geographic information systems (GIS) applications
- photographs
- text, from varied media
- audio-visual media
- artistic representations
- oral sources, such as interviews, reminiscences, songs etc.

Sources must include qualitative and quantitative data to represent places in the past and at present. Their use should allow the development of critical perspectives on the data categories.

Both place studies must refer to people's lived experience of the place in the past and at present.

In addition both place studies must refer to:

either

- changing demographic and cultural characteristics of the place

or

- economic change over time and its effects on the place.

3.2.3 Contemporary urban environments

We've designed this optional section of our specification to focus on urban growth and change which are seemingly ubiquitous processes and present significant environmental and social challenges for human populations. The section examines these processes and challenges and the issues associated with them, in particular the potential for environmental sustainability and social cohesion. Engaging with these themes in a range of urban settings from contrasting areas of the world affords the opportunity for students to appreciate human diversity and develop awareness and insight into profound questions of opportunity, equity and sustainability. Study of this section offers the opportunity to exercise and develop observation skills, measurement and geospatial mapping skills, together with data manipulation and statistical skills, including those associated with and arising from fieldwork.

3.2.3.1 Urbanisation

Global patterns of urbanisation since 1945. Urbanisation, suburbanisation, counter-urbanisation, urban resurgence. The emergence of megacities and world cities and their role in global and regional economies.

Economic, social, technological, political and demographic processes associated with urbanisation and urban growth.

3.2.3.2 Urban forms

Urban characteristics in contrasting settings. Contemporary characteristics of mega/world cities. Spatial patterns of land use, economic inequality and cultural diversity in contrasting urban areas, and the factors that influence them.

3.2.3.3 Social and economic issues associated with urbanisation

Issues associated with economic inequality and cultural diversity in contrasting urban areas.

Strategies to manage these issues.

3.2.3.4 Urban climate

The impact of urban forms and processes on local climate and weather.

Urban temperatures: the urban heat island effect. Precipitation: frequency and intensity. Fogs and thunderstorms in urban environments. Wind: the effects of urban structures and layout on wind speed, direction and frequency. Air quality: particulate and photo-chemical pollution.

Pollution reduction policies.

3.2.3.5 Urban drainage

Urban precipitation, surfaces and catchment characteristics; impacts on drainage basin storage areas; urban water cycle: water movement through urban catchments as measured by hydrographs.

Issues associated with catchment management in urban areas. The development of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS).

River restoration and conservation in damaged urban catchments with reference to a specific project. Reasons for and aims of the project; attitudes and contributions of parties involved; project activities and evaluation of project outcomes.

3.2.3.6 Other contemporary urban environmental issues

Environmental problems in contrasting urban areas: atmospheric pollution, water pollution, dereliction and waste disposal.

Strategies to manage these environmental problems.

3.2.3.7 Sustainable urban growth

Features of sustainable cities. Contemporary opportunities and challenges in developing more sustainable cities.

Strategies for developing more sustainable cities.

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3.2.3.8 Case studies

Case studies of two contrasting urban areas to illustrate and analyse key themes set out above, to include:

- patterns of economic and social well-being
- the nature and impact of physical environmental conditions

with particular reference to the implications for environmental sustainability, the character of the study areas and the experience and attitudes of their populations.

3.2.4 Population and the environment

We've designed this optional section of our specification to focus on the continuing growth of human populations, associated with economic development and changing lifestyles, which continues to be one of the defining features of the present era. Migration change is significant at local and regional scales.

This section explores the relationships between population numbers, population health and well-being, levels of economic development and the role and impact of the natural environment. Engaging with these themes at different scales fosters opportunities for students to contemplate the reciprocating relationships between the physical environment and human populations and the relationships between people in their local, national and international communities.

Study of this section offers the opportunity to exercise and develop observation skills, measurement and geospatial mapping skills, together with data manipulation and statistical skills, including those associated with and arising from fieldwork.

3.2.4.1 Population change

Natural change: birth rates, death rates, infant mortality rates, fertility rates, net replacement rates. Critical perspectives on models of natural population change, and their application in countries at different stages of development and in contrasting physical environments.

Migration change: environmental and socio-economic causes, processes and outcomes in relation to regions of origin and destination. Critical perspectives on the social, economic, environmental and political implications of migration.

3.2.4.2 Population structures

Population structure, particularly age–sex composition, within countries at different stages of development.

The impact of natural and migration change on population structures.

