



GCE AS MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

**AS
SOCIOLOGY- COMPONENT 2
METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY
B200U20-1**

About this marking scheme

The purpose of this marking scheme is to provide teachers, learners, and other interested parties, with an understanding of the assessment criteria used to assess this specific assessment.

This marking scheme reflects the criteria by which this assessment was marked in a live series and was finalised following detailed discussion at an examiners' conference. A team of qualified examiners were trained specifically in the application of this marking scheme. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners. It may not be possible, or appropriate, to capture every variation that a candidate may present in their responses within this marking scheme. However, during the training conference, examiners were guided in using their professional judgement to credit alternative valid responses as instructed by the document, and through reviewing exemplar responses.

Without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers, learners and other users, may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that this marking scheme is used alongside other guidance, such as published exemplar materials or Guidance for Teaching. This marking scheme is final and will not be changed, unless in the event that a clear error is identified, as it reflects the criteria used to assess candidate responses during the live series.

EDUQAS GCE AS SOCIOLOGY

COMPONENT 2 - METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY

SUMMER 2025 MARK SCHEME

Understanding Society: The UK household longitudinal study

Understanding Society is a longitudinal study that began in 2009 and conducts interviews with around 40,000 households each year. The study collects quantitative data, tracks participants over an extended period, and offers a long-term perspective on people's lives. Every year, participants complete their questionnaire either via a face-to-face interview or by using an online questionnaire. Funding is an important **practical issue** in sociological research such as Understanding Society. Without funding from the [Economic and Social Research Council \(ESRC\)](https://www.esrc.ac.uk/), it would not have been possible to carry out this research.

Adapted from research published on <https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/>

- (a) Using material from the item and sociological knowledge, explain the meaning of the term **practical issues**. [5]

Answers should include accurate knowledge points for band 3 AO1. Points should be supported with examples and/or evidence. For band 3 AO2 a clear explanation of the examples/evidence should be present.

Indicative content:

A definition of the term practical issues e.g. issues relating to the feasibility of undertaking sociological research. Issues may include:

- Time
- Cost
- Funding
- Access
- Skills of researcher
- The item should be used to demonstrate understanding e.g. issues with the large sample size or the longitudinal nature of the research on the impact on time and cost, or issues with funding from the ERSC.

Any other reasonable response.

Band	AO1 elements 2a & 2b	AO2 element 1b
3	3 marks Answers demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question as applied to research methods.	2 marks Answers demonstrate accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/concepts/evidence/research methods. These are applied and interpreted in the context of the debate/question. Reference will be made to the item to show the ability to select appropriate examples.
2	2 marks Answers demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question as applied to research methods.	1 mark Answers demonstrate some ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/concepts/evidence/research methods in the context of the debate/question.
1	1 mark Answers demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question as applied to research methods.	
	0 marks NRSP	0 marks NRSP

- (b) Using material from the item and sociological knowledge, explain **two** possible reasons why the researchers collected quantitative data. [10]

There should be two reasons for AO1 band 3. These reasons can be theoretical, practical or methodological and must contain technical language. For AO2 band 3, the reasons must be contextualised and explained with reference to methodological issues.

Indicative content:

- Produces reliable, social facts that are preferred by positivists. The research can be replicated and standardised helping researchers to make objective claims about people's lives
- Easy to compare and analyse – can spot patterns and trends in people's lives
- More practical than collecting qualitative data – since the study is on a large scale (40 000) it is more appropriate to collect quantitative data.
- The item should be used to contextualise the reasons offered.

Any other reasonable response.

Band	AO1 elements 2a & 2b	AO2 element 1b
3	5-6 marks Answers demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question.	4 marks Answers demonstrate a detailed ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/concepts/evidence in the context of the debate/ question. There will be appropriate use made of the item to demonstrate understanding.
2	3-4 marks Answers demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question.	2-3 marks Answers demonstrate some ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/concepts/evidence in the context of the debate/ question. Some reference will be made to the item.
1	1-2 marks Answers demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question.	1 mark Answers demonstrate a basic ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/concepts/evidence in the context of the debate/ question.
	0 marks NRSP	0 marks NRSP

- (c) Explain **one** strength and **one** weakness of using face-to-face interviews in this research. [10]

There should be one strength and one weakness identified for AO1 band 3. These will contain technical language and will be focused on methodological problems. For AO2 band 3, the strength and weakness must be explained with reference to methodological issues and the impact on the research.

