



# Fair access by design

*Guidance for awarding bodies and regulatory authorities on designing inclusive GCSE and GCE qualifications*

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# Briefing

## Purpose and use

1. This document is designed for the GC(S)E awarding bodies and regulatory authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It may also be of interest to those responsible for other kinds of qualifications, including the Scottish Qualifications Authority. As an awarding body may use some or all of this guidance within its own documentation, individuals working for an awarding body should ensure that they use that awarding body's documentation.
2. The document does not have statutory status. Rather, it provides practical guidance on how examinations can be designed to give all candidates the fairest possible opportunities to show their subject attainments. Examinations that provide these opportunities effectively are said to offer 'fair access'.
3. The regulators are responsible for writing qualifications' criteria that preserve the rigour of qualifications whilst making these qualifications as accessible as possible. Awarding bodies must design their qualifications to meet the requirements of the regulatory criteria. In any review of qualifications' criteria, the regulators will check the likely impact of all competence standards on disabled candidates. Where a competence standard could have an adverse impact, the regulators will review whether that standard is absolutely necessary or whether the purpose for which the standard is applied could be met in a way that does not adversely affect disabled people. Where a competence standard is deemed essential, even though it could impact adversely on some disabled people, the justification for this decision will be made explicit.
4. The statutory regulation of external qualifications supports equal opportunities legislation in the interests of fair access. Specifically, the criteria for accreditation require awarding bodies to consider the needs of all potential candidates when developing specifications, assessment arrangements and associated materials. Qualifications must be designed to 'minimise any later need to make reasonable adjustments for candidates who have particular requirements'.
5. This document does not give guidance on making adjustments. Rather its focus is on designing qualifications that are as accessible as possible. Adjustments will continue to be available where they are needed. For example, some visually-impaired candidates will require Braille or enlarged-print versions of question papers. Appendix A provides examples of the access arrangements that are available and the candidates who require these arrangements. However, thoughtful design can reduce the extent to which such provision is required.
6. This document offers a resource to reinforce good practice and support continuing professional development. Individuals can use the material to

refine their own skills. However, the resource is likely to be most effective when integrated within an organisation's wider training and development programmes. For example:

- the material, including examples, could be customised, supplemented and updated as required for use as free-standing guidance
  - relevant sections could be cut and pasted into existing documentation
  - extracts could be used to support focused development sessions or 'surgeries'. The final checklist might be used in this way, for example.
7. Regular review of the regulatory requirements and awarding bodies' house styles and printing arrangements will help to ensure that efforts to apply the principles of fair access have maximum impact.

## **Expectations and challenges**

8. Awarding bodies must maintain examination standards. Examinations in all subjects – general and applied – must also be as fair and valid as possible for all groups of candidates.
9. In examinations aimed at a wide cohort – like GCSE and GCE – examiners aim to address the full range of candidate attainment, need and background while holding to established standards. To promote equal opportunities, examinations must accordingly:
- be free from gender, ethnic or other discrimination and stereotyping
  - use content, resources and assessment materials that recognise the achievements and contributions of different groups
  - permit alternative learning and teaching approaches
  - provide an appropriate balance of assessment methods.
10. Plain language and clear presentation in specifications and assessment materials are in the interest of every candidate. They promote fair access for all groups, including those with hearing, visual or learning difficulties. They also help where alternative means of communication – including technology – permit more candidates to show their knowledge and skills.
11. Fine balances have to be struck to ensure that measures that improve access for some groups do not create barriers for others – for example, when the proportions of verbal to visual stimuli are adjusted. The provision of genuinely inclusive examinations remains a challenge.

12. Employers, university admissions staff, parents and those who manage the education system use examination results to inform their work. They need to be confident that the awards reflect appropriate and consistent standards fairly applied. The regulatory authorities must satisfy themselves and the wider world that this is so. This will help to ensure that the currency of qualifications gained by all candidates is fully recognised.

## **Acknowledgements**

13. Joint agreements between awarding bodies help to promote fairness and consistency across examinations provision. Individual awarding bodies and specialist groups have also developed support materials, the best of which have helped to shape this document. We gratefully acknowledge the help of the project steering group and those who gave their time and expertise through consultation to support the development.

## **Design**

### **Serving all candidates**

14. Throughout this document, the phrase 'all groups' includes candidates:
  - at all levels of attainment within the specified standards of award
  - of both sexes and different socio-economic backgrounds
  - from different ethnic, cultural and religious communities
  - with physical and sensory disabilities
  - with difficulties in aspects of communication, language and literacy
  - with emotional, behavioural and related access difficulties.
15. Fair access for all groups demands clear specifications supported by well-designed assessment instruments, source materials and mark-schemes. The pointers that follow are consistent with the regulatory criteria, but focus on the next level of quality assurance. They aim to help examiners avoid bias and barriers to the recognition of attainment.
16. Each of the sections that follows deals with a separate aspect of the examining process. Each includes boxed examples and comments. Some of these refer to particular subjects or levels, though each has been selected to illustrate a general principle. A checklist at the end of the document draws the main principles together in summary form, to

assist awarding bodies as they develop specifications, assessment materials and mark schemes. The checklist may also assist regulators in any detailed checking of awarding body materials.

### Specifications: principles

17. Specifications should be uncluttered and clear for teachers and candidates. Examiners must be clear about what they plan to assess. Assessment objectives must link logically to content. Assessment schemes should use a varied but coherent combination of techniques.
18. All candidates deserve freedom from ambiguity and hidden expectations. Care is needed to avoid creating barriers for particular groups.
19. Working within the regulatory criteria (see paragraph 3), designers should keep fair access in mind for each area of subject matter and each part of the assessment scheme. Where a barrier cannot be eliminated by good design, the awarding body should clarify the justification for that in the specification. Also the awarding body should determine whether the associated material or assessment component is required by regulations or otherwise deemed essential to the subject. Otherwise, awarding bodies may seek guidance from the regulators on such matters – and where the criteria allow – such materials could be made optional or replaced.

#### Example

A Media Studies qualification might require some film or television to be included. An alternate unit on Sound could, however, offer a worthwhile alternative for many, including vision-impaired candidates.

### Specifications: design points

20. The following points address aspects of specification design. Each aspect (identified below in bold typeface) features in the regulatory authorities' criteria for accreditation.
  - i. Ensure, as far as possible, that **titles** used for an overall qualification, each of its mandatory units and across the range of its optional units denote learning that is relevant to all.

### Comment

Evidence suggests that gender stereotyping persists in some curriculum areas. Some applied subjects – Manufacturing, Engineering and Health and Social Care, for example – are familiar cases in point.

Narrow assumptions about the experiences offered by a subject can be countered to some extent by careful balancing and presentation of the titles and range of its units. These matters need to be considered when specifications are designed and qualifications are marketed.

