

# Controlled Assessment guidance

GCSE Geography Specification A



Controlled Assessment is the new GCSE Geography form of internal assessment. At AQA, we are providing Geography teachers with an overview of the Controlled Assessment process to give you the support you need to make a smooth transition into the new internal assessment process.

The Controlled Assessment process has three stages:

- **task setting**
- **task taking**
- **task marking.**

Each stage has a control level (High, Medium or Low), which has been defined by QCA for all awarding bodies.

For more information on GCSE Geography see [aqa.org.uk/GeogA2009](http://aqa.org.uk/GeogA2009)

## Section A: Task setting

### Level of Control: High

- The task will be set by us.
- You must ensure that your students are undertaking the correct Controlled Assessment for the series in which it is being submitted.

### Issue of tasks

- The Controlled Assessment tasks will be published on the e-AQA secure website.
- They will be released in April, two years in advance.
- For the first two series, 2010 and 2011, both sets of tasks are available from March 2009.
- The 2012 Controlled Assessment task will be available from April 2010.

## Task design

### Local Fieldwork investigation

Eleven task options will be provided in the form of statements, set by us based on the following Specification units:

- Rocks, Resources and Scenery
- Challenge of Weather and climate
- Living World
- Water on the Land
- Ice on the Land
- The Coastal Zone
- Population Change
- Changing Urban Environments
- Changing Rural Environments
- Globalisation
- Tourism.

Students must attempt one task only.

- Each option will consist of the unit heading from which it is derived, followed by a task statement.
- You can contextualise the investigation by using the statement as a basis from which to produce an appropriate question or hypothesis that can be investigated at a local scale.
- Students should select four or five key concepts or processes that will underpin and run throughout the investigation.
- The next step is to think of some appropriate data collection techniques (no more than three) and to give your students the scope to generate at least one more of their own and so give them access to Level 3 Methodology.
- It is also worth thinking about what types of more complex presentation skills some students might use to achieve the higher levels.

## Section B: Task taking

### Authenticity control – Levels of Control: Limited and High

#### Limited Level

You must be able to confirm that the work submitted by each student is their own. To ensure this can be done, all work with the exception of research must be completed under supervision. Research can be completed outside the classroom whether this is on the Internet, from the library, taking photographs, gathering/collecting primary data. **Preparation, research, planning, processing and presentation all fall under Limited levels of control.**

#### High Level

**Description, interpretation, analysis, conclusions and evaluation fall under High level of control.**

Students:

- must work independently and complete work under formal supervision
- must not communicate with each other
- may have access to their research but not to any secondary resources or the Internet.

Any assistance must be declared on the Candidate Record Form.

### Selection of tasks

Students choose one option from the Local Fieldwork Investigation. (See task design page).

#### Word and time limits

- The maximum time limit of 20 hours is fixed and can only be extended for students with approved special consideration allowances.
- The 2000 words are guidance and students are required to stay within this number of words as far as it is possible to do so.
- There would not be an issue with one or two students from your centre going slightly over the 2000 words. If, however, all of your centre's studies seen at moderation were 3000+ words, you will have clearly breached the Specification requirements and all work will be reviewed at the highest level.



#### Task

The task will take up to **20** hours (with additional time to collect fieldwork data) with a word guidance of **2000**. Students should spend:

- **four hours** carrying out research and preparing notes.
- **up to 10 hours** completing the next stages (Limited level of control):
  - 1 introduction, theory and location evidence
  - 2 methodology – description and justification of the data collection techniques used
  - 3 data processing – collating and sorting fieldwork data
  - 4 presentation – completing tables, maps, graphs based upon the fieldwork results.

Word guidance for this section – **800** words.

- **a maximum of six hours** to write up the final three elements of the investigation under High level of control:
  - 5 description, interpretation and analysis
  - 6 conclusions
  - 7 evaluation.

Word guidance for this section – approximately **1200** words.



## Research

### Time limits for data collection

- There are no time limits specified for collecting data as it can take a lot of time, especially if travelling is involved.
- Data collection should be carried out outside the time set for the tasks.
- You can collect data on a fieldwork trip.
- Timings stated relate to hours spent in the classroom working on the task.

### Studies without primary data

The Methodology Level 1 descriptor requires the student to provide 'basic evidence' that some information has been collected as part of a fieldwork investigation. Should a student miss the data collection field trip due to illness for example, and rely on data collected by the rest of the group, that would be secondary data and allow the student access to Level 1 only. Level 2 can only be considered if the student has collected some primary data.