Indicative content:

Strengths

- Gain valid insights
- Easier to establish a rapport
- Can understand non-verbal communication and address any queries about the questions

Weaknesses

- Issues with social desirability
- Issues with researcher bias.
- Issues with rapport.
- Issues with subjectivity.

The item should be used to contextualise the reasons offered e.g. a strength of the face-to-face nature of Understanding Society means participants gain familiarity with the researchers and this can help to improve the validity of the answers due to the rapport established. Equally, a weakness of this research could be that people lie if their life isn't going according to plan which lowers the validity.

Any other reasonable response.

Band	AO1 <i>elements 2a & 2b</i>	AO2 <i>element 1b</i>
3	5-6 marks Answers demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question.	4 marks Answers demonstrate a detailed ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/ concepts/evidence in the context of the debate/question. There will be appropriate use made of the item to demonstrate understanding.
2	3-4 marks Answers demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question.	2-3 marks Answers demonstrate some ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/ concepts/evidence in the context of the debate/question. Some reference will be made to the item.
1	1-2 marks Answers demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question.	1 mark Answers demonstrate a basic ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/ concepts/evidence in the context of the debate/question.
	0 marks NRSP	0 marks NRSP

- (d) With reference to sociological studies, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of using longitudinal studies in sociological research. [25]

Answers should demonstrate the ability to make sense of sociological debates, offer sociological examples and explain sociological concepts. Answers need to use key terminology. Credit will be given to effective discussion where there is evidence of detailed and wide-ranging knowledge. Where answers demonstrate all abilities to the highest standard, then they will be consistent with Band 4. However, answers demonstrating knowledge but fewer skills of interpretation and discussion may achieve band 4 for AO1 but lower bands for AO2 and AO3.

Indicative content:

Candidates may refer to some, but not necessarily all, of the following:

- Definition of longitudinal study – a study that follows the same subjects repeatedly over a period of time. They can be quantitative or qualitative.
- There should be reference to appropriate sociological examples such as The Up Series, Born in Bradford, National Child Development Study (NCDS), 1970 British Cohort Study or the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children.

Strengths

- More than a snapshot
- Can track changes over time
- If qualitative, they are high in depth and validity
- If quantitative, they are reliable, macro and easy to represent in a graph.

Weaknesses

- Time consuming
- Expensive
- Sample attrition
- Issues with researcher bias.

When discussing strengths and weaknesses, this should be in the context of key methodological issues such as validity, reliability, practicality, generalisability.

All relevant examples and explanations will be credited. Direct reference to relevant studies is necessary for answers to gain access to the top mark band.

Responses other than those listed above may be valid and creditworthy if sociological evidence is present.

Band	AO1 elements 2a & 2b	AO2 element 1b	AO3 strands 1-3
4	9-10 marks Answers demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/ evidence relating to the context of the debate/ question as applied to research methods.	5 marks Answers demonstrate accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/ concepts/ evidence/ research methods. These are applied and interpreted in the context of the debate/ question.	9-10 marks Answers demonstrate detailed, well-organised and logical arguments. Logical judgements and conclusions will be offered based on explicit evaluation of the relevant theories/ concepts/ research methods/ evidence examined.
3	6-8 marks Answers demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/ evidence relating to the context of the debate/ question as applied to research methods.	4 marks Answers demonstrate some accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/ concepts/ evidence/ research methods. Some of which are applied and interpreted in the context of the debate/ question.	6-8 marks Answers demonstrate some well-organised and logical arguments. Judgements and conclusions offered will show some evaluation of the relevant theories/ concepts/ evidence/ research methods examined.
2	3-5 marks Answers demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/ evidence relating to the context of the debate/ question as applied to research methods.	3 marks Answers demonstrate a basic ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/ concepts/ evidence/ research methods in the context of the debate/ question.	3-5 marks Answers demonstrate basic arguments. Judgements and conclusions offered will show basic evaluation of the theories/ concepts/ evidence examined.
1	1-2 marks Answers demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/ question as applied to research methods.	1-2 marks Answers demonstrate limited ability to select and/or interpret and/ or apply sociological theories/ concepts/ evidence in the context of the debate/ question.	1-2 marks Answers demonstrate limited argument. Any judgements and conclusions offered will show limited evaluation of any theories/ concepts/ evidence/ research methods examined.
	0 marks NRSP	0 marks NRSP	0 marks NRSP