The range and balance of optional units could also be reviewed. For example, a unit on Technology in Hospitals might complement the existing Vehicle Technology option in VCE Engineering.

- ii. Limit recommended **prior knowledge and experience** to essentials.

### Comment

In some subjects, including modern languages, mathematics and the sciences, concepts are considered to build successively on more basic knowledge and understandings.

However, fair access can be diminished if too fixed a view is taken of the sequence of learning.

- iii. Check that **mandatory subject material** is essential to the field of study. Specify it in terms designed to make the specification as a whole relevant and attractive to all groups.

### Example

A specification that requires the demonstration of 'public speaking' skills would exclude many candidates. A more widely-defined requirement to show 'presentation' skills would permit a range of valid alternatives. This would extend access and, arguably, make the specification more attractive to all groups of candidates.

- iv. Ensure that any optional material is **either** equally accessible to all groups **or** matched by other equally-demanding options that extend access.

### Example

A GCE Geology specification might require candidates to undertake experimental work on materials collected from the field. Candidates with certain physical disabilities could find it difficult to collect materials, while being entirely capable of conducting the experiments.

The specification could indicate that first-hand collection of the material is not expected. Alternatively, an option involving physical activity in the field might be balanced, for example, by equally challenging work on the planning of an expedition or the evaluation of field-derived data.

- v. Identify **opportunities for developing wider understandings** that incorporate experiences across candidate groups.

### Examples

The accreditation criteria identify spiritual, moral, ethical, social, legislative, economic and cultural issues as examples of the wider understandings that a specification might encourage. They refer, too, to matters such as health and safety, sustainable development and international agreements.

Most, if not all, subjects offer scope to extend candidates' understanding in several of these areas. Business, geography and physics provide good and rather different illustrations. There are significant social and ethical implications, for example, in company 'downsizing', international fair trade agreements and nuclear energy programmes.

Specifications that take advantage of these opportunities can motivate groups of candidates who might otherwise find it difficult to see the relevance of a subject to their lives.

- vi. Construct **assessment objectives** and **a scheme of assessment** that focus sharply on the required knowledge, understanding and skills and avoid introducing unnecessary hurdles.

### Comment

Examiners and staff in the awarding bodies and regulatory authorities use 'assessment grids' as analytical tools. Grids of this kind have been used, for example, to chart systematically the coverage of assessment objectives and content against the components, questions and question parts of an examination. A similar grid could be used to analyse the accessibility of each component of the examination for candidates with disabilities.



- vii. Check that, where appropriate, **assessment components** allow a variety of response modes. Check, too, that where a particular mode of response would be inappropriate, alternative assessment methods are included wherever possible.

### **Example**

A GCE Geography specification includes coursework assessment of research skills regarded as essential to the subject. The component requires candidates to give a short talk. The talk is assessed for its lucidity, relevance and evidence that the required skills have been deployed.

Some candidates have disabilities that make it difficult or impossible for them to present their subject attainments orally. The assessment component could be modified to allow a presentation to be made in various ways, all of which would permit assessment against the criteria specified.

### **Question papers: principles**

21. Question papers must cover required subject content to the expected overall standard without bias or stereotype. Each examination series will generate new examples of successful practice and, sometimes, cautionary tales. The principles that follow also apply in general terms to other kinds of assessment materials.
22. Awarding bodies instruct examiners to tell candidates unambiguously and economically what information they require and how that information should be presented. If candidates do not understand what is required they will, in effect, answer the wrong question. Their subject attainment may remain unrecognised.
23. The language and syntax of questions and rubric must therefore be easy to understand. Papers must be 'readable'. Even complex concepts and instructions can be communicated in simple language without compromising standards.
24. Candidates have to read, understand and respond appropriately to written materials under examination conditions. Papers must therefore be constructed and presented clearly. Unhelpful distraction can arise, for example, from poor diagrams, clumsy typography and inadequate labelling.
25. Awarding bodies commission language experts and specialists in sight and hearing impairment to modify prepared assessment materials to meet particular needs. Involving such professionals alongside subject

experts at an early stage in the development process can help to reduce the need for later adjustments.

## **Question papers: design points**

### **Diversity amongst candidates**

26. The following points and examples illustrate how access can be increased when examiners recognise the full diversity of the candidate population.
- i. Ensure that the people represented in assessment materials reflect the diversity of society.
  - ii. Avoid narrow, negative or stereotypical representations of different groups. Adopt a balanced approach to roles, activities and appearances. Ensure that the life-styles, languages and developmental activities of peoples across the world are presented accurately and with respect.

#### **Comment**

Unless 'balance' is itself the focus of assessment, portrayals should be balanced and realistic in relation to domestic and workplace roles; artistic, scientific and technological skills; intellectual and practical competences; sports and social activities; political and community leadership. Examples that reinforce known inequities should be treated with great care.

The contributions of both sexes and different cultural groups to the historical record and shaping of society in the UK and overseas should feature accurately and equitably in examination papers.

### Examples

- Over-use of particular word sequences (like ‘men and women’) and narrow cultural referencing (Eurocentric text, for example) can damage fair access.
- The following sentence is clearly unacceptable:

The local doctor may be fortunate: he retains much of the social status that other professionals have lost . . .

The evident sex-bias can be avoided by the use of the plural or alternative structures, such as:

The local doctor may be fortunate in retaining much of the social status that other professionals have lost.

- iii. Use contexts for questions that reflect the experience of all groups of candidates in a balanced way.

### Examples

- Practices accepted by some groups can offend others. Gambling ‘odds’, for example, might seem to offer a real-life context for mathematics problems, but candidates with Islamic or certain other religious beliefs would find such references distasteful.
- Certain contexts can be emotionally disturbing to candidates with related experiences. Personal traumas including serious illness, bereavement, violence, house-fires and road accidents are not uncommon. Where the subject demands such references, examiners should limit the use of affective language.
- Some illustrations can cause offence to particular groups of candidates. Images of clothing styles and food items require particular sensitivity.
- The use of ‘real world’ contexts often makes helpful connections for candidates. However, the context must not be allowed to dominate. If candidates lose subject focus, they can be tempted to respond from general knowledge in ways that are tangential to the actual question. Perceptions of the ‘real world’ also vary according to candidates’ experiences, beliefs and circumstances.

- iv. Avoid biased, derogatory and racist language, even in contexts intended to be critical of the usage.

## Readability of questions

27. The following points deal with aspects of readability. Each is worth considering in its own right, but it is equally important to check the overall impact of adjustments made separately. Changes that make sense on their own sometimes appear clumsy in combination.

