

Your guide to the changes for 2021

Following an [Ofqual consultation in July 2020](#), we made changes to a number of our qualifications. These changes would have applied to the summer 2021 examinations, had they gone ahead. After a [further consultation](#), Ofqual confirmed the changes will now apply to the autumn 2021 examinations.

Please use [the specification](#) on our website alongside the information below, which explains how this qualification will differ in autumn 2021.

Overview of changes for GCSE Geography A

Students taking Geography in autumn 2021:

- will **not** be asked questions during the exams in relation to their own fieldwork experience.
- **will** still be asked questions during the exams on unfamiliar fieldwork contexts.
- Centres do **not** need to sign a Fieldwork Statement confirming that fieldwork has taken place on at least two occasions.

We have produced updated sample assessment material to show how the assessment will look in 2021.

To support students in preparing for the unfamiliar fieldwork questions, there are past paper examples which can be found on the Geography A qualification page, within Assessment. Fieldwork resources can be found within Planning and Teaching.

GCSE Geography A for academic year 2020/21

Students must complete all three assessments to be awarded a GCSE in geography in **autumn 2021**. There has been **no** change to the specification content. Themes 1.1 – 2.3 ([specification pages 6-12](#)) and the geographical skills ([specification pages 13-14](#)) will need to be taught.

Content Overview	Assessment Overview	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscapes of the UK People of the UK UK Environmental challenges 	<p>Living in the UK Today (01)</p> <p>60 marks</p> <p>1 hour written exam</p>	<p>32.4 of total GCSE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecosystems of the Planet People of the Planet Environmental threats to our Planet 	<p>The World Around Us (02)</p> <p>60 marks</p> <p>1 hour written exam</p>	<p>32.4 of total GCSE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographical skills Fieldwork Assessment <p>* Indicates inclusion of synoptic assessment.</p>	<p>Geographical Skills (03)*</p> <p>65 marks</p> <p>1 hour 20 minutes written exam</p>	<p>35.2% of total GCSE</p>

There will be no changes to Components 01 and 02.

The changes to Component 03 are only in relation to fieldwork for section B. The table above indicates any changes and these are explained below:

- The qualification total has changed from 200 to 185 marks.
- The component weightings have changed, Components 01 and 02 from 30% to 32.4% and Component 03 from 40% to 35.2%.

The following information refers to **Component 03 only**

- We will **remove** questions which relate to the student's **own fieldwork** experience, this equates to 15 marks.
- There will **still be** questions related to **unfamiliar fieldwork** contexts (section B) and these will equate to 15 marks. The questions will be in the same style as those shown in the Sample Assessment Materials, Practice Papers, and the past papers from 2018 and 2019.
- The unfamiliar fieldwork questions will include **both** physical and human geography fieldwork contexts. The questions will relate to these two fieldwork contexts:

The physical fieldwork context is **coasts**.

The human fieldwork context is **urban**.

- The exam paper has been reduced from 80 marks to **65 marks** to reflect the removal of the own fieldwork questions.
- The duration of the exam paper has changed from 1 hour and 30 minutes to **1 hour and 20 minutes** (as own fieldwork questions have been removed).
- In section B, there will be 7 marks for lower tariff questions and one higher tariff question (8 marks) with a further 3 marks for SPAG.

What has changed?

What has changed – SAMs	Detail
Sample Assessment Material	In Component 03 section B, questions related to student's own fieldwork experience have been removed. This equates to 15 marks.

What has changed – Specification	Detail																													
Fieldwork written statement	Centres do not need to sign a Fieldwork Statement confirming that fieldwork has taken place on at least two occasions (as per the specification).																													
Fieldwork	Fieldwork can be 'in the field' or through virtual fieldwork (classroom based). 'In the field' could include the school grounds and local area (to the school or student's home).																													
Assessment objectives weightings per component for autumn 2021	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Component</th> <th colspan="4">% of overall GCSE (9-1) in Geography A (Geographical Themes) J383</th> </tr> <tr> <th>AO1</th> <th>AO2</th> <th>AO3</th> <th>AO4</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Living in the UK Today (J383/01)</td> <td>8</td> <td>12</td> <td>8.5</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The World Around Us (J383/02)</td> <td>8</td> <td>12</td> <td>8.5</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Geographical Skills (J383/03)</td> <td>0</td> <td>3</td> <td>15</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>16</td> <td>27</td> <td>32</td> <td>25</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The remaining 5% of marks are associated to Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (please see section 3f of the specification).</p> <p>There will be 3 marks associated to SPaG in each of the three components' assessments.</p> <p>Within the assessments, 6% of the marks will be assessing AO3 applied in fieldwork context(s) and 3% of the marks will be associated with AO4 applied to responding to questions with fieldwork data and contexts.</p>	Component	% of overall GCSE (9-1) in Geography A (Geographical Themes) J383				AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Living in the UK Today (J383/01)	8	12	8.5	4	The World Around Us (J383/02)	8	12	8.5	4	Geographical Skills (J383/03)	0	3	15	17	Total	16	27	32	25
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