## Originality

### 'Originality' for Level 3 Methodology

A data collection technique devised by the student would allow Level 3 access as long as it makes a significant contribution to the study. Token efforts, such as:

- a one-minute pedestrian count
- an extra question on a group questionnaire
- a two-minute traffic count

do not fulfil this requirement.

Originality can also be achieved by means of location and timing. The number of data collection techniques available to students is limited so if, for example, several students decide to test the sphere of influence by means of car tax disc data, there is no problem with this as long as the surveys are done at different times and/or at different locations. One word of caution – if your students use the same additional data collection technique then 'originality' is difficult to justify.

## Presentation

### Types of more complex presentation skills that students could use to access Level 3

The skill itself is just part of the requirement. Completeness, accuracy and appropriateness must also be assessed. Presentation skills that have been used at Level 3 in the past include:

- cross sections (do not exaggerate scales)
- beach profiles
- proportional flow line maps
- isoline maps
- choropleth maps
- proportional flow line maps
- proportional symbols located on to base maps
- some statistical techniques (all working shown)
- scatter graphs
- very well annotated photographs and field sketches.

### Studies without ICT

There must be one ICT contribution present for the student to access Level 1 Presentation. With no ICT contributions, the student cannot earn any marks from this part of the marking criteria.

### Level 2 Interpretation criteria

- At Level 1 Interpretation – students are only required to use basic qualitative terms when interpreting their results, eg many, most, few, high numbers, lots etc.
- Level 2 requires an increase in precision and the most effective way to show this is by the students making more specific use of their data, being more quantitative in their analysis. By calculating percentages for example they can write '73% of people came from the local area' which is more valuable than writing 'most people came from the local area'. Similarly using fractions and ratios can be very effective, eg ' $\frac{3}{4}$  of people', or 'three times as many', adds that degree of precision when compared to basic Level 1 statements.

## Feedback control

### Support to students

Under the **Limited level of control**, you are able to teach the students and help them produce their Introduction, Methodology and Presentation sections of their study. You cannot give written feedback on draft work or provide writing frames (Spec p23).

Under the **High level of control**, you **cannot** give:

- answers to questions about meanings of terms or interpretations of findings
- guidance about how to write conclusions and evaluations whilst they are engaged on these tasks.

You can, however, offer advice about the structure of the work to ensure it is organised effectively.

### Recording time taken by and support given to students

- As there is a maximum of 20 hours available for this component, and some students might miss lessons from time to time, it is important to be clear how much time each student has had on the task.
- You do not need to write this down each lesson.
- We suggest that the research folders used by your students have a recording sheet attached to (or within) them. Students can record the relevant information at the end of each session. You need only check that this has been done when you collect the files.
- It is a requirement of the Specification (page 23) that you note any support given during the High level of control phase on the Candidate Record Form. Noting such support on the record sheet will make it easier for you to do this.

### Individual feedback in the early stages

You can give advice (but not written feedback) to students (Spec p23) and this should be recorded in the fieldwork folder, possibly on the Candidate Record Form.

## General

### Breaches of High level controls

There are already procedures in place for students found to be in breach of the regulations. You must ensure that you have signed each Candidate Record Form to confirm that the work being submitted for assessment:

- is the work of the student
- has been completed under the required regulations.

If you cannot do this for a particular student, the work may be withdrawn.



### Acceptable help

Overview of the topic  
Copy of assessment criteria  
Practice research tasks, skills etc  
General advice rather than specific answers  
Pointers in the right direction

### Unacceptable help

Setting the actual tasks as a practice assessment  
Draft assignments  
Providing feedback on draft assignments

### General introduction lessons and teacher instruction sessions

In many cases the task selected for the Controlled Assessment will have been selected as it is derived from one of the units that will be taught. You will almost certainly have covered the key elements of the task during 'normal' lessons. It might then be prudent to have a lesson or two to focus the thinking in relation to the task before the Controlled Assessment work begins. Presentation techniques could be covered by means of a taught unit of work within the classroom before the Controlled Assessment gets under way.

### The timing of the High level of control sessions

You might like to break this up into 30 minute slots. Students might, for example, spend part of a lesson completing presentation methods such as graphs or diagrams under Limited control, you could then move the lesson to High level of control and direct them to interpret their graphs. Similarly, students might complete their conclusions and evaluations over several lessons, 30 minutes here and there. You must find what is best for your centre.

Any interpretation of results must take place during the High level of control phase.

### Resource control

#### ICT security issues during the High level of control phase

The Specification is very clear about what is and is not allowed during the High level of control phase in relation to ICT (p23):

- Students can use a laptop or pc.
- They can use spell checks and grammar checks.
- They must **not** have access to the Internet/e-mail or secondary sources.

