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# A-LEVEL GEOGRAPHY

(7037)

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**Specification**

For teaching from September 2016 onwards  
For exams in 2018 onwards

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Version 1.0 27 May 2016



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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](https://www.aqa.org.uk/7037)
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to this specification.

# 1 Introduction

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## 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](https://www.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](https://www.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](https://www.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.

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## 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](https://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](https://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](https://coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk)

## Get help and support

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Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at [aqa.org.uk/7037](https://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](https://aqa.org.uk/keepinformedgeography)

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

E: [geography@aqa.org.uk](mailto:geography@aqa.org.uk)

T: 01483 477 791

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# 2 Specification at a glance

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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 8)
- 2 [Hot desert systems and landscapes](#) (page 11)
- 3 [Coastal systems and landscapes](#) (page 13)
- 4 [Glacial systems and landscapes](#) (page 14)
- 5 [Hazards](#) (page 16)
- 6 [Ecosystems under stress](#) (page 17)

### Human geography

- 7 [Global systems and global governance](#) (page 20)
- 8 [Changing places](#) (page 22)
- 9 [Contemporary urban environments](#) (page 24)
- 10 [Population and the environment](#) (page 26)
- 11 [Resource security](#) (page 27)

### Geography fieldwork investigation

- 12 [Fieldwork requirements](#) (page 30)
- 13 [Investigation requirements](#) (page 30)

### Geographical skills

- 14 [Geographical skills checklist](#) (page 38)

## 2.2 Assessments

| Component 1: Physical geography   | + | Component 2: Human geography  | + | Component 3: Geography fieldwork investigation   |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <p><b>What's assessed</b></p> <p>Section A: Water and carbon cycles</p> <p>Section B: either Hot desert systems and landscapes <b>or</b> Coastal systems and landscapes <b>or</b> Glacial systems and landscapes</p> <p>Section C: either Hazards <b>or</b> Ecosystems under stress</p>   |   | <p><b>What's assessed</b></p> <p>Section A: Global systems and global governance</p> <p>Section B: Changing places</p> <p>Section C: either Contemporary urban environments <b>or</b> Population and the environment <b>or</b> Resource security</p>  |   | <p><b>What's assessed</b></p> <p>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.</p> |
| <p><b>How it's assessed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes</li> <li>• 120 marks</li> <li>• 40 % of A-level</li> </ul>  |   | <p><b>How it's assessed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes</li> <li>• 120 marks</li> <li>• 40 % of A-level</li> </ul>  |   | <p><b>How it's assessed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,000 – 4,000 words</li> <li>• 60 marks</li> <li>• 20 % of A-level</li> <li>• marked by teachers</li> <li>• moderated by AQA</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section A: answer all questions (36 marks)</li> <li>• Section B: answer either question 2 <b>or</b> question 3 <b>or</b> question 4 (36 marks)</li> <li>• Section C: answer either question 5 <b>or</b> question 6 (48 marks)</li> <li>• Question types: multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response and extended prose</li> </ul> |   | <p><b>Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section A: answer all questions (36 marks)</li> <li>• Section B: answer all questions (36 marks)</li> <li>• Section C: answer either question 3 <b>or</b> question 4 <b>or</b> question 5 (48 marks)</li> <li>• Question types: multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose</li> </ul> |   |  |



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# 3 Subject content

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## 3.1 Physical geography

### 3.1.1 Water and carbon cycles

This section of our specification focuses 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.

Processes driving change in the magnitude of these stores over time and space, including flows and transfers: evaporation, condensation, cloud formation, causes of precipitation and cryospheric processes 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, evapotranspiration 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 over time and space, including flows and transfers at plant, sere and continental scales. Photosynthesis, respiration, decomposition, combustion, carbon sequestration in oceans and sediments, 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, climate and life on Earth

The key role of the carbon and water stores and cycles in supporting life on Earth with particular reference to 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 and implications for life on Earth.

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

#### 3.1.1.5 Quantitative and qualitative skills

Students must engage with a range of quantitative and relevant qualitative skills, within the theme water and carbon cycles. Students must specifically understand simple mass balance, unit conversions and the analysis and presentation of field data.

#### 3.1.1.6 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 systems and landscapes

This section of our specification focuses 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 subject 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.

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### 3.1.2.2 Systems and processes

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

Sediment sources, cells and budgets.

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 in contrasting settings

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 Quantitative and qualitative skills

Students must engage with a range of quantitative and relevant qualitative skills, within the theme landscape systems. These should include observation skills, measurement and geospatial mapping skills and data manipulation and statistical skills applied to field measurements.

### 3.1.2.6 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** at a local scale of a landscape where desertification has occurred 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

This section of our specification focuses 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 subject 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

This content must include study of a variety of landscapes from beyond the United Kingdom (UK) but may also include UK examples.

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.

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

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### 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 Quantitative and qualitative skills

Students must engage with a range of quantitative and relevant qualitative skills, within the theme landscape systems. These should include observation skills, measurement and geospatial mapping skills and data manipulation and statistical skills applied to field measurements.

### 3.1.3.6 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 contrasting coastal landscape beyond the UK to illustrate and analyse how it presents risks and opportunities for human occupation and development and evaluate human responses of resilience, mitigation and adaptation.

## 3.1.4 Glacial systems and landscapes

This section of our specification focuses on glaciated landscapes. These are dynamic environments in which landscapes continue to develop through contemporary processes but which mainly reflect former climatic conditions associated with the Pleistocene era. 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 subject content fosters an informed appreciation of the beauty and diversity of glaciated regions and the challenges they present for human habitation. 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.

### 3.1.4.1 Glaciers as natural systems

Systems in physical geography: systems concepts and their application to the development of glaciated 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.

### 3.1.4.2 The nature and distribution of cold environments

The global distribution of cold environments.