3.2.4.3 Environmental factors

Environmental constraints on population growth.

The implications of population size and structure for the balance between population and resources; the concepts of 'carrying capacity' of an area, 'ecological footprint'; and 'the demographic dividend' and their implications.

3.2.4.4 Environment, health and well-being

Global patterns of health, mortality and morbidity.

Regional variations in health and morbidity and the factors that influence these variations: age, gender, income, wealth on lifestyle, nutrition, and access to healthcare in the UK and in contrasting

countries at different levels of development and where health is influenced by varying environmental factors.

The relationship between place and well-being with contrasting examples from local to global and in light of wider economic development factors and in light of differing environmental factors.

Links between the natural environment and the incidence and impact on disease.

The global distribution of one infectious disease, its links to local natural environments and its impact on health, well-being and economic development.

3.2.4.5 Global population futures

Predictions of global population change under different scenarios.

Possible implications for people and environments of the various models of future global population totals.

Alternative approaches to management of future global population change.

3.2.4.6 Case studies

Case study of a country/society experiencing specific patterns of overall population change – increase or decline – to illustrate and analyse the environmental and socio-economic causes, character, scale, pattern of change, its implications for the country/society and attempts to manage the change.

Case study of a specified local area to illustrate and analyse the relationship between place, health and well-being and the relationship of well-being to the environmental, socio-economic character and distinctiveness of the place and the experience and attitudes of its populations.

3.2.5 Resource security

We've designed this optional section of our specification to focus on the large-scale exploitation of unevenly distributed natural resources, which is one of the defining features of the present era. Increasing demand for water and energy and their critical role in human affairs leads to massive local and regional transfers of water and massive global transfers of energy.

In this section students contemplate the fundamental relationships between the physical environment and human activities and the relationships between people in their local, national and international communities involving themes of sustainability and conflict. They engage with these themes in relation to both energy and water but may concentrate on one or other in their case studies.

Study of this section offers the opportunity to exercise and develop observation skills, measurement and geospatial mapping skills, together with data manipulation and statistical skills, including those associated with and arising from fieldwork.

3.2.5.1 Resource development

Concept of a resource. Resource classifications to include stock and flow resources. Natural resource development over time: exploration, exploitation, development. Concept of the resource frontier.

Concept of resource peak. Sustainable resource development.

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3.2.5.2 Natural resource issues

Global patterns of production, consumption and trade/movements of energy. Global patterns of water availability and demand.

The geopolitics of energy and water resource availability and management.

3.2.5.3 Water security

Sources of water; components of demand, water stress.

Relationship of water supply (volume and quality) to key aspects of physical geography – climate, geology and drainage.

Strategies to increase water supply to include catchment, diversion, storage and water transfers and desalination.

Strategies to manage water consumption (including reducing demand).

Sustainability issues associated with water management; conservation, recycling, 'greywater' and groundwater management.

Water conflicts at a variety of scales – local, national, international.

3.2.5.4 Energy security

Sources of energy, both primary and secondary. Components of demand and energy mixes in contrasting settings.

Relationship of energy supply (volume and quality) to key aspects of physical geography – climate, geology and drainage.

Energy supplies in a globalising world: competing national interests and the role of transnational corporations in energy production, processing and distribution.

Strategies to increase energy supply (oil and gas exploration, nuclear power and development of renewable sources).

Strategies to manage energy consumption (including reducing demand).

Sustainability issues associated with energy production, trade and consumption: acid rain, the enhanced greenhouse effect, nuclear waste and energy conservation.

3.2.5.5 Resource futures

Alternative energy and water futures and their relationship with a range of technological, economic, environmental and political developments.

3.2.5.6 Case studies

Case study of **either** water **or** energy resource issues in a global or specified regional setting to illustrate and analyse theme(s) set out above, their implications for the setting including the relationship between resource security and human welfare and attempts to manage the resource.

Case study of a specified place to illustrate and analyse how aspects of its physical environment affects the availability and cost of water or energy and the way in which water or energy is used.

3.3 Geography investigation

The geography investigation is assessed in Component 3.

3.3.1 Fieldwork requirements

All students are required to undertake fieldwork in relation to processes in both physical and human geography. Students must undertake four days of fieldwork during their A-level course. Fieldwork can be completed in a number of ways: locally or further afield, on full days or on part days. Schools and colleges will be required to confirm that all A-level Geography students have been given an opportunity to fulfil this requirement.