- i. Use simple sentence structures in questions. Wherever possible, use a logical conceptual flow (subject, verb, object) to minimise unnecessary burdens on memory and interpretation. Avoid subordinate clauses unless their usage is being assessed: they often disrupt candidates' absorption of information.

### Example

The following sentence is short, but hard to disentangle:

What kind of cleaning agent will remove the hard-water stains left by a dripping tap on a wash-basin?

The following redraft is simpler. It follows a logical pictorial flow.

A dripping tap leaves hard-water stains on a wash-basin. What kind of cleaning agent will remove them?

### Example

The following GCSE Science question is unnecessarily complex:

If a student were provided with three painted metal rods, one of which was known to be made from brass, one from magnetised steel and one from non-magnetised steel, describe how, without scratching the paint, the student could identify each of the rods.

This redraft presents the same information more simply:

A student has three painted metal rods. One is made from brass, one from magnetised steel and one from non-magnetised steel. Describe how the student could find out which rod is which, without scratching the paint.

- ii. Avoid dense text, superfluous words, clumsy phrases, unnecessary metaphors and redundant information.

### **Example**

The instruction below manages to incorporate a number of superfluous words within some clumsy phrases:

These observations, together with the deductions that you can make from them, must be transposed for the record into the table that is provided for you on the opposite page.

It would be sufficient to write:

Record your observations and deductions in the table on the opposite page.

### **Comment**

Elaborate phrases may seem to add gravitas. In practice, they often introduce unnecessary complexity.

### **Examples**

- The phrase 'in conjunction with' says no more than the word 'with'.
- The following question is clumsily expressed:

Given that a stone takes 1.8s to fall through 16m, how long does it take to fall through 25m?

This plainer version is more elegant and easier to grasp.

A stone takes 1.8s to fall through 16m. How long does it take to fall through 25m?

**Comment**

Metaphors can mislead. Some groups of candidates may take them literally and misunderstand the question. Avoid them unless they are the focus of the assessment.

**Example**

Instead of:

Why did the government frown on the regime?

write:

Why did the government object to the regime?

- iii. If long sentences are unavoidable, make them as straightforward as possible. They should be simple in structure and accurately punctuated.

**Example**

The sentence below is long, but relatively easy to read because of its construction. It is nevertheless a matter of judgement as to whether it would be better to divide the sentence, perhaps after the word 'hills'.

The rebels came down from their camps in the hills, bringing with them their families, strong tents, food supplies and everything else needed for the long winter.

- iv. Divide even relatively short sentences if they contain much condensed information.

**Example**

The following question contains a sentence that is short but dense:

Four-fifths of a Year 11 class of 35 pupils are going on a field trip. How many pupils will be on the trip?

It is easier to grasp what is required if the first sentence is divided:

A Year 11 class has 35 pupils. Four-fifths of them are going on a field trip. How many pupils will be on the trip?

- v. Avoid the passive wherever possible: it can make sentences unnecessarily impersonal and complex.

**Example**

A GCSE Science examination contained the following task:

Identify two faults that have been made in the design of the experiment shown, describing in each case how the fault can be corrected.

Use of the active voice, as follows, gives candidates a more direct lead.

Identify two faults in the design of this experiment.  
Describe how to correct each fault.

- vi. Avoid negative ('not') or partly negative ('only') expressions wherever possible. If a negative is essential to the question, put it in bold typeface to ensure that candidates notice it.
- vii. Avoid embedding more than one question in a single sentence.

**Example**

A question on environmental issues asked candidates to:

Name one everyday product that can be recycled, identifying the main material that can be recovered from it.

The text contains two questions. Separating them improves clarity.

- a) Name one everyday product that can be recycled.
- b) Identify the main material that can be recovered from the product.

- viii. Separate questions from any associated statements.

### **Example**

A GCE Media Studies paper contained the following question:

Referring in particular to differences between traditional local weekly newspapers and their newer free competitors, explain how the balances between advertising revenue, costs and cover price operate within the newspaper industry.

The question can be made simpler and fairer by a little reorganisation:

Explain the balances between advertising revenue, cost and cover price within the newspaper industry. In your answer, refer to differences between traditional local weekly newspapers and their newer free competitors.

### **Example**

A GCE Social Science paper contained the following question:

What reasons can you suggest for the facts that, of children placed in the lowest teaching set for a subject, 5 per cent were from professional backgrounds and 32 per cent were from unskilled backgrounds?

The question is easier to pick out if it is separated from the background material, as follows:

In the lowest teaching set for a subject, 5 per cent of children were from professional backgrounds and 32 per cent were from unskilled backgrounds. Suggest reasons for these facts.

- ix. Awarding bodies instruct examiners to avoid questions in which failure to answer an earlier part makes it impossible to answer later parts successfully, unless the linkage is the focus of assessment. Such 'consequential' errors penalise the candidate repeatedly for the same shortcoming. This compounds any residual access problems.
- x. Weigh the choice of vocabulary as suitable to the level of the examination and the context.



### **Examples**

For GCSE Foundation Tier papers:

- 'use' rather than 'utilise'
- 'find' rather than 'locate'
- 'make' rather than 'produce'.

xi. Use verbs rather than the related abstract nouns.

### **Examples**

- 'He performed the song perfectly' rather than 'His performance of the song was perfect'.
- 'How can you protect steel from rust?' rather than 'What steps can you take to ensure the protection of steel from rust?'

xii. Avoid words with multiple meanings, unless they are the focus of the assessment. Unless the context leaves no room for uncertainty, candidates can make different, valid decisions as to what is meant.

### **Examples**

- 'Settlement' can mean 'village', 'agreement' or 'payment'.
- 'Volume' can mean 'book', 'loudness' or 'amount of space'.
- 'Revolution' can mean 'uprising' or 'rotation'.

## Examples

The words in bold print introduce unhelpful ambiguities to the following questions.

- The **last thing** you should do when serving a soufflé is leave it to settle. Explain why this is so.
- Some walkers see whistling as **a sound way** to keep cheerful on a lonely path. Suggest one reason why this practice may work.
- The decorator's equipment looked modern enough, but his **overall** appearance was shabby. Discuss how the public image of a company can be affected by the way its employees look.

xiii. Use command words consistently and correctly. Avoid words that prompt inadequate, single-word answers. Use different command words to elicit different kinds of responses, not purely for the sake of variety. A glossary containing some common command words appears at the end of this booklet.

28. Where a question paper or task is to be offered through the medium of Welsh, Irish or Gaelic, the draft should be checked both by a language specialist and a subject expert. Papers and tasks must be equally accessible in each language used.

## Comment

The process of translation can often help to clarify the meaning of questions. For example, it may uncover an ambiguity in the original text. Where this happens, it may be helpful to modify the question(s) in both languages.