Physical characteristics of cold environments. Climate, soils and vegetation (and their interaction).

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

### 3.1.4.3 Systems and processes

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.

Fluvioglacial processes: meltwater, erosion transportation and deposition.

Periglacial features and processes: permafrost, active layer and mass movement.

### 3.1.4.4 Glaciated landscape development

This content must include study of a variety of landscapes from beyond the UK and may also include UK examples.

Origin and development of glaciated landscapes.

Erosional and depositional landforms: corries, arêtes, glacial troughs, hanging valleys, truncated spurs, roches moutonnées. Characteristic glaciated landscapes.

Origin and development of landforms and landscapes of glacial deposition: drumlins, erratics, moraines, till plains. Characteristic glaciated landscapes.

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

Periglacial landforms: patterned ground, ice wedges, pingos, blockfields, solifluction, lobes, terracettes, thermokarst. Characteristic periglacial landscapes.

The relationship between process, time, landforms and landscapes in glaciated settings: characteristic glaciated and periglacial landscapes.

### 3.1.4.5 Human impacts on cold environments

Concept of environmental fragility. Human impacts on fragile cold environments over time and at a variety of scales. Recent and prospective impact of climate change. Management of cold environments at present and in alternative possible futures.

### 3.1.4.6 Quantitative and qualitative skills

Students must engage with a range of quantitative and relevant qualitative skills, within the theme landscape systems. These should include observation skills, measurement and geospatial mapping skills and data manipulation and statistical skills applied to field measurements.

### 3.1.4.7 Case studies

**Case study(ies)** of glaciated environment(s) at a local scale to illustrate and analyse fundamental glacial processes, their landscape outcomes as set out above and engage with field data.

**Case study** of a contrasting glaciated landscape from beyond the UK to illustrate and analyse how it presents challenges and opportunities for human occupation and development and evaluate human responses of resilience, mitigation and adaptation.

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### 3.1.5 Hazards

This optional section of our specification focuses on the lithosphere and the atmosphere, which intermittently but regularly present natural 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 environments they occupy. 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 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. The Park model of human response to hazards. The Hazard Management Cycle.

#### 3.1.5.2 Plate tectonics

Earth structure and internal energy sources. Plate tectonic theory of crustal evolution: tectonic plates; plate movement; gravitational sliding; ridge push, slab pull; convection currents and sea-floor spreading.

Destructive, constructive and conservative plate margins. Characteristic processes: seismicity and volcanicity. Associated landforms: young fold mountains, rift valleys, ocean ridges, deep sea trenches and island arcs, volcanoes.

Magma plumes and their relationship to plate movement.

#### 3.1.5.3 Volcanic hazards

The nature of volcanicity and its relation to plate tectonics: forms of volcanic hazard: nuées ardentes, lava flows, mudflows, pyroclastic and ash fallout, gases/acid rain, tephra. Spatial distribution, 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.

#### 3.1.5.4 Seismic hazards

The nature of seismicity and its relation to plate tectonics: forms of seismic hazard: earthquakes, shockwaves, tsunamis, liquefaction, landslides. 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.



### 3.1.5.5 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.

### 3.1.5.6 Fires in nature

Nature of wildfires. Conditions favouring intense wild fires: vegetation type, fuel characteristics, climate and recent weather and fire behaviour. Causes of fires: natural and human agency. 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.

Impact and human responses as evidenced by a recent wild fire event.

### 3.1.5.7 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.

## 3.1.6 Ecosystems under stress

This optional section of our specification focuses 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.

### 3.1.6.1 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.



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### 3.1.6.2 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.

Mineral 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.

### 3.1.6.3 Biomes

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

The nature of two contrasting biomes: tropical rainforest and savanna grassland 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.

### 3.1.6.4 Ecosystems in the British Isles over time

Succession and climatic climax as illustrated by lithoserres and hydrosere.

The characteristics of the climatic climax: temperate deciduous woodland biome.

The effects of human activity on succession – illustrated by one plagioclimax such as a heather moorland.

### 3.1.6.5 Marine ecosystems

The distribution and main characteristics of coral reef ecosystems. Environmental conditions associated with reef development.

The following aspects should be examined with reference to a named, located coral reef:

Factors in the health and survival of reefs:

- Natural: Water temperature, acidity, salinity, algal blooms.
- Human activity and its impact: Major drainage basin schemes, onshore development, desalination, pollution, tourism, fishing.
- Future prospects for coral reefs.

### 3.1.6.6 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.

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.

### 3.1.6.7 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.

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## 3.2 Human geography

### 3.2.1 Global systems and global governance

This section of our specification focuses 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 both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gathering, processing and interpreting relevant information and data including, those associated with and arising from fieldwork.

#### 3.2.1.1 Globalisation

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

Factors in globalisation: the development of technologies, systems and relationships, including financial, transport, security, communications, management and information systems and trade agreements.

#### 3.2.1.2 Global systems

Form and nature of economic, political, social and environmental interdependence in the contemporary world.

Issues associated with interdependence including how:

- unequal flows of people, money, ideas and technology within global systems can sometimes act to promote stability, growth and development but can also cause inequalities, conflicts and injustices for people and places
- unequal power relations enable some states to drive global systems to their own advantage and to directly influence geopolitical events, while others are only able to respond or resist in a more constrained way.

#### 3.2.1.3 International trade and access to markets

Global features and trends in the volume and pattern of international trade and investment associated with globalisation.

Trading relationships and patterns between large, highly developed economies such as the United States, the European Union, emerging major economies such as China and India and smaller, less developed economies such as those in sub-Saharan Africa, southern Asia and Latin America.

Differential access to markets associated with levels of economic development and trading agreements and its impacts on economic and societal well-being.

The nature and role of transnational corporations (TNCs), including their spatial organisation, production, linkages, trading and marketing patterns, with a detailed reference to a specified TNC and its impacts on those countries in which it operates.