Schools and colleges are required to provide a fieldwork statement that confirms each student has undertaken four days of geographical fieldwork. Any failure to provide this statement in a timely manner will be treated as malpractice or maladministration (under Ofqual's General Condition A8 (Malpractice and maladministration)).

3.3.2 Investigation requirements

Students are required to undertake an independent investigation. This must incorporate a significant element of fieldwork. Independent in this context does not mean lone working. They may incorporate field data and/or evidence from field investigations collected individually or in groups. What is important is that students work on their own on contextualising, analysing and reporting of their work to produce an independent investigation with an individual title that demonstrates required fieldwork knowledge, skills and understanding.

The independent investigation must:

- be based on a question or issue defined and developed by the student individually to address aims, questions and/or hypotheses relating to any part of the specification content
- incorporate field data and/or evidence from field investigations
- draw on the student's own research and/or secondary data
- require the student to independently contextualise, analyse and draw conclusions
- involve presentation and analysis of data and findings, and extended writing.

This allows students to scope their own individual task, whilst also allowing the use of data collected in a group context. Schools and colleges must ensure that the completed report is individual to each student.

Students should select a manageable focus for their investigation which enables them to select one or more focused research question or issue with both a theoretical basis and a locational context. Appropriate and feasible methods should be used to collect relevant data. The data collected should permit the use of appropriate cartographical, graphical and statistical skills to enable a full interpretation to be made, which should include reference to the title/aim. The conclusion should include a summary of the results, the relevance of these to the title/aim and an evaluation of the overall investigation, including the contributions and limitations of geography in understanding the topic and opportunities for further research.

Preparation for this unit must involve enquiry work outside the classroom, to include data collection in the field and might include, for example, data collected in specialist study venues, work experience settings, internet research and use of library or archive.

Teachers should be available for consultation where necessary as per guidance common to all awarding bodies. Students should seek advice on the choice of topic from their teachers to ensure that it is related to the course content, and is suitable to their ability.

Schools and colleges are required to provide a fieldwork statement which confirms each student has complied with the independent investigation requirements set-out in the bullet points above. These requirements are set out in paragragh 27 of the *Geography GCE AS and A level subject*

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content, document reference DFE-00693-2014. Any failure to provide this statement in a timely manner will be treated as malpractice or maladministration (under Ofqual's General Condition A8 (Malpractice and maladministration)).

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3.3.3 Non-exam assessment mark scheme

Level (marks)	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Criteria 4	Criteria 5	Criteria 6	Criteria 7
	Identification of issue/research question(s), and reference to theoretical or comparative contexts, and locational context.	**Data collection methodology, including practicality of approaches and relevance of data.** **Use of external sources.**	**Presentation techniques, including the selection and use of suitable quantitative and qualitative approaches.**	**Analysis, interpretation and interrogation techniques, including the selection and use of suitable quantitative and qualitative approaches.**	**Conclusion, including critically evaluating and applying results/ outcomes to existing knowledge, theory and concepts.**	**Evaluation of, and reflection on, the investigation including an understanding of the ethical dimensions of field research.**	**Quality of written argument.**

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Level (marks)	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Criteria 4	Criteria 5	Criteria 6	Criteria 7
Level 5 **(35–29)**	Strong sense of focus and/or wide range of research questions exhibiting challenge; strong theoretical or comparative contexts; detailed locational context; contexts linked effectively. Strong acknowledgement of literature sources.	Strong evidence of use of relevant data collection methods; range of sampling techniques fully understood and put into practice; strong sense of practical work done in the field. Strong justification of methodologies. Strong sense of classification: quantitative v qualitative; primary v secondary with clear evidence of all aspects. Strong use of external sources.	Full range of techniques used that are clearly appropriate to the investigation. Strong evidence of selection and use of suitable approaches. Strong sense of sophistication and challenge in the choice and use of techniques.	Full range of techniques used that are clearly appropriate to the investigation. Strong evidence of selection and use of suitable approaches. Strong sense of sophistication and challenge in the choice and use of techniques. Strong evidence of precise interpretation and interrogation with thorough critical awareness.	A cogent set of conclusions with strong references to the results/ outcomes of the investigation and the research question(s). Strong critical evaluation and application of outcomes to existing knowledge, theory and concepts.	Evaluation is strong and perceptive. Strong sense of reflection. Strong understanding of the ethical dimensions of field research.	Arguments are highly focused, perceptive, mature, and are expressed coherently and confidently. Arguments make highly effective use of evidence and theory. Strong sense of individuality and/or flair.