## Legibility of question papers (presentation, layout and rubrics)

29. Each of the following points deals with an aspect of legibility. The visual content and impact of a question paper should support its purpose. Cluttered presentation, like dense text, can impede effective communication.
- i. Adopt a clear typeface of sufficient size.

## Examples

- Frequently, a 12-point font size is used in examination papers (as in this booklet). It is widely – if not universally – accessible.
- The Arial typeface (again, used throughout this booklet) is widely regarded as legible.
- Times New Roman and other typefaces have their merits but may be less easy to read in 12-point. Compare this sentence with the two above.
- Where the context permits, opportunities to use a larger font such as 14-point could be considered.
- For some purposes, an 18-point font could be suitable.
- If paper larger than A4 would be necessary as a result of using a large font, the benefits must be balanced against the fact that A3 and larger sizes can be unwieldy and difficult to scan.

- ii. Make consistent and uncluttered use of bold and italic typefaces, underlining, boxes and indentation as reading cues.

## Example

Many questions include source material. For such material to be accessible to candidates, it must be laid out clearly. The following part of a history question shows one way of achieving clarity.

**SOURCE A** lists some important changes in British coalmining.

### **SOURCE A**

**1842** Underground work by women and children under ten years of age outlawed.

**1850** Safety rules and government inspectors introduced.

**1872** Daily safety inspections for all coalmines required.

- iii. Use headings, sub-headings, bullet points and numbers to ensure questions are well structured and easily managed. Avoid long lines of text closely packed together.
- iv. Use simple rubrics in plain and correct English to make the purpose of the task clear. Avoid superfluous material.

**Example**

A GCE History paper rubric contained the statement: 'In addition to this paper, a 12-page Answer Book is required'.

The information is strictly for the invigilator rather than the candidate.

If the examiners believe that candidates need the information, they could use a simpler statement such as 'Check that you have a 12-page Answer Book'.

- v. Present diagrams, pictures and photographs in familiar form, unless interpretation of novel formats is a focus of assessment. Use sharp contrast, clear definition and sufficient size to allow important information to be identified comfortably.
- vi. Avoid handwritten material unless it is a requirement of the assessment. If such material is essential, consider using a print typeface that simulates handwriting.
- vii. Avoid superfluous information in diagrams, pictures and photographs. Where appropriate, label significant features using keys rather than lines and arrows.
- viii. Present graphs with as little background 'noise' as possible. This will help to avoid visual confusion between structural incidentals (such as grids) and significant information.
- ix. Present tables in clearly separated columns. Use a typeface of sufficient size and avoid an excess of data.
- x. Position the text of a question and any supporting material closely together – wherever possible on the same side or double spread. This will help candidates to link related materials efficiently.
- xi. Box labels and titles against pale backgrounds. Where possible, match the typeface and the font size to those in associated material.
- xii. Provide enough space for candidates to enter information between question parts or on diagrams, where that is required.

xiii. Avoid the use of unnecessary material in the form of diagrams, pictures and photographs as many cannot be converted into Braille and may have to be described in words in the Braille version.

xiv. Consider how artwork will appear in enlarged versions of the question.

**Comment**

The design work of examiners is guided by their awarding body's house style and printing arrangements. These arrangements can encourage or constrain fair access. They should be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain compatible with the principles of good design.

The examples that follow illustrate strengths and weaknesses.

## Example

This version of a cover page is cluttered, clumsy and badly organised. The background is too dark for comfortable reading.

### GCSE Geography Syllabus A (Reference 675Geo/A) Paper 2 Foundation Tier: Paper Reference 2003/675/1a

Monday 14 June 2003 from 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm. (Duration two hours).

*The paper should be answered in black or blue ink on the answer sheet that you should have been provided with.*

#### Instructions and information you might need during the examination

Rough working should be done in the Answer Book, with any work that is not intended for marking being crossed out.

Marks are shown for each question in brackets with a total of 95 and 5 maximum for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Question 1 has some informational source material that can be found on pages 5 and 6 (which are perforated) and can be torn out and used with the question.

On the answer sheet you should find spaces for candidate name and the paper number to be filled in.

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### GCSE GEOGRAPHY SYLLABUS A, PAPER 2 Foundation Tier: Paper Reference 2003/675/1a

**Monday 14 June 2003: 1.30pm to 3.30pm  
You have two hours.**

#### Instructions

- Use blue or black ink.
- Write your name and the paper number on the answer book in the spaces provided.
- Information sources for Question 1 are printed on pages 5 and 6. The pages are perforated. **Tear them out now and use them to help you with your answer.**
- Do all rough work in the answer book. **Cross out work that you do not want marked.**

#### Information

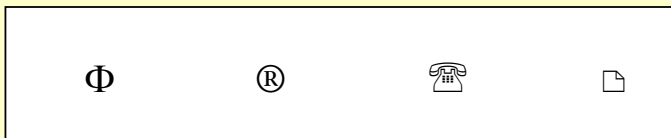
- The maximum mark for the paper is 95. The marks for each question are shown in brackets.
- You can earn up to 5 extra marks for good spelling, punctuation and grammar.

This version of the cover page is less cluttered and more logically organised. It has better contrast and the essential information is easier to find and understand.

**Example**

This version of the question contains all the necessary information. However, the signs are not labelled clearly and the three parts of the question are intertwined. The mark allocation is not broken down.

Two of the symbols shown below have one line of symmetry and one has rotational symmetry:



Indicate which of the symbols have one line of symmetry and which has rotational symmetry, specifying the order of the rotational symmetry.

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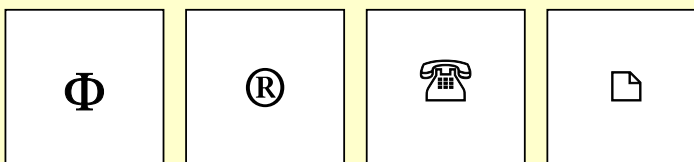
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(4 marks)

In this version of the question, the signs are given specific labels. They are also rather larger.

The parts of the question are separated out and the mark allocation to each is indicated.

Here are **four** symbols. Each is labelled with a letter



**A**

**B**

**C**

**D**

**(a) Two** of the symbols have only one line of symmetry.

Write down the letters of these two symbols:  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (2 marks)

**(b) One** of the symbols has rotational symmetry.

(i) Write down the letter of this symbol:  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)

(ii) Write down the order of rotational symmetry:  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)

**Example**

Study the data in the table and then answer the questions that follow.

Number of racial incidents reported to selected police forces in England and Wales are set out in Table 1 below. (Source: adapted from Alan Travis, Guardian, 12 April 1996).