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

Analysis and assessment of the geographical consequences of global systems to specifically consider how international trade and variable access to markets underly and impacts on students' and other people's lives across the globe.

### 3.2.1.4 Global governance

The emergence and developing role of norms, laws and institutions in regulating and reproducing global systems.

Issues associated with attempts at global governance, including how:

- agencies, including the UN in the post-1945 era, can work to promote growth and stability but may also exacerbate inequalities and injustices
- interactions between the local, regional, national, international and global scales are fundamental to understanding global governance.

### 3.2.1.5 The 'global commons'

The concept of the 'global commons'. 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.

#### 3.2.1.5.1 Antarctica as a global common

An outline of the contemporary geography, including climate, of Antarctica (including the Southern Ocean as far north as the Antarctic Convergence) to demonstrate its role as a global common and illustrate its vulnerability to global economic pressures and environmental change.

Threats to Antarctica arising from:

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

Critical appraisal of the developing governance of Antarctica. International government organisations to include United Nations (UN) agencies such as United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Whaling Commission. The Antarctic Treaty (1959), the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (1991); IWC Whaling Moratorium (1982) – their purpose, scope and systems for inspection and enforcement.

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

Analysis and assessment of the geographical consequences of global governance for citizens and places in Antarctica and elsewhere to specifically consider how global governance underlies and impacts on students' and other people's lives across the globe.

### 3.2.1.6 Globalisation critique

The impacts of globalisation to consider the benefits of growth, development, integration, stability against the costs in terms of inequalities, injustice, conflict and environmental impact.

### 3.2.1.7 Quantitative and qualitative skills

Students must engage with quantitative and qualitative approaches across the theme as a whole.

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## 3.2.2 Changing places

This section of our specification focuses on people's engagement with places, their experience of them and the qualities they ascribe to them, all of 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, the factors and processes which impact upon places and how they change and develop over time. Through developing this knowledge, students will gain understanding of the way in which their own lives and those of others are affected by continuity and change in the nature of places which are of fundamental importance in their lives.

Study of the content must be embedded in two contrasting places, one to be local. The local place may be a locality, neighbourhood or small community either urban or rural. A contrasting place is likely to be distant – it could be in the same country or a different country but it must show significant contrast in terms of economic development and/or population density and/or cultural background and/or systems of political and economic organisation.

The place studies complement the requirement to embed the study of content in two contrasting places. 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:

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

Factors contributing to the character of places:

- Endogenous: location, topography, physical geography, land use, built environment and infrastructure, demographic and economic characteristics.
- Exogenous: relationships with other places.

### 3.2.2.2 Changing places – relationships, connections, meaning and representation

In relation to the local place within which students live or study and then at least one further contrasting place and encompassing local, regional, national, international and global scales:

- the ways in which the following factors: relationships and connections, meaning and representation, affect continuity and change in the nature of places and our understanding of place

and

- the ways in which students' own lives and those of others are affected by continuity and change in the nature of places and our understanding of place.

#### 3.2.2.2.1 Relationships and connections

The impact of relationships and connections on people and place with a particular focus on:

**either**

changing demographic and cultural characteristics

**or**

economic change and social inequalities.

- How the demographic, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of places are shaped by shifting flows of people, resources, money and investment, and ideas at all scales from local to global.
- The characteristics and impacts of external forces operating at different scales from local to global, including **either** government policies **or** the decisions of multinational corporations **or** the impacts of international or global institutions.
- How past and present connections, within and beyond localities, shape places and embed them in the regional, national, international and global scales.

#### 3.2.2.2 Meaning and representation

The importance of the meanings and representations attached to places by people with a particular focus on people's lived experience of place in the past and at present.

- How humans perceive, engage with and form attachments to places and how they present and represent the world to others, including the way in which everyday place meanings are bound up with different identities, perspectives and experiences.
- How external agencies, including government, corporate bodies and community or local groups make attempts to influence or create specific place-meanings and thereby shape the actions and behaviours of individuals, groups, businesses and institutions.
- How places may be represented in a variety of different forms such as advertising copy, tourist agency material, local art exhibitions in diverse media (eg film, photography, art, story, song etc) that often give contrasting images to that presented formally or statistically such as cartography and census data.
- How both past and present processes of development can be seen to influence the social and economic characteristics of places and so be implicit in present meanings.

#### 3.2.2.3 Quantitative and qualitative skills

Students must engage with a range of quantitative and qualitative approaches across the theme as a whole. Quantitative data, including the use of geospatial data, must be used to investigate and present place characteristics, particular weight must be given to qualitative approaches involved in representing place, and to analysing critically the impacts of different media on place meanings and perceptions. The use of different types of data should allow the development of critical perspectives on the data categories and approaches.

#### 3.2.2.4 Place studies

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

**Contrasting place study** exploring the developing character of a contrasting and distant place.

Place studies must apply the knowledge acquired through engagement with prescribed specification content and thereby further enhance understanding of the way students' own lives and those of others are affected by continuity and change in the nature of places. Sources must include qualitative and quantitative data to represent places in the past and present.

Both place studies must focus equally on:

- people's lived experience of the place in the past and at present

**and either**

- changing demographic and cultural characteristics

**or**

- economic change and social inequalities.

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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.

### 3.2.3 Contemporary urban environments

This optional section of our specification focuses 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

Urbanisation and its importance in human affairs. 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.

Urban change: deindustrialisation, decentralisation, rise of service economy.

Urban policy and regeneration in Britain since 1979.

#### 3.2.3.2 Urban forms

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

New urban landscapes: town centre mixed developments, cultural and heritage quarters, fortress developments, gentrified areas, edge cities. The concept of the post-modern western city.