Level (marks)	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Criteria 4	Criteria 5	Criteria 6	Criteria 7
Level 4 **(28–22)**	Well-focused range of research questions; detailed theoretical or comparative contexts; detailed sense of locational context; explicit linkages between contexts. Clear acknowledgement of literature sources.	Detailed evidence of use of relevant data collection methods; good evidence of sampling technique(s) used appropriately; full sense of practical work done in the field. Detailed justification of methodologies. Detailed sense of classification: quantitative v qualitative; primary v secondary with evidence of all aspects. Detailed use of external sources.	Detailed use of more than one technique. Clear sense of appropriateness of the techniques being used. Clear evidence of selection and use of suitable approaches. Some sense of sophistication in the choice and use of techniques.	Detailed use of more than one technique. Clear sense of appropriateness of the techniques being used. Clear evidence of selection and use of suitable approaches. Some sense of sophistication in the choice and use of techniques. Clear evidence of interpretation and interrogation with precision and some critical awareness.	A sound set of conclusions with clear reference to results/outcomes, and clear linkage to the research question(s). Detailed critical evaluation and application of outcomes to existing knowledge, theory and concepts.	Evaluation is appropriate and detailed. Clear sense of reflection. Clear understanding of the ethical dimensions of field research.	Arguments have a sound focus and are expressed purposefully. Arguments make effective use of evidence and theory. Clear sense of individuality.

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Level (marks)	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Criteria 4	Criteria 5	Criteria 6	Criteria 7
Level 3 **(21–15)**	Focused and clear research question(s); clear theoretical or comparative contexts; clear sense of locational context; tentative linkages between contexts. Limited acknowledgement of literature sources.	Clear evidence of use of relevant data collection methods; clear evidence of sampling technique(s) used; clear sense of practical work done in the field. Clear justification of methodologies. Clear sense of classification: quantitative v qualitative; primary v secondary. Clear use of external sources.	Accurate use of more than one technique. A sense of appropriateness of the techniques being used. Some evidence of selection and use of suitable approaches.	Accurate use of more than one technique. A sense of appropriateness of the techniques being used. Some evidence of selection and use of suitable approaches. Some evidence of interpretation and interrogation with some precision.	A set of conclusions with some reference to results/ outcomes, and linkage to the research question(s). Some critical evaluation and application of outcomes to existing knowledge, theory and concepts.	Some attempt at evaluation. A sense of reflection. Some understanding of the ethical dimensions of field research.	Arguments are relevant and logical, and are expressed with clarity. Arguments are evidence-based with clear links to theory. Clear sense of focus of task. Some evidence of individuality.

Level (marks)	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Criteria 4	Criteria 5	Criteria 6	Criteria 7
Level 2 **(14–8)**	Unfocused research question(s); limited theoretical or comparative contexts; limited sense of locational context; limited linkage between contexts.	Limited evidence of use of relevant data collection methods; limited evidence of sampling technique(s) used, which may be unrealistic or too small; limited sense of practical work done in the field. Limited justification of methodologies. Limited sense of classification: quantitative v qualitative; primary v secondary. Limited use of external sources.	Accurate use of one technique. Limited range of techniques. Limited evidence of selection and use of suitable approaches.	Accurate use of one technique. Limited range of techniques. Limited evidence of selection and use of suitable approaches. Limited evidence of interpretation and interrogation, but lacking precision.	A limited conclusion which consists of a reasonable summary of results/outcomes, with limited reference to the research question(s). Limited evaluation and application of outcomes to existing knowledge, theory and concepts.	Limited sense of evaluation. Limited sense of reflection. Limited understanding of the ethical dimensions of field research.	Arguments are not fully developed, and the organisation of ideas shows imbalances. Limited use of evidence and theory. Limited sense of focus of task.