Table 1			
Police Force	Date covered		
	1993-4	1994-5	% change
Numbers			
<i>England</i>			
Manchester	658	637	- 3%
London (Met)	5124	5480	+7%
Newcastle	405	508	+25%
West Midlands	487	375	-23%
<i>Wales</i>			
South Wales	400	517	+29%

The table used in the question is crowded and hard to interpret. It gets in the way of the main purpose of the task, which is to test the candidates' skills of interpretation.

Study the data in the table carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

Number of racial incidents reported to selected police forces in England and Wales.

<b>Police Force</b>	<b>1993-4</b>	<b>1994-5</b>	<b>% change</b>
Manchester	658	637	- 3%
London (Met)	5124	5480	+ 7%
Newcastle	405	508	+25%
South Wales	400	517	+29%
West Midlands	487	375	- 23%

Source:  
adapted from Alan Travis, Guardian, 12 April 1996.

The table is simpler and better presented. It is easier for all candidates to find the relevant data, but the key task of interpretation requires the same level of subject understanding.



## Practical and oral assessment

30. In many subjects, particular aspects of knowledge and skill are best demonstrated orally or through practical expression.

### Comment

Practical attributes are central to dance, music, art, design, scientific experimentation, information technology and fieldwork of various kinds. They are also at the heart of many applied subjects, including engineering, construction and health and social care.

Oral examination makes a key contribution to languages, drama and subjects with a strong customer interface, like leisure and tourism and business.

Subjects of this kind extend the range of skills and understandings to which GCSE and GCE recognition can legitimately be given.

31. Practical and oral assessments bring both advantages and challenges. All candidates – including those to whom written text presents barriers – have additional ways to demonstrate their attainment. On the other hand, no mode of performance is equally accessible to all. For example, assessment methods that demand acute hearing or physical dexterity create their own difficulties for certain groups.
32. Accordingly, the use of non-textual components in an assessment scheme must be carefully thought through. The key to fair examining remains good design incorporating a balanced approach. The following points are not new, but they have particular relevance in this context.
- i. Be clear about what is to be assessed and construct an assessment scheme that avoids unnecessary concentration on a particular kind of task or mode of presentation.

### Example

A practical or oral element may, in some circumstances, be necessary. Candidates might, for example, be required to respond to an item of music or speech. Tasks of this kind can extend fair access to candidates whose perceptive strengths lie in areas other than the written word.

- ii. Check that, where valid, each assessment component allows a variety of response modes. Where a particular mode of response is inappropriate, alternative assessment methods should be included wherever possible.

### **Examples**

In Leisure and Tourism, Health and Social Care and other work-related subjects, candidates may be expected to demonstrate understanding and skills in the field of customer care. One aspect of this might be the provision of answers to customers' queries.

It would be possible to frame tasks narrowly, perhaps by asking candidates to design or attend to a telephone helpline. However, relevant understanding and skills could be demonstrated in a variety of other ways – for instance, responses to enquiries could be provided in the form of letters, e-mails or the design of a 'frequently asked questions' page on a website.

- iii. Transfer the principles of 'legibility' to tasks set in pictorial, aural, signed or electronic form. Plain, consistent and uncluttered communication is the key, whichever mode of presentation is chosen.

### **Mark schemes: principles**

33. Question papers and other examination tasks designed to maximise fair access should sit alongside mark schemes that are fit for the same purpose. Schemes that are readable, legible and valid will support both good marking and equal opportunities.
34. Mark schemes must be designed to ensure consistent interpretation and application of the marking points by all examiners. Teachers and candidates increasingly have access to scripts and the associated mark schemes. They have a proper expectation that mark schemes will show clearly and unequivocally where marks are to be earned.
35. GC(S)E awarding bodies must train subject specialists to prepare and use high-quality mark schemes. As part of the development process, they must ensure that each mark scheme is evaluated by experts who have had no previous involvement with the materials. Wherever possible, language and equal opportunities experience should be incorporated alongside subject expertise in the process. Key reference points will be the assessment requirements in the specification, the principles set out in this document and (where they exist) tasks set in previous years.
36. GCSE and GCE examinations are designed to reward 'positive achievement'. They should discriminate between candidates purely on grounds of demonstrable subject performance. Effective mark schemes help examiners to ensure that demonstrations of required knowledge, understanding and skills receive fair reward. The degree of flexibility of a scheme will reflect the nature

of the subject and attributes under examination. Awarding bodies amend mark schemes during standardisation to ensure that equally valid responses presented in different forms earn the same amount of credit.

37. Mark schemes should be equally sensitive to the diverse ways in which candidates may demonstrate what they know, understand and can do. Some types of task present particular challenges. Synoptic questions, for example, need to take account of the many legitimate directions in which candidates may approach a task.

**Comment**

A synoptic question in GCE Politics, for example, may ask candidates to identify patterns in social behaviour from their knowledge of the way that outstanding individuals and groups contributed to national events in different historical periods.

Candidates may choose to give a chronological overview of a series of events and the role of the principal participants before seeking to identify patterns. They may prefer to present a deeper analysis of a set of contemporaneous contributions and then pick out similar or contrasting behaviour from other periods. There are other acceptable approaches. The mark scheme must be sufficiently open to accommodate alternative approaches and sufficiently precise to ensure that the relevant skills are rewarded.

38. Some multi-part questions may explicitly be designed to test a sequence of logical thought. Generally, though, mark schemes should not permit a failure on one part of a question to make later marks harder to earn. Question paper and mark scheme must be considered together in order to avoid such 'consequential' errors. The process also helps to isolate any residual access problems and limit their impact.
39. Market research can guide the development of any product. Feedback from actual and prospective customers is relatively easy to gather for specifications. Live question papers and mark schemes, however, raise the issue of security. Where item banking is appropriate, pre-tests using control groups can inform the development of accessible materials. In other cases, post hoc reviews of questions and mark schemes can help examiners to identify access problems and establish how best to avoid them for the future.
40. The emergence of electronic marking systems raises both opportunities and challenges. The point is picked up in the later section on the use of technology.

## Mark schemes: design points

41. Each of the following points considers an aspect of the design of mark schemes. Good design helps to ensure that candidates who possess the required knowledge, skills and understanding receive full recognition for their subject attainments.
  - i. Ensure that the distinctive purposes of each assessment component are fully reflected in the associated mark scheme.
  - ii. Check that the mark scheme permits recognition of a variety of responses. Check, too, that where a particular response mode is inappropriate, mark schemes are sufficiently adaptable to match alternative assessment methods.
  - iii. Use plain, unambiguous language and clear presentation. Aim to make mark schemes as readable and legible as the tasks to which they relate. There will then be less risk of introducing unintended ambiguity or unnecessary complexity.
  - iv. Ensure that marks are awarded for each task in a manner that fully and consistently reflects the agreed interpretation of command words.

