



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

**A LEVEL
SOCIOLOGY – COMPONENT 2
METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY
A200U20-1**

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 A LEVEL SOCIOLOGY
COMPONENT 2 – METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY
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Answer all questions

The Study of Early Education and Development (SEED)

SEED is a longitudinal study that started in 2013 and follows nearly 6000 children from across England from age two. The initial sample of families in the SEED study is representative of the population of families with children aged two in England.

The study involves a longitudinal survey of children aiming to find out how early childhood education and care relate to child development over time. Yearly interviews with families and surveys with childcare staff and teachers are also conducted. Finally, the children's educational attainment data is compared with national attainment statistics. This research provides both qualitative and quantitative data.

Adapted from: Home | Study of Early Education and Development | SEED (natcen.ac.uk)

- 1.1 Using material from the item and sociological knowledge, explain what is meant by the term representative sample. [5]

Indicative content:

A definition of the term representative sample: The participants making up the sample are typical of the target population.

- Generalisations can be made if the sample is a representative one
- Often linked to quantitative research
- Favoured by positivists
- The item should be used to demonstrate understanding

Any other relevant point.

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 applied to research methods	2 marks Answers demonstrate accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/concepts/ evidence applied to research methods. These are 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 applied to research methods	1 mark Answers demonstrate some ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/concepts/ evidence applied to 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 applied to research methods	
0	0 marks NRSP	0 marks NRSP

- 1.2 Explain **one** reason why the researchers decided to use a longitudinal study in their research. [5]

For band 3 AO1 the answer will include one reason which is linked to either key methodological concepts, the characteristics of the method or the focus of the research. For band 3 AO2 there will be a clear explanation of the reason offered and this must be contextualised for full marks.

Indicative content:

- To track long term changes
- More than a snapshot
- Improve validity
- The