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Level (marks)	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Criteria 4	Criteria 5	Criteria 6	Criteria 7
Level 1 **(7–1)**	Generalised and imprecise research question(s); general theoretical or comparative contexts; vague locational context; no linkage between contexts.	Generalised evidence of use of relevant data collection methods; simplistic sampling techniques; generalised sense of practical work done in the field. Generalised justification of methodologies. Marginal sense of classification: quantitative v qualitative; primary v secondary. No use of external sources.	Basic use of techniques; basic or no range of techniques; some inaccuracy.	Basic use of techniques; basic or no range of techniques; some inaccuracy. No evidence of interpretation and interrogation – largely narrative.	A basic or brief conclusion. Basic application of outcomes to existing knowledge, theory and concepts. No sense of evaluation of outcomes.	Basic and/or simplistic statements of evaluation. Basic sense of reflection. Basic understanding of the ethical dimensions of field research.	Language is basic; arguments are partial and over-simplified. Basic use of evidence and theory. Little sense of focus of task.
0	Does not meet criteria.	Does not meet criteria.	Does not meet criteria.	Does not meet criteria.	Does not meet criteria.	Does not meet criteria.	Does not meet criteria.

3.4 Geographical skills checklist

Competence in geographical skills should be developed during study of the course content, in an integrated way and not as a separate theme or topic. While the relative balance of quantitative and qualitative methods and skills will differ between each of the core elements and the options, students must be introduced to a roughly equal balance of quantitative and qualitative methods across the specification.

During their A-level course students should:

- understand the nature and use of different types of geographical information, including qualitative and quantitative data, primary and secondary data, images, factual text and discursive/creative material, digital data, numerical and spatial data and other forms of data, including crowd-sourced and 'big data'
- collect, analyse and interpret such information, and demonstrate the ability to understand and apply suitable analytical approaches for the different information types
- undertake informed and critical questioning of data sources, analytical methodologies, data reporting and presentation, including the ability to identify sources of error in data and to identify the misuse of data
- communicate and evaluate findings, draw well-evidenced conclusions informed by wider theory, and construct extended written argument about geographical matters.

Students at A-level are required to demonstrate all the skills and approaches detailed below.

3.4.1 Qualitative skills and quantitative skills

Students should develop the following with respect to **qualitative data**:

- use and understanding of a mixture of methodological approaches, including interviews
- interpretation and evaluation of a range of source material including textual and visual sources
- understanding of the opportunities and limitations of qualitative techniques such as coding and sampling, and appreciation of how they actively create particular geographical representations
- understanding of the ethical and socio-political implications of collecting, studying and representing geographical data about human communities.

Students should develop the following with respect to **quantitative data**:

- understanding of what makes data geographical and the geospatial technologies (eg GIS) that are used to collect, analyse and present geographical data
- an ability to collect and use digital and geo-located data, and understand a range of approaches to the use and analysis of such data
- understanding of the purposes and difference between the following and to use them in appropriate contexts:
  - descriptive statistics of central tendency and dispersion
  - descriptive measures of difference and association, inferential statistics and the foundations of relational statistics
  - measurement, measurement errors, and sampling.

3.4.2 Specific skills

The following sections identify specific qualitative and quantitative skills to be developed.

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3.4.2.1 Core skills

- Use and annotation of illustrative and visual material: base maps, sketch maps, OS maps (at a variety of scales), diagrams, graphs, field sketches, photographs, geospatial, geo-located and digital imagery.
- Use of overlays, both physical and electronic.
- Literacy – use of factual text and discursive/creative material and coding techniques when analysing text.
- Numeracy – use of number, measure and measurement.
- Questionnaire and interview techniques.

3.4.2.2 Cartographic skills

- Atlas maps.
- Weather maps – including synoptic charts.
- Maps with located proportional symbols.
- Maps showing movement – flow lines, desire lines and trip lines.
- Maps showing spatial patterns – choropleth, isoline and dot maps.

3.4.2.3 Graphical skills

- Line graphs – simple, comparative, compound and divergent.
- Bar graphs – simple, comparative, compound and divergent.
- Scatter graphs, and the use of best fit line.
- Pie charts and proportional divided circles.
- Triangular graphs.
- Graphs with logarithmic scales.
- Dispersion diagrams.

3.4.2.4 Statistical skills

- Measures of central tendency – mean, mode, median.
- Measures of dispersion – range, inter-quartile range and standard deviation.
- Inferential and relational statistical techniques to include Spearman's rank correlation and Chi-square test and the application of significance tests.

3.4.2.5 ICT skills

- Use of remotely sensed data (as described above in Core skills).
- Use of electronic databases.
- Use of innovative sources of data such as crowd sourcing and 'big data'.
- Use of ICT to generate evidence of many of the skills provided above such as producing maps, graphs and statistical calculations.

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4 Scheme of assessment

Find past papers and mark schemes, and specimen papers for new courses, on our website at aqa.org.uk/pastpapers

This specification is designed to be taken over two years.