#### 3.2.3.3 Social and economic issues associated with urbanisation

Issues associated with economic inequality, social segregation 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 Urban waste and its disposal

Urban physical waste generation: sources of waste – industrial and commercial activity, personal consumption. Relation of waste components and waste streams to economic characteristics, lifestyles and attitudes. The environmental impacts of alternative approaches to waste disposal: unregulated, recycling, recovery, incineration, burial, submergence and trade.

Comparison of incineration and landfill approaches to waste disposal in relation to a specified urban area.

### 3.2.3.7 Other contemporary urban environmental issues

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

Strategies to manage these environmental problems.

### 3.2.3.8 Sustainable urban development

Impact of urban areas on local and global environments. Ecological footprint of major urban areas. Dimensions of sustainability: natural, physical, social and economic. Nature and features of sustainable cities. Concept of liveability.

Contemporary opportunities and challenges in developing more sustainable cities.

Strategies for developing more sustainable cities.

### 3.2.3.9 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.



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## 3.2.4 Population and the environment

This optional section of our specification has been designed to explore the relationships between key aspects of physical geography and 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 Introduction

The environmental context for human population characteristics and change. Key elements in the physical environment: climate, soils, resource distributions including water supply. Key population parameters: distribution, density, numbers, change. Key role of development processes. Global patterns of population numbers, densities and change rates.

### 3.2.4.2 Environment and population

Global and regional patterns of food production and consumption. Agricultural systems and agricultural productivity. Relationship with key physical environmental variables – climate and soils.

Characteristics and distribution of two major climatic types to exemplify relationships between climate and human activities and numbers. Climate change as it affects agriculture.

Characteristics and distribution of two key zonal soils to exemplify relationship between soils and human activities especially agriculture. Soil problems and their management as they relate to agriculture: soil erosion, waterlogging, salinisation, structural deterioration.

Strategies to ensure food security.

### 3.2.4.3 Environment, health and well-being

Global patterns of health, mortality and morbidity. Economic and social development and the epidemiological transition.

The relationship between environment variables eg climate, topography (drainage) and incidence of disease. Air quality and health. Water quality and health.

The global prevalence, distribution, seasonal incidence of one specified biologically transmitted disease, eg malaria; its links to physical and socio-economic environments including impacts of environmental variables on transmission vectors. Impact on health and well-being. Management and mitigation strategies.

The global prevalence and distribution of one specified non-communicable disease, eg a specific type of cancer, coronary heart disease, asthma; its links to physical and socio-economic environment including impacts of lifestyles. Impact on health and well-being. Management and mitigation strategies.

Role of international agencies and NGOs in promoting health and combating disease at the global scale.

### 3.2.4.4 Population change

Factors in natural population change: the demographic transition model, key vital rates, age–sex composition; cultural controls. Models of natural population change, and their application in contrasting physical and human settings. Concept of the Demographic Dividend.

International migration: refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants: environmental and socio-economic causes, processes. Demographic, environmental, social, economic, health and political implications of migration.

### 3.2.4.5 Principles of population ecology and their application to human populations

Population growth dynamics. Concepts of overpopulation, underpopulation and optimum population. Implications of population size and structure for the balance between population and resources; the concepts of ‘carrying capacity’ and ‘ecological footprint’ and their implications.

Population, resources and pollution model: positive and negative feedback. Contrasting perspectives on population growth and its implications; Malthusian, neo-Malthusian and alternatives such as associated with Boserup and Simon.

### 3.2.4.6 Global population futures

Health impacts of global environmental change: ozone depletion – skin cancer, cataracts; climate change – thermal stress, emergent and changing distribution of vector borne diseases, agricultural productivity and nutritional standards.

Prospects for the global population. Projected distributions. Critical appraisal of future population–environment relationships.

### 3.2.4.7 Case studies

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

**Case study** of a specified local area to illustrate and analyse the relationship between place and health related to its physical environment, socio-economic character and the experience and attitudes of its populations.

## 3.2.5 Resource security

This optional section of our specification focuses 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, energy and minerals and their critical role in human affairs leads to massive local and regional transfers of water and massive global transfers of energy and minerals.

In this section students contemplate the fundamental relationships between the physical environment and human activities and wants 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 energy, water and minerals 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.

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### 3.2.5.1 Resource development

Concept of a resource. Resource classifications to include stock and flow resources. Stock resource evaluation: measured reserves, indicated reserves, inferred resources, possible resources. Natural resource development over time: exploration, exploitation, development. Concept of the resource frontier. Concept of resource peak.

Sustainable resource development. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in relation to resource development projects.

### 3.2.5.2 Natural resource issues

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

The geopolitics of energy, ore mineral and water resource distributions, trade 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.

Environmental impacts of a major water supply scheme incorporating a major dam and/or barrage and associated distribution networks.

Strategies to manage water consumption (including reducing demand).

Sustainability issues associated with water management: virtual water trade, 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.

Environmental impacts of a major energy resource development such as an oil, coal or gas field and associated distribution networks.

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 Mineral security

With reference to iron ore **or** a specified globally traded non-ferrous metal ore eg copper, tin, manganese.

Sources of the specified ore. Distribution of reserves/resources. End uses of the ore. Components of demand for ore. Role of specified ore in global commerce and industry.

Key aspects of physical geography associated with ore occurrence and working: geological conditions and location.

Environmental impacts of a major mineral resource extraction scheme and associated distribution networks.

Sustainability issues associated with ore extraction, trade and processing.

### 3.2.5.6 Resource futures

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

### 3.2.5.7 Case studies

**Case study** of **either** water **or** energy **or** mineral ore 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 mineral ore and the way in which water or energy or mineral ore is used.