### Example

When an examination question asks candidates to **describe** something, the expectation is that they should set out the characteristics of the item, attribute or event that is the subject of the question.

The mark scheme should reward precisely the kind of behaviour that candidates have been asked to demonstrate. If, in this case, marks are in practice reserved for an explanation, an analysis or a comparison, the contract between examiner and candidate has been broken.

## Coursework: principles

42. In some subjects – drama and physical education, for example – coursework assessment may focus on practical performance. In such subjects, coursework validly extends opportunity by permitting practical skills to be measured without the time constraints associated with examination papers. Similarly, history and social science are amongst the subjects where coursework permits research skills to be demonstrated under reasonably natural conditions and rewarded appropriately.
43. In many other subjects, coursework can make an assessment scheme more adaptable. The relevant assessment objectives may be less well addressed through timed, written questions requiring a written response. Whether or not

this is so, the relatively flexible assessment conditions for coursework offer additional scope for eliciting and recognising understanding and skill.

44. The distinctive feature of coursework is the element of devolution to schools and colleges. This offers scope for centres to promote fair access for individuals and groups of candidates. The degree of flexibility must of course be controlled in the interest of fairness for all. Centres must ensure that they design tasks that meet the requirements within the specification. The regulatory authorities will keep the ground-rules under review as practice evolves.
45. Whatever its role, a coursework component must match the standards of quality and fairness expected in other aspects of the examination. Where tasks are generated locally, therefore, awarding bodies and moderators need to guide schools, colleges and individual teachers in the principles of good design.
46. Coursework assessors are frequently teachers with full timetables. Some will not have the same experience of formal assessment as those involved in marking external question papers. Others will not have been so exposed to specialised training in assessment techniques. Specifications should therefore be written in terms that make practical sense to this wider audience. This, in turn, will help centres to plan courses that extend rather than limit opportunity and attainment.
47. Clear presentation, language and expectations are as important for coursework tasks as for examination papers. High professional standards are necessary to maintain effective communication in such a devolved system of examination. This is especially critical where candidates are required to build a portfolio of work for assessment over an extended period of time.

### **Coursework: design points**

48. Each of the following points considers an aspect of the design of coursework tasks that offer fair access. Many of the principles considered in earlier sections of the booklet are equally relevant here.
  - i. Ensure that the purpose of each coursework task is clear. Readability and legibility are as important for coursework as they are for examination papers.
  - ii. Design tasks that address assessment objectives precisely, but without unnecessary prescription. Tasks should permit valid alternative modes of information gathering and response.

**Example**

An ability to use equipment and materials may be central to the subject. If so, examiners need to identify the essential skills and avoid situations in which difficulties with incidental manipulations could stop candidates from showing what they can do in the subject.

However, a requirement to manipulate specific instruments in a practical science examination may narrow opportunity. Where the focus of assessment is actually a science concept or problem-solving skill, such a requirement should be avoided.

**Example**

A Business coursework project asked candidates to:

Sample the opinions of employees about a formal training programme. Evaluate their comments and report to the employer on the programme's success.

The wording of the task meant students with hearing or communication difficulties could gather the required information. Candidates could complete the task validly using a written questionnaire, a computer programme, signing or an interpreter. Further, they could 'report to the employer' using various means of communication without compromising the validity or challenge of the task.

- iii. Use coursework to extend the reach of assessment schemes. Exploit the scope offered to accommodate candidates' diverse circumstances. Coursework can provide scope for candidates to demonstrate higher skills and have valid attainments recognised.

**Example**

A GCSE History coursework task was unnecessarily specific with regard to the form of product required. It asked candidates to:

Write an account contrasting aspects of working life in Victorian Britain with working life today.

The question was intended to extend access by permitting the accounts to be presented in alternative forms. However, it would be even more inclusive (and simpler) if the task were to begin:

Contrast aspects of working life in Victorian Britain with working life today. Your account can be written or word-processed.

- iv. Do not require assessments to be made within group settings unless the interpersonal competences needed are essential to the subject.

**Example**

A candidate with expressive language difficulties struggled with his GCSE Applied ICT coursework, because an element of group working was included in the assessment scheme. He found it hard to function effectively under these circumstances, though his subject knowledge and skills were considerable.

The candidate had capabilities that would have been marketable, since IT-based jobs offer many opportunities for independent working. The particular expectations of the assessment scheme, however, prevented him from gaining a GCSE qualification.

If the demonstration of group-interactive skills is not essential to the subject, the specification has narrowed access without justification.

- v. Design coursework schemes that recognise the practical constraints under which most schools and colleges operate.

**Comment**

Coursework schemes that demand unusual and expensive equipment, highly specialised environments or protracted time commitments would not normally be appropriate in GCE and GCSE examinations.

## Assessment criteria

49. Coursework marks are allocated when candidates' work is judged to meet specified assessment criteria. The criteria should focus on subject capabilities rather than particular modes of demonstration. The points made above with regard to mark schemes are broadly applicable to the design of assessment criteria that support fair access.
50. A specification may offer coursework as an alternative to an external component. Where this is so, the coursework tasks and associated assessment criteria must present a level of demand comparable to that of the external option. The opportunity should be taken, nevertheless, to extend fair access by providing additional ways for candidates to demonstrate the same level of subject attainment.

### Comment

An example in the previous section shows how to improve access to a task in a Business Studies examination. The care taken in designing this task would be wasted if the mark scheme were not equally sensitive.

For example, if marks are allocated for candidates 'talking' to employees to gather the required information, some candidates will be prevented from showing their subject understanding.

Similarly, if marks are allocated for a 'written' report, candidates who are perfectly capable of presenting valid evidence through alternative methods of communication will be unfairly penalised.

The assessment criteria must reward specified subject understandings rather than particular kinds of transcription skills.

## Stimulus and source materials: principles

51. Stimulus and source materials are often used to support examination papers or coursework tasks. The materials may include pictures, maps, photographs, film, sound archive, text, diagrams, charts, graphs and other forms of reference information. They may be in hard copy or electronic form. Readability, legibility and representational matters affect access to such materials – exactly as they do for the associated examination questions.
52. Stimulus materials are often developed by the examiners themselves. In these circumstances, the design can be managed with fair access in mind. By definition, however, most source materials have already been created for another purpose. They rarely originate with the awarding body. The materials contain information that is pertinent to an examination task but not created by



the examiner. They may be of academic or popular origin but, to be useful, must be relevant and valid in terms of the task set.

53. It is legitimate, indeed necessary, practice to review and reshape draft examination questions. Issues arise, however, with the modification of source materials, since they are normally attributable to third parties. Copyright regulations apply where extended extracts or complete works are involved; and there may well be issues of misrepresentation if materials are unilaterally altered for convenience or ease of comprehension.
54. Examiners must seek to hold to the principles of fair access to examinations without transgressing the law of the land or offending the owners of source materials. Equally, simplification or other adaptation must avoid creating concerns about the standards of awards.