This is a linear qualification. In order to achieve the award, students must complete all assessments at the end of the course and in the same series.

A-level exams and certification for this specification are available for the first time in May/June 2018 and then every May/June for the life of the specification.

All materials are available in English only.

Our A-level exams in Geography include questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- draw together their skills, knowledge and understanding from across the full course of study
- provide extended responses.

For example, Section C of Components 1 and 2 contain extended response questions. An 'extended response' is evidence of sufficient length generated to allow students to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

4.1 Aims

Courses based on this specification should encourage students to:

- develop their knowledge of locations, places, processes and environments, at all geographical scales from local to global across the specification as a whole
- develop an in-depth understanding of the selected core and non-core processes in physical and human geography at a range of temporal and spatial scales, and of the concepts which illuminate their significance in a range of locational contexts
- recognise and be able to analyse the complexity of people–environment interactions at all geographical scales, and appreciate how these underpin understanding of some of the key issues facing the world today
- develop their understanding of, and ability to apply, the concepts of place, space, scale and environment, that underpin both the national curriculum and GCSE, including developing a more nuanced understanding of these concepts
- gain understanding of specialised concepts relevant to the core and non-core content. These must include the concepts of causality, systems, equilibrium, feedback, inequality, representation, identity, globalisation, interdependence, mitigation and adaptation, sustainability, risk, resilience and thresholds
- improve their understanding of the ways in which values, attitudes and circumstances have an impact on the relationships between people, place and environment, and develop the knowledge and ability to engage, as citizens, with the questions and issues arising
- become confident and competent in selecting, using and evaluating a range of quantitative and qualitative skills and approaches, (including observing, collecting and analysing geo-located data) and applying them as an integral part of their studies

- understand the fundamental role of fieldwork as a tool to understand and generate new knowledge about the real world, and become skilled at planning, undertaking and evaluating fieldwork in appropriate situations
- apply geographical knowledge, understanding, skills and approaches in a rigorous way to a range of geographical questions and issues, including those identified in fieldwork, recognising both the contributions and limitations of geography
- develop as critical and reflective learners, able to articulate opinions, suggest relevant new ideas and provide evidenced argument in a range of situations.

4.2 Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all A-level Geography specifications and all exam boards.

The exams and non-exam assessment will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of places, environments, concepts, processes, interactions and change, at a variety of scales (30–40%).
- AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding in different contexts to interpret, analyse and evaluate geographical information and issues (30–40%).
- AO3: Use a variety of relevant quantitative, qualitative and fieldwork skills to:
  - investigate geographical questions and issues
  - interpret, analyse and evaluate data and evidence
  - construct arguments and draw conclusions (20–30%).

4.2.1 Assessment objective weightings for A-level Geography

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx %)			Overall weighting (approx %)
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	
AO1	14	14	7	35
AO2	20	20	0	40
AO3	6	6	13	25
Overall weighting of components	40	40	20	100

4.3 Assessment weightings

The marks awarded on the papers will be scaled to meet the weighting of the components. Students' final marks will be calculated by adding together the scaled marks for each component. Grade boundaries will be set using this total scaled mark. The scaling and total scaled marks are shown in the table below.

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Component	Maximum raw mark	Scaling factor	Maximum scaled mark
Component 1: Physical geography	96	x1	96
Component 2: Human geography	96	x1	96
Component 3: Geographical investigation	35	x1.37	48
		Total scaled mark:	240

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5 Non-exam assessment administration

This specification will be updated once the arrangements for non-exam assessment have been finalised. The following statement has been agreed by all awarding organisations.

The A-level non-exam assessment comprises an Independent investigation. It is a compulsory requirement of the course of study and accounts for 20% of the qualification grade.

Awarding organisations are working together to agree common principles for the guidance and arrangements for task setting, task taking, and the declarations required to show that work is authentic and meets specification requirements.

The final requirements for non-exam assessment will be consistent across all awarding organisations. The accredited specifications will be updated in autumn 2015 to include this information.

5.1 Teacher standardisation

We will provide support for using the marking criteria and developing appropriate tasks through teacher standardisation.

For further information about teacher standardisation visit our website at aqa.org.uk/7037

In the following situations teacher standardisation is essential. We will send you an invitation to complete teacher standardisation if:

- moderation from the previous year indicates a serious misinterpretation of the requirements
- a significant adjustment was made to the marks in the previous year
- your school or college is new to this specification.