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## 3.3 Geography fieldwork investigation

The geography fieldwork 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 in relation to processes in both physical and human geography. Schools and colleges must provide the fieldwork statement by 15 May in the year of entry. 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. The fieldwork undertaken as part of the individual investigation may be based on either human or physical aspects of geography, or a combination of both. 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 research 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
- involve research of relevant literature sources and an understanding of the theoretical or comparative context for a research question/hypothesis
- incorporate the observation and recording of field data and/or evidence from field investigations that is of good quality and relevant to the topic under investigation
- involve justification of the practical approaches adopted in the field including frequency/timing of observation, sampling and data collection approaches
- draw on the student's own research, including their own field data and/or secondary data, and their experience of field methodologies of the investigation of core human and physical processes
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the techniques appropriate for analysing field data and information and for representing results, and show ability to select suitable quantitative or qualitative approaches and to apply them
- demonstrate the ability to interrogate and critically examine field data in order to comment on its accuracy and/or the extent to which it is representative, and use the experience to extend geographical understanding
- require the student to independently contextualise, analyse and summarise findings and data, and to draw conclusions, by applying existing knowledge, theory and concepts to order and understand field observations and identify their relation to the wider context
- involve the writing up of field results clearly, logically and coherently using a range of presentation methods and extended writing
- demonstrate the ability to answer a specific geographical question drawing effectively on evidence and theory to make a well-argued case

- require evaluation and reflection on the investigation including showing an understanding of the ethical dimensions of field research.

### 3.3.2.1 Independence

Some stages of the investigation must be carried out independently. Other parts of the investigation may be carried out collaboratively, either as a class, group or pair.

Independence is compulsory in the following stages of the investigation:

- defining and developing a question or issue to address aims, questions and/or hypotheses relating to any aspect of the specification
- drawing on research, including field data and if relevant, secondary data which must be sourced by the student
- contextualising, analysing and summarising findings and data
- presenting data and drawing conclusions.

Collaboration is allowed in the following stages of the investigation:

- exploring the focus of potential investigations
- collecting field data and/or evidence from field investigations.

If students collaborate where independence is expected then the teacher must record this additional assistance on the *Candidate record form* (CRF) and take it into account when marking the work. You must award a mark which reflects the student's unaided achievement. Failure to do so will be considered as malpractice. If malpractice is suspected, we will investigate. If malpractice is found to have taken place a penalty will be given dependent on the circumstances and severity of the malpractice. For full information, please see [Malpractice](#) and the JCO instructions Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessment.

Students should select a manageable focus for their investigation which enables them to select one or more specific research question(s) or issue(s) 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 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.

Students are expected to submit a written report which is 3,000 – 4,000 words in length. This includes all text, text boxes and supplementary material such as photographs and data presentation techniques. It does not include appendices. When attaching appendices students should have examples of raw data only, such as data sheets and questionnaires, rather than every questionnaire completed.

Students who offer work that is below the advisory word count may be penalising themselves by not allowing appropriate coverage of the required assessment objectives. Students who exceed the advisory word count may be penalising themselves through a lack of precision and focus.

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### 3.3.2.2 Teacher guidance for students

Teachers should:

- provide broad parameters for students' investigation proposals (including themes from the specification, locations, availability of equipment, time constraints)
- explain what independence means
- advise on health and safety considerations, the use of equipment and potential ethical concerns
- discuss with students their initial exploratory planning and tentative investigation titles
- review each student's independent investigation proposal. Within this review you should ensure that the proposed investigation can suitably access the specification requirements and you should give general guidance on the methodology and analytical tools that the student plans to use.
- advise on good practice such as referencing and using a bibliography system.

The above advice does not need to be recorded or taken into account when marking the work.

Teachers must not:

- provide students with a choice of titles or tasks from which they then choose
- mark work provisionally and share that mark so that the student may then improve it
- give specific guidance on how to make improvements to a draft in order to meet the assessment criteria without recording it as additional assistance on the *Candidate record form* (CRF) and taking it into account when marking the work.

These conditions apply equally to third party fieldwork providers. Failure to adhere to them constitutes malpractice. You must ensure that at all times you remain confident in the authenticity and independence of students' work.

Assistance that goes beyond general advice includes (but is not limited to):

- providing templates or model answers for specific titles or students
- providing specific guidance on how to improve an individual student's draft to meet the assessment criteria so that the student is no longer engaged in independent learning
- providing specific guidance on errors and omissions which limits students' opportunities to show initiative themselves
- providing primary or secondary data not collected by the student either individually or as part of a group.

Any additional guidance of this nature must be recorded on the *Candidate record form* (CRF) and taken into account when marking the work. Annotation must be used to explain how marks were applied in the context of the additional assistance given. Failure to do so will be considered as malpractice.

If malpractice is suspected with regard to guidance and feedback to students, we will investigate. If malpractice is found to have taken place a penalty will be given dependent on the circumstances and severity of the malpractice. For full information, please see [Malpractice](#) and the JCQ instructions *Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessment*.



### 3.3.3 Non-exam assessment mark scheme guidance

#### Level 4

Detailed, effective, thorough, complete, well-developed.

##### Overall description of this level

- The research question(s) will be effectively identified and preliminary research will be thoroughly undertaken with well-understood and well-stated contexts.
- The methods of field investigation will be detailed and thorough with reasoned justification.
- The methods of critical analysis will be effective, developed and complete.
- The conclusions and evaluation will be thorough, effective and complete and the presentation will be logical and coherent.

#### Level 3

Clear, secure, explicit, focused, precise, consistent.

##### Overall description of this level

- The research question(s) will be securely identified and preliminary research will be focused with consistently understood and stated contexts.
- The methods of field investigation will be clear and relevant with explicit justification.
- The methods of critical analysis will be clear, precise and consistent.
- The conclusions and evaluation will be clear, secure and focused and the presentation will be clear and precise.

#### Level 2

Intermittent, partial, some, implicit, imprecise, inconsistent.