### **Example**

The data used in the final example of the 'legibility' section above has its origins in an academic text and a newspaper article. The facts quoted are broadly accurate. However, the amount of material and level of detail have been reduced to create a manageable question targeted on the skills the examiners wish to assess.

Depending on the amount of material involved, it would be appropriate to seek the agreement of the authors and publishers and acknowledge their ownership of the original material.

### **Source materials: design points**

55. Each of the following points considers an aspect of the selection of source material.
  - i. Be clear about the purpose of incorporating source material.
  - ii. Where possible, choose material that enhances or at least maintains the readability and legibility of the examination paper or coursework task.

### **Comment**

Some tabloid newspapers may tend to sensationalise their reporting. However, they also have a keen sense of audience and their journalists and editors take considerable care to write plainly and directly.

Provided that examiners take proper professional care over content and standards, tabloids and popular magazines should not be ignored as providers of ideas for clearly-written stimulus and source material.

- iii. If prospective source material could detract from a question paper's readability or legibility, review its purpose and either seek different material or modify the question.
- iv. If potentially useful material would reduce readability or legibility, consider whether adaptation, properly negotiated and flagged, would be appropriate in the interests of fair examining.
- v. Where a source betrays bias or a stereotypical view of a group or groups in society, check that the associated question draws attention to this fact or seeks comment on the nature of the representation.

### **Example**

A source asserts superiority for European values, concepts, institutions and lifestyles. The associated question could appropriately ask candidates to consider the stance from which the judgements are made and comment on the position taken.

## **Technology**

- 56. Technology has introduced options that can extend access and opportunity. It also offers the prospect of economies, some forms of which could threaten fair access. It is for the awarding bodies and regulatory authorities to ensure that new techniques advance rather than reduce opportunity. This applies to the design of regulatory criteria as well as to the design of qualifications.
- 57. The principles of clarity of purpose and expression apply equally to the design of assessment tasks, source materials and mark schemes in electronic form. Indeed, the additional flexibility that technology offers raises additional points, as follows.
  - i. Consider whether technology offers ways of rendering mandatory material more widely accessible.

### **Comment**

Subjects continue to evolve. Technology has a unique relationship with science, but other subjects are also changing as technology opens up new ways of working. Computer graphics in art and electronic systems in music, for example, have affected both the scope and practice of the subjects. Technology is also creating new ways of creating and decoding text.

Regulators and awarding bodies need to consider carefully how such developments should impact on examinations and what implications arise for fair access.

- ii. Consider whether technology-based options would extend access to groups of candidates who might otherwise be excluded.

### **Example**

GC(S)E Design and Technology coursework projects require candidates to demonstrate 'design and make' skills. Part of the assessment typically focuses on the skills of modelling, sketching and rendering of design proposals. The design proposals are subsequently realised by candidates using appropriate manufacturing processes and materials.

Familiar terms may need to be rethought as technology provides new ways of performing practical tasks. For example, the assessment of 'making' has traditionally required the activity to be conducted by hand. Where there is access to appropriate CAD/CAM equipment, though, candidates with limited motor skills may be able to complete valid 'design and make' tasks and receive appropriate recognition.

- iii. Introduce a systematic review of the ways in which specifications, assessment tasks and source materials are presented, checking that technology is being used effectively to enhance quality.
- iv. Periodically review each assessment scheme to establish whether technology could be deployed in new ways that would increase access to the qualification.
- v. Monitor and evaluate the comparability of alternative response modes. Assess the validity and practicality of each mode on the basis of evidence rather than familiarity.

58. Electronic marking and other forms of e-assessment are emerging applications of technology. New issues inevitably arise as awarding bodies explore the possibilities. The use of a screen may allow examiners to respond more quickly and flexibly to candidates' work. New kinds of interaction are possible, and it is already clear that fresh approaches will be required to maintain security and consistency.
59. The pace of development is rapid. Successful practice has yet to be systematically identified and documented. Systematic monitoring of emerging techniques by the regulatory authorities should provide the basis for a supplement to this document in future years.

## Checklist

This checklist draws the main principles together in summary form, to assist awarding bodies as they develop specifications, assessment materials and mark schemes. The checklist may also assist regulators in any detailed checking of awarding body materials.

60. Before signing off any specification, be sure that:
  - i. all text is free from ambiguity and hidden expectations
  - ii. no unnecessary material is included that could present obstacles to particular groups of candidates
  - iii. any assessment criterion/component that does present an obstacle to a particular group of candidates is justified
  - iv. the titles, mandatory content, optional content and assessment scheme have been designed to offer attractive, relevant and accessible prospects to all groups of candidates within the attainment range of the qualification
  - v. the overall package is both balanced and coherent from the perspective of candidates and other stakeholders.
  
61. Before signing off any examination paper, coursework task or source material, be sure that:
  - i. all text is written in plain, clear and consistent language
  - ii. all pictorial, tabular and graphic material is presented in a clear, uncluttered and logical way
  - iii. all materials associated with a particular task are closely co-located in a logical manner
  - iv. the scope each assessment component offers to extend fair access has been fully exploited
  - v. each item makes a significant contribution to the balance of the overall examination.
  
62. Before signing off any mark scheme or set of assessment criteria, be sure that:
  - i. all text is readable, legible and valid in relation to the objectives of the assessment component
  - ii. language and equal opportunities expertise has been included alongside subject expertise in the development process

- iii. the scheme has been evaluated by experts who have not been involved in the earlier stages of development
- iv. the scheme is fully sensitive to the diverse ways in which candidates can demonstrate their subject attainments.

# Glossary

## General terms

The majority of terms and definitions that follow are identical with those in the regulatory authorities' 2004 publication *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*. A few additional terms have been included. These appear with an asterisk.

<b>Accreditation</b>	The process through which the regulatory authorities confirm that a qualification and the associated specification conform to the regulatory criteria.
<b>Assessment</b>	The process of making judgements about the extent to which a candidate's work meets the assessment criteria for a qualification or unit, or part of a unit.
<b>Assessment criteria</b>	The requirements that candidates need to meet in order to achieve success (or a given grade) in a qualification or unit, or part of a unit.
<b>*Assessment objective</b>	One of a set of statements in a specification describing the focus of assessment. (GCSE, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA Code of Practice 2005/6, page 62)
<b>*Assessment scheme</b>	A description of the components, methods, processes and kinds of tasks used to assess a qualification or unit.
<b>Awarding</b>	The process through which candidates' results and/or grades are determined on the basis of available evidence.
<b>Competence</b>	The ability to carry out activities to the standards required.
<b>Content</b>	The coverage of a qualification, programme, module, unit or other component, expressed as the knowledge, understanding, skills or area of competence that is covered.
<b>*Coursework</b>	Tasks completed by a candidate during the course of study and assessed against criteria made explicit in the specification.