For further support and advice please speak to your adviser. Email your subject team at geography@aqa.org.uk for details of your adviser.

5.2 Internal standardisation

You must ensure that you have consistent marking standards for all students. One person must manage this process and they must sign the *Centre declaration sheet* to confirm that internal standardisation has taken place.

Internal standardisation may involve:

- all teachers marking some sample pieces of work to identify differences in marking standards
- discussing any differences in marking at a training meeting for all teachers involved
- referring to reference and archive material, such as previous work or examples from our teacher standardisation.

5.3 Submitting marks

You must check that the correct marks are written on the *Candidate record form* and that the total is correct.

The deadline for submitting the total mark for each student is given at aqa.org.uk/keydates

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6 General administration

You can find information about all aspects of administration, as well as all the forms you need, at aqa.org.uk/examsadmin

6.1 Entries and codes

You only need to make one entry for each qualification – this will cover all the question papers, non-exam asssessment and certification.

Every specification is given a national discount (classification) code by the Department for Education (DfE), which indicates its subject area.

If a student takes two specifications with the same discount code, further and higher education providers are likely to take the view that they have only achieved one of the two qualifications. Please check this before your students start their course.

Qualification title	AQA entry code	DfE discount code
AQA Advanced Level GCE in Geography	7037	TBC

This specification complies with:

- Ofqual *General conditions of recognition* that apply to all regulated qualifications
- Ofqual GCE qualification level conditions that apply to all GCEs
- Ofqual GCE subject level conditions that apply to all GCEs in this subject
- all other relevant regulatory documents.

The Ofqual qualification accreditation number (QAN) is TBC.

6.2 Overlaps with other qualifications

There is overlapping content in the AS and A-level Geography specifications. This helps you teach the AS and A-level together.

6.3 Awarding grades and reporting results

The A-level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A*, A, B, C, D and E.

Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

6.4 Re-sits and shelf life

Students can re-sit the qualification as many times as they wish, within the shelf life of the qualification.

6.5 Previous learning and prerequisites

There are no previous learning requirements. Any requirements for entry to a course based on this specification are at the discretion of schools and colleges.

However, we recommend that students should have the skills and knowledge associated with a GCSE Geography course or equivalent.

6.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion

General qualifications are designed to prepare students for a wide range of occupations and further study. Therefore our qualifications must assess a wide range of competences.

The subject criteria have been assessed to see if any of the skills or knowledge required present any possible difficulty to any students, whatever their ethnic background, religion, sex, age, disability or sexuality. If any difficulties were encountered, the criteria were reviewed again to make sure that tests of specific competences were only included if they were important to the subject.

As members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) we participate in the production of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational qualifications*. We follow these guidelines when assessing the needs of individual students who may require an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment. This document is published on the JCQ website at jcq.org.uk

6.6.1 Students with disabilities and special needs

We can make arrangements for disabled students and students with special needs to help them access the assessments, as long as the competences being tested are not changed. Access arrangements must be agreed **before** the assessment. For example, a Braille paper would be a reasonable adjustment for a Braille reader but not for a student who does not read Braille.

We are required by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage that affects a disabled student.

If you have students who need access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, you can apply using the Access arrangements online service at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

6.6.2 Special consideration

We can give special consideration to students who have been disadvantaged at the time of the assessment through no fault of their own – for example a temporary illness, injury or serious problem such as the death of a relative. We can only do this **after** the assessment.

Your exams officer should apply online for special consideration at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

For more information and advice about access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration please see aqa.org.uk/access or email accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk

6.7 Working with AQA for the first time

If your school or college has not previously offered any AQA specification, you need to register as an AQA centre to offer our specifications to your students. Find out how at aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre

DRAFT SPECIFICATION

6.8 Private candidates

This specification is available to private candidates.

A private candidate is someone who enters for exams through an AQA-approved school or college but is not enrolled as a student there.

A private candidate may be self-taught, home-schooled or have private tuition, either with a tutor or through a distance learning organisation. You must be based in the UK.

If you have any queries as a private candidate, you can:

- speak to the exams officer at the school or college where you intend to take your exams
- visit our website at aqa.org.uk/privatecandidates
- email: privatecandidates@aqa.org.uk

DRAFT SPECIFICATION

Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/7037

You can talk directly to the Geography subject team:

E: geography@aqa.org.uk

T: 01483 477 791

DRAFT SPECIFICATION

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