##### Overall description of this level

- The research question(s) will be partial and preliminary research will be imprecise with inconsistently understood and stated contexts.
- The methods of field investigation will be intermittently applied with only some aspects justified.
- The methods of critical analysis will be imprecise, partial and inconsistent.
- The conclusions and evaluation will be partial and inconsistent and the presentation will be incomplete.

#### Level 1

Basic, limited, tentative, generalised, isolated.

##### Overall description of this level

- The research question(s) will be generalised and preliminary research will be limited with only isolated contexts.
- The methods of field investigation will be basic and limited in scope with tentative justification.
- The methods of critical analysis will be basic, limited and tentative.
- The conclusions and evaluation will be limited and generalised and the presentation will be basic.



### 3.3.4 Non-exam assessment mark scheme

#### 3.3.4.1 Area 1: Introduction and preliminary research

AO3 (strand 1): 10 marks

| Assessment criteria  | Level 4<br>10–9 marks   | Level 3<br>8–6 marks   | Level 2<br>5–3 marks   | Level 1<br>2–1 marks   | No marks<br>0           |
|--|---|--|--|--|-------------------------|
| To define the research questions which underpin field investigations. (AO3)  | A research question(s) is effectively identified and is completely referenced to the specification.   | A research question(s) is securely identified that is explicitly linked to the specification.  | A research question(s) which is partial. Links to the specification are imprecise.                                       | A research question(s) is generalised. Links to the specification are tentative.                           | Does not meet criteria. |
| To research relevant literature sources and write up the theoretical or comparative context for a research question. (AO3) | Well-supported by thorough use of relevant literature sources.<br>Theoretical and comparative contexts are well-understood and well-stated. | Supported by focused use of relevant literature sources.<br>Theoretical and comparative contexts are consistently understood and stated. | Supported by some use of relevant literature sources.<br>Theoretical and comparative contexts are inconsistently stated. | Limited or basic use of relevant literature sources.<br>Theoretical and comparative contexts are isolated. | Does not meet criteria. |

### 3.3.4.2 Area 2: Methods of field investigation

AO3 (strand 2): 15 marks

| Assessment criteria  | Level 4<br>15–12 marks  | Level 3<br>11–8 marks   | Level 2<br>7–4 marks   | Level 1<br>3–1 marks  | No marks<br>0           |
|--|---|---|--|---|-------------------------|
| To observe and record phenomena in the field and devise and justify practical approaches taken in the field including frequency/timing of observation, sampling, and data collection approaches (AO3). | Detailed use of a range of appropriate observational, recording and other data collection approaches including sampling.<br><br>Thorough and well-reasoned justification of data collection approaches. | Clear use of appropriate observational, recording and other data collection approaches including sampling.<br><br>Explicit justification of data collection approaches. | Intermittent use of appropriate observational, recording and other data collection approaches including sampling.<br><br>Some justification of data collection approaches. | Basic use of appropriate observational, recording and other data collection approaches including sampling.<br><br>Justification of data collection approaches is tentative. | Does not meet criteria. |
| To demonstrate practical knowledge and understanding of field methodologies appropriate to the investigation of human and physical processes (AO3).  | Detailed demonstration of practical knowledge and understanding of field methodologies appropriate to the investigation of human and physical processes.  | Clear demonstration of practical knowledge and understanding of field methodologies appropriate to the investigation of human and physical processes.                   | Intermittent demonstration of practical knowledge and understanding of field methodologies appropriate to the investigation of human and physical processes.               | Limited demonstration of practical knowledge and understanding of field methodologies appropriate to the investigation of human and physical processes.                     | Does not meet criteria. |
| To implement chosen methodologies to collect data/information of good quality and relevant to the topic under investigation (AO3).   | Detailed implementation of chosen methodologies to collect data/information of good quality and relevant to the topic under investigation.  | Clear implementation of chosen methodologies to collect data/information of good quality and relevant to the topic under investigation.                                 | Partial implementation of chosen methodologies to collect data/information of good quality and relevant to the topic under investigation.                                  | Limited implementation of chosen methodologies to collect data/information of good quality and relevant to the topic under investigation.                                   | Does not meet criteria. |

### 3.3.4.3 Area 3: Methods of critical analysis

20 marks – AO2: 6 marks; AO3 (strand 2): 14 marks

| Assessment criteria   | Level 4<br>20–15 marks<br>(AO2–6; AO3–14)  | Level 3<br>14–10 marks<br>(AO2–4; AO3–10)   | Level 2<br>9–5 marks<br>(AO2–2; AO3–7)   | Level 1<br>4–1 marks<br>(AO2–1; AO3–3)  | No marks<br>0           |
|---|--|---|--|---|-------------------------|
| To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the techniques appropriate for analysing field data and information and for representing results, and show ability to select suitable quantitative or qualitative approaches and to apply them (AO3). | Effective demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the techniques appropriate for analysing field data and information and for representing results.<br>Thorough ability to select suitable quantitative or qualitative approaches and to apply them. | Precise demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the techniques appropriate for analysing field data and information and for representing results.<br>Clear ability to select suitable quantitative or qualitative approaches and to apply them. | Imprecise demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the techniques appropriate for analysing field data and information and for representing results.<br>Some ability to select suitable quantitative or qualitative approaches and to apply them. | Limited demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the techniques appropriate for analysing field data and information and for representing results.<br>Basic ability to select suitable quantitative or qualitative approaches and to apply them. | Does not meet criteria. |
| To demonstrate the ability to interrogate and critically examine field data in order to comment on its accuracy and/or the extent to which it is representative, and use the experience to extend geographical understanding (AO3).                 | Thorough ability to interrogate and critically examine field data in order to comment on its accuracy and/or the extent to which it is representative.<br>Complete use of the experience to extend geographical understanding.                               | Clear ability to interrogate and critically examine field data in order to comment on its accuracy and/or the extent to which it is representative.<br>Secure use of the experience to extend geographical understanding.                               | Partial ability to interrogate and critically examine field data in order to comment on its accuracy and/or the extent to which it is representative.<br>Inconsistent use of the experience to extend geographical understanding.                        | Limited ability to interrogate and critically examine field data in order to comment on its accuracy and/or the extent to which it is representative.<br>Tentative use of the experience to extend geographical understanding.                          | Does not meet criteria  |
| To apply existing knowledge, theory and concepts to order and understand field observations (AO2).  | Effective application of existing knowledge, theory and concepts to order and understand field observations.   | Focused application of existing knowledge, theory and concepts to order and understand field observations.  | Implicit application of existing knowledge, theory and concepts to order and understand field observations.  | Tentative application of existing knowledge, theory and concepts to order and understand field observations.  | Does not meet criteria. |