<b>*Examination</b>	The totality of assessment that a candidate must undertake to gain a GCSE or GCE qualification. The examination will generally involve several different assessment components. These may include coursework, external question papers, practical tests and/or oral tests.
<b>Mark scheme</b>	Detail of how marks are to be awarded in relation to a particular assessment task.
<b>Reasonable adjustment</b>	Arrangements which are approved in advance of an examination or assessment to allow attainment to be demonstrated by candidates with either a permanent or long-term disability or learning difficulty, or a temporary disability, illness or indisposition.
<b>Reliability</b>	The extent to which assessment results are an accurate measurement of the candidates' demonstration of the abilities specified by the assessment criteria.
<b>*Specification</b>	The complete description – including mandatory and optional aspects – of the content, assessment arrangements and performance requirements for a qualification. (GCSE, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA Code of Practice 2005/6, page 63)
<b>*Stimulus material</b>	Material generated by examiners and included in a task to encourage candidates to demonstrate their subject capabilities.
<b>*Source material</b>	Material from external sources that candidates are invited to draw on in order to respond to a task.
<b>Unit</b>	The smallest part of a qualification that is capable of certification in its own right.
<b>Validity</b>	The fitness for purpose of an assessment tool or scheme.



## Command words

The awarding bodies have prepared various glossaries for the command words used in GCSE and GCE examinations. The definitions below draw on and simplify the common ground found in the available material.

The same command words are often used in a wide range of different subjects. Subjects have their own traditions and expectations, however, and it is appropriate to use any potentially common definitions with caution and sensitivity.

Until such time as the Joint Council for Qualifications or the regulatory authorities publish an authoritative set of definitions, awarding bodies could monitor and comment on the practicality of the definitions below and those in their own guidelines. This record of experience could inform the development of national policy.

<b>Analyse</b>	Separate information into components and identify their characteristics.
<b>Apply</b>	Put into effect in a recognised way.
<b>Argue</b>	Present a reasoned case.
<b>Assess</b>	Make an informed judgement.
<b>Comment</b>	Present an informed opinion.
<b>Compare</b>	Identify similarities.
<b>Consider</b>	Review and respond to given information.
<b>Contrast</b>	Identify differences.
<b>Criticise</b>	Assess worth against explicit expectations.
<b>Debate</b>	Present different perspectives on an issue.
<b>Deduce</b>	Draw conclusions from information provided.
<b>Define</b>	Specify meaning.
<b>Describe</b>	Set out characteristics.
<b>Discuss</b>	Present salient points.
<b>Estimate</b>	Assign an approximate value.

<b>Evaluate</b>	Judge from available evidence.
<b>Examine</b>	Investigate closely.
<b>Explain</b>	Set out purposes or reasons.
<b>Explore</b>	Investigate without preconceptions.
<b>Identify</b>	Name or otherwise characterise.
<b>Illustrate</b>	Present clarifying examples.
<b>Interpret</b>	Translate information into recognisable form.
<b>Justify</b>	Present a reasoned case.
<b>Outline</b>	Set out main characteristics.
<b>Prove</b>	Demonstrate validity on the basis of evidence.
<b>Relate</b>	Demonstrate interconnections.
<b>Review</b>	Survey information.
<b>State</b>	Express in unequivocal terms.
<b>Summarise</b>	Present principal points without detail.

## **Examples of Access Arrangements for Candidates who are Eligible**

For further details please refer to the Joint Council for Qualifications document:

*Access Arrangements and Special Consideration: Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examination.*

Access Arrangements are provided for candidates with short or long-term disabilities. Access Arrangements must:

- be approved before an examination
- allow access to assessment without giving an unfair advantage
- reflect the candidate's normal way of working
- not give assistance in the skill that is actually being assessed

**Evidence of candidates' needs will be required for the approval of most Access Arrangements.**

### **Readers**

A reader reads the question to the candidate but does not explain or clarify the question. Computer software can be used for the same purpose. Readers are not allowed on papers or sections of papers that test the skill of reading e.g. English and MFL.

### **Scribes**

A scribe or amanuensis writes or word processes a candidate's dictated answers on question papers or coursework. Scribes cannot be used on papers that are testing writing e.g. MFL writing papers unless the candidate dictates the foreign words letter by letter. On papers testing written communication marks should not be awarded for spelling and punctuation when a scribe is used.

### **Practical Assistants**

A practical assistant carries out practical tasks at the instruction of the candidate in coursework and in an examination. A practical assistant cannot be used when a practical skill is being tested. e.g. in Music, Art, Design and Technology. In Science practical examinations or coursework marks cannot be credited for implementation if the candidate uses a practical assistant.

### **Transcripts**

A transcript is a word for word copy of the candidate's script which is made after the examination without the participation of the candidates. A transcript may be partial or complete, handwritten or word-processed by someone who is familiar with the candidate's handwriting.

### **Sign Interpreters for the Deaf**

British Sign Language (BSL) is now an official language. Sign interpreters can be used to sign the questions to candidates taking written papers. Signing of answers by the candidates can only be used in single word answers. Sign interpreters cannot be used in any MFL examinations.

### **Modified Question Papers**

Braille

Enlarged papers

Modified enlarged papers

Language modified papers for hearing-impaired candidates

### **Extra Time**

Less than 25% extra time can be awarded by the centre.

More than 25% must be approved by the awarding body for visual and hearing impaired candidates, physical and multiple disabilities and severe learning difficulties.

## **Examples of candidates who require Access Arrangements**

### **Communication and Interaction**

Candidates with communication and interaction difficulties may have problems with written communication skills. They may need to use a word processor or, in particular circumstances, have the assistance of a scribe to write for them. They may need extra time to demonstrate written and oral communication skills.

### **Cognition and Learning**

Candidates with learning difficulties may require extra time for timed examinations and assessments. In appropriate cases, they may also need reading or writing assistance.

### **Sensory and Physical Needs**

Candidates with sensory and physical needs might require extra time, word processors, and/or a scribe. They may require papers which are modified for hearing impairment or visual impairment. They may also require a practical assistant.

### **Behavioural, Emotional and Social Needs**

Candidates with behavioural, emotional and social needs might require supervised rest periods, separate invigilation or alternative accommodation arrangements. Where candidates also have learning difficulties, they may

require extra time and, in the case of more severe impairment, readers and/or scribes.

Some candidates' needs will fall within more than one of the above categories.

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