



Qualifications and  
Curriculum Authority



# GCE A level performance descriptions for general studies

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## Introduction

Performance descriptions have been created for all GCE subjects. They describe the learning outcomes and levels of attainment likely to be demonstrated by a representative candidate performing at the A/B and E/U boundaries for AS and A2.

In practice most candidates will show uneven profiles across the attainments listed, with strengths in some areas compensating in the award process for weaknesses or omissions elsewhere. Performance descriptions illustrate expectations at the A/B and E/U boundaries of the AS and A2 as a whole; they have not been written at unit level.

Grade A/B and E/U boundaries should be set using professional judgement. The judgement should reflect the quality of candidates' work, informed by the available technical and statistical evidence. Performance descriptions are designed to assist examiners in exercising their professional judgement. They should be interpreted and applied in the context of individual specifications and their associated units. However, performance descriptions are not designed to define the content of specifications and units.

The requirement for all AS and A level specifications to assess candidates' quality of written communication will be met through one or more of the assessment objectives.

The performance descriptions have been produced by the regulatory authorities in collaboration with the awarding bodies.

## AS performance descriptions for general studies

	Assessment objective 1	Assessment objective 2	Assessment objective 3	Assessment objective 3
<b>Assessment objectives</b>	Demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of issues, using skills from different disciplines.	Marshal evidence and draw conclusions: select, interpret, evaluate and integrate information, data, concepts and opinions.	Demonstrate understanding of different types of knowledge, appreciating their strengths and limitations.	Communicate clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and relevant way.
<b>A/B boundary performance descriptions</b>	Candidates characteristically: a) demonstrate focused knowledge and understanding of a range of issues b) use skills from different disciplines with confidence and consistency.	Candidates characteristically: a) provide evidence of selecting, interpreting and applying relevant information, data, concepts and opinions b) organise evidence to support arguments c) draw reasoned conclusions.	Candidates characteristically: a) identify different types of knowledge and make relevant evaluative comments.	Candidates characteristically: a) communicate accurately, clearly and fluently, using appropriate language and structure.
<b>E/U boundary performance descriptions</b>	Candidates characteristically: a) demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of issues b) use skills from different disciplines with variable success.	Candidates characteristically: a) provide limited evidence of selecting and applying some relevant information, data and opinions b) draw simple conclusions.	Candidates characteristically: a) recognise examples of different types of knowledge.	Candidates characteristically: a) convey meaning clearly despite limited powers of expression.

## A2 performance descriptions for general studies

	<b>Assessment objective 1</b>	<b>Assessment objective 2</b>	<b>Assessment objective 3</b>	<b>Assessment objective 4</b>
<b>Assessment objectives</b>	Demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of issues, using skills from different disciplines.	Marshal evidence and draw conclusions: select, interpret, evaluate and integrate information, data, concepts and opinions.	Demonstrate understanding of different types of knowledge, appreciating their strengths and limitations.	Communicate clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and relevant way.
<b>A/B boundary performance descriptions</b>	Candidates characteristically: a) deploy knowledge and understanding across a wide range of issues b) use skills from different disciplines with confidence and consistency.	Candidates characteristically: a) provide evidence of selecting, interpreting and applying relevant information, data, concepts and opinions b) organise and evaluate evidence to support arguments c) make connections and draw reasoned conclusions.	Candidates characteristically: a) identify correctly different types of knowledge b) offer a sound evaluation of different types of knowledge.	Candidates characteristically: a) communicate accurately, clearly, concisely, logically and fluently, using appropriate language and structure.
<b>E/U boundary performance descriptions</b>	Candidates characteristically: a) deploy some knowledge and understanding across issues b) use skills from different disciplines with variable success.	Candidates characteristically: a) provide limited evidence of selecting and applying some relevant information, data and opinions b) make limited connections and draw simple conclusions.	Candidates characteristically: a) identify examples of different types of knowledge b) recognise some strengths and weaknesses of types of knowledge, but with limited success.	Candidates characteristically: a) convey meaning clearly.