### 3.3.4.4 Area 4: Conclusions, evaluation and presentation

15 marks – AO3 (strand 2): 5 marks; AO3 (strand 3): 10 marks

| Assessment criteria  | Level 4<br>15–12 marks  | Level 3<br>11–8 marks  | Level 2<br>7–4 marks   | Level 1<br>3–1 marks  | No marks                |
|--|---|--|--|---|-------------------------|
| To show the ability to write up field results clearly and logically, using a range of presentation methods (AO3 strand 3).   | Thorough ability to write up field results clearly and logically, using a range of presentation methods.  | Clear ability to write up field results clearly and logically, using a range of presentation methods.  | Some ability to write up field results clearly and logically, using a range of presentation methods, but with some inconsistency.  | Basic ability to write up field results clearly and logically, using a range of presentation methods.   | Does not meet criteria. |
| To evaluate and reflect on fieldwork investigations, explain how the results relate to the wider context and show an understanding of the ethical dimensions of field research (AO3 strand 2).   | Effective evaluation and reflection on the fieldwork investigation. Complete explanation of how the results relate to the wider context(s). Thorough understanding of the ethical dimensions of field research. | Secure evaluation and reflection on the fieldwork investigation. Precise explanation of how the results relate to the wider context(s). Clear understanding of the ethical dimensions of field research. | Partial evaluation and reflection on the fieldwork investigation. Imprecise explanation of how the results relate to the wider context(s). Some understanding of the ethical dimensions of field research. | Tentative evaluation and reflection on the fieldwork investigation. Generalised explanation of how the results relate to the wider context(s). Limited understanding of the ethical dimensions of field research. | Does not meet criteria. |
| To demonstrate the ability to write a coherent analysis of fieldwork findings in order to answer a specific geographical question and to do this drawing effectively on evidence and theory to make a well-argued case (AO3 strand 3). | Thorough ability to write a coherent analysis of fieldwork findings in order to answer a specific geographical question. Draws effectively on evidence and theory to make a well-argued case.                   | Focused ability to write a coherent analysis of fieldwork findings in order to answer a specific geographical question. Draws explicitly on evidence and theory to make an argued case.                  | Partial ability to write a structured analysis of fieldwork findings in order to answer a specific geographical question. Draws inconsistently on evidence and theory to make a reasoned case.             | Basic ability to write an analysis of fieldwork findings in order to answer a specific geographical question. Draws tentatively on evidence and theory to make an isolated case.                                  | Does not meet criteria. |

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## 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 use and analyse 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
- understanding of the ethical and socio-political implications of collecting, studying and representing geographical data about human communities.

## 3.4.2 Specific skills

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

### 3.4.2.1 Core skills

- Use and annotation of illustrative and visual material: base maps, sketch maps, Ordnance Survey (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 (if applicable).
- 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.



# 4 Scheme of assessment

Find past papers and mark schemes, and specimen papers for new courses, on our website at [aqa.org.uk/pastpapers](http://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                             | 15–20                           | 15–20       | 0           | 30–40                        |
| AO2                             | 14–19                           | 14–19       | 2           | 30–40                        |
| AO3                             | 1–6                             | 1–6         | 18          | 20–30                        |
| 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.

| Component                               | Maximum raw mark | Scaling factor | Maximum scaled mark |
|---|------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Component 1: Physical geography         | 120              | x1             | 120                 |
| Component 2: Human geography            | 120              | x1             | 120                 |
| Component 3: Geographical investigation | 60               | x1             | 60                  |
| Total scaled mark:                      |                  |                | 300                 |



# 5 Non-exam assessment administration

The non-exam assessment (NEA) for this specification is an independent investigation which involves, but is not restricted to, fieldwork.

Visit [aqa.org.uk/7037](http://aqa.org.uk/7037) for detailed information about all aspects of NEA administration.

The head of the school or college is responsible for making sure that NEA is conducted in line with our instructions and Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) instructions.

## 5.1 Supervising and authenticating

To meet Ofqual's qualification and subject criteria students and teachers must complete and sign the *Candidate record form* (CRF).

Teachers must ensure that a CRF is provided with each student's investigation.

The CRF must be retained with the investigation until after the moderation period and the deadline for Enquiries about Results (or until any enquiry is resolved). The CRF may also be subject to inspection by a JCQ Centre Inspector.

Students must complete the independent investigation proposal section of the CRF in the planning stages of the investigation process.

Students must sign the candidate declaration section of the CRF when the investigation is submitted to the teacher for marking to confirm that the work submitted is their own in accordance with the conditions set out in this specification.

All teachers who have marked a student's work must sign the teacher declaration section of the CRF. This is to confirm that the work was conducted under the conditions set out by this specification. Students must have sufficient direct supervision by the teacher to ensure that the work submitted can be confidently authenticated. If students collaborate (where independence is compulsory) and/or are given assistance beyond the parameters indicated in '[Guidance and feedback for students](#)', then you must record details on the CRF and take this into account when marking the work. You must award a mark which reflects the student's unaided achievement. Failure to do so will be considered as malpractice.