This work must be kept secure after each session.

#### Candidate research folders

- All students' work must be retained by your centre at all times.
- Research work and completed work must be stored securely at your centre.

- If students are able to use ICT throughout the process, their work may be kept in a central folder, possibly 'Geography CA Work' held on your centre network and only accessible during specified times.
- Written work may be stored in candidate research folders along with time and work record sheets. Students have access to these folders in the lessons and hand them back to you at the end of each lesson.

### 'New' material in the High level of control

This refers to any 'hard' material, text, pictures, resources, Internet material, etc. Only what has been put into the research files in the Limited level of control can be carried through to the High level of control phase. Students may bring in new ideas or factual material in their heads!

### Collaboration control

#### Collaboration between students during the Limited level control phase

Limited control is just the same as normal classroom practice so there can be full collaboration between students. Page 23 of the Specification states:

'The work of individual students may be informed by working with others but students must provide an individual response. Where work is undertaken within a group, or is teacher directed, students must indicate where they have made a contribution to the investigation or have demonstrated initiative'.

#### Collaboration between students during the High level control phase

The High level of control section must be produced by the student working individually under formal supervision by yourself or an invigilator.

If the tasks are not completed in a single sitting, all materials used must be collected and retained in secure conditions. Students will normally use 'candidate research folders' to keep their work together. Memory sticks should be collected after each session if work is to be saved by this method.

You are allowed to communicate with students to clarify issues, but not to offer suggestions or solutions. You can give help regarding technical issues such as the use of ICT equipment.



## Section C: Task marking

Level of control: Medium

### Initial marking

You should mark the Controlled Assessment using the assessment criteria in our Specification. The annotation of students' work will help the moderator see where you consider students have met the assessment criteria. Annotation of the work can be:

- written in the text
- at the end of the work
- a combination of both.

The annotation needs to demonstrate how and why a particular level and mark has been awarded. It should be addressed to the moderator.

Further training will be provided to ensure you understand the assessment criteria and know how to apply it accurately.

- A programme of Teacher Support meetings with a focus on the Controlled Assessments will be available in spring/summer 2009.
- Annual standardising meetings will be available from autumn 2009.
- Controlled Assessment Advisors will be allocated to centres before September 2009.

### Further guidance on the application of the 'interpretation and QWC' strand in the marking criteria

- For Level 1 Interpretation students are only required to use basic qualitative terms when interpreting their results, eg many, most, few, high numbers, lots etc.
- Level 2 requires an increase in precision. Students must make more specific use of their data, being more quantitative in their analysis eg '73% of people came from the local area' rather than 'most people came from the local area'. Similarly they can reach Level 2 by using fractions and ratios can be very effective, eg  $\frac{3}{4}$  of people, or three times as many, adds that degree of precision when compared to basic Level 1 statements.

Quality of Written Communication (QWC) can be used to adjust the marks awarded within a level in this strand but not to move students into or out of a level.

### Internal standardising of marking

You **must** standardise marking to make sure that all students at your centre have been marked to the same standard. One person must be responsible for internal standardisation. This person should sign the Centre Declaration Sheet to confirm that internal standardising has taken place. Further guidance is provided in the 'JCQ Instructions for conducting controlled assessment'.

### Submission of marks and a sample of work to AQA

Instructions will be provided regarding the submission of marks to us and a sample of work to the moderator. The work submitted should be the final piece written up during the analysis and evaluation stage. It may include, as an appendix, work carried out during the research stage, but any material which is not referred to within the main body of the work will not contribute to the mark awarded. Material not included should be retained in your centre until after the deadline for enquiries about results.



## Authentication of Controlled Assessment

To meet the requirements of the Code of Practice, we require:

- students to sign the Candidate Record Form (CRF) to confirm that the work submitted is their own
- you to confirm on the CRF that the work assessed is solely that of the student concerned and was conducted under the conditions laid down by the Specification
- you to record marks of zero if your centre/student cannot confirm the authenticity of work submitted for assessment.

## Moderation

We will moderate this work in accordance with QCA Code of Practice requirements.

## Exemplar material

Material to illustrate marking standards will be available:

- at the second phase 'preparing to teach' meetings (spring/summer 2009)
- in the Teacher Resource Bank (due out in August 2009)
- at the autumn Teacher Standardising meetings.

Controlled Assessment Advisers will also be allocated to centres to provide guidance on all aspects of Controlled Assessment, including task marking.

## We are here to help you

If you would like further information or advice please contact the AQA Geography department at:

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