Work that cannot be confidently authenticated must not be included in the student's submission.

The CRF is an important means of confirming the authenticity and independence of a student's work. If it is not:

- submitted with a student's investigation
- signed by both the teacher and/or the student
- fully completed

then the work cannot be accepted for assessment.

If the proposal section of a CRF has not been satisfactorily completed, but nevertheless the moderator is confident on the basis of the work itself that the independence and authenticity conditions have been satisfied, the moderator will give details on the feedback form and the situation will be monitored in subsequent years.

## 5.2 Malpractice

Please inform your students of the AQA regulations concerning malpractice. They must not:

- work collaboratively when independence is required
- submit work that is not their own
- lend work to other students
- allow other students access to, or use of, their own independently-sourced source material
- include work copied directly from books, the internet or other sources without acknowledgement
- submit work that is word-processed by a third person without acknowledgement
- include inappropriate, offensive or obscene material.

If malpractice is suspected, we will investigate. If malpractice is found to have taken place a penalty will be given dependent on the circumstances and severity of the malpractice. For full information regarding malpractice, please see JCQ instructions *Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessment*.

If you identify malpractice before the student signs the candidate declaration, you don't need to report it to us. Please deal with it in accordance with your school or college's internal procedures. We expect schools and colleges to treat such cases very seriously.

If you identify malpractice after the student has signed the declaration of authentication, the head of your school or college must submit full details of the case to us at the earliest opportunity. Please complete the form *JCQ/M1*, available from the JCQ website at [jcq.org.uk](http://jcq.org.uk)

You should consult your exams officer about these procedures.

## 5.3 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](http://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](mailto:geography@aqa.org.uk) for details of your adviser.

## 5.4 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.

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## 5.5 Annotation

To meet Ofqual's qualification and subject conditions, you must show clearly how marks have been awarded against the assessment criteria in this specification.

Your comments will help the moderator see, as precisely as possible, where you think the students have met the assessment criteria.

Work can be annotated using either or both of the following methods:

- flagging evidence in the margins or in the text
- summative comments, referencing precise sections in the work.

Annotation must be used, in addition to information on the *Candidate record form* (CRF), to explain how marks were applied in the context of any additional assistance given.

## 5.6 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](https://www.aqa.org.uk/keydates)

## 5.7 Factors affecting individual students

For advice and guidance about arrangements for any of your students, please email us as early as possible at [eos@aqa.org.uk](mailto:eos@aqa.org.uk)

**Occasional absence:** you should be able to accept the occasional absence of students by making sure they have the chance to make up what they have missed. You may organise an alternative session for students who were absent at the time you originally arranged.

**Lost work:** if work is lost you must tell us how and when it was lost and who was responsible, using our special consideration online service at [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](https://www.aqa.org.uk/eaqa)

**Special help:** where students need special help which goes beyond normal learning support, please use the *Candidate record form* (CRF) to tell us so that this help can be taken into account during moderation.

**Students who move schools:** students who move from one school or college to another during the course sometimes need additional help to meet the requirements. How you deal with this depends on when the move takes place. If it happens early in the course, the new school or college should be responsible for the work. If it happens late in the course, it may be possible to arrange for the moderator to assess the work as a student who was 'Educated Elsewhere'.

## 5.8 Keeping students' work

Students' work must be kept under secure conditions from the time that it is marked, with the completed *Candidate record form* (CRF). After the moderation period and the deadline for Enquiries about Results (or once any enquiry is resolved) you may return the work to students.

## 5.9 Moderation

An AQA moderator will check a sample of your students' work. We will let you know which students' work to submit as part of the sample. If you are entering fewer than 21 students it will be the work of all your students. Otherwise it will be the work of a sample of students.

The moderator re-marks the work and compares this with the marks you have provided to check whether any changes are needed to bring the marking in line with our agreed standards. In some cases the moderator will ask you to send in more work.

Any changes to marks will normally keep your rank order but, where major inconsistencies are found, we reserve the right to change the rank order.

### 5.9.1 School and college consortia

If you are in a consortium of schools or colleges with joint teaching and assessment arrangements (where students from different schools and colleges have been taught together but entered through the school or college at which they are on roll), you must let us know by:

- filling in the *Application for Centre Consortium Arrangements for centre-assessed work*, which is available from the JCQ website [jqc.org.uk](http://jqc.org.uk)
- appointing a consortium coordinator who can speak to us on behalf of all schools and colleges in the consortium. If there are different coordinators for different specifications, a copy of the form must be sent in for each specification.

We will allocate the same moderator to all schools and colleges in the consortium and treat the students as a single group for moderation.

All the work must be available at the lead school or college.

## 5.10 After moderation

You will receive a report from your moderator when the results are issued, which will give individual school or college feedback on the appropriateness of the tasks set, adherence to the correct administrative procedures, interpretation of the marking criteria and how students performed in general.

We will give you the final marks when the results are issued.

We will provide a general report on moderation across all schools and colleges that will be published when results are issued.

To meet Ofqual requirements, as well as for awarding, archiving or standardisation purposes, we may need to keep some of your students' work. We will let you know if we need to do this.

# 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](http://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 assessment 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           | 3910              |

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 601/8940/X.

## 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](http://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](http://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](http://aqa.org.uk/eaqa)

For more information and advice about access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration please see [aqa.org.uk/access](http://aqa.org.uk/access) or email [accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk](mailto: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](http://aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre)

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## 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](https://www.aqa.org.uk/privatecandidates)
- email: [privatecandidates@aca.org.uk](mailto:privatecandidates@aca.org.uk)



## Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at [aqa.org.uk/7037](https://aqa.org.uk/7037)

You can talk directly to the geography subject team

E: [geography@aca.org.uk](mailto:geography@aca.org.uk)

T: 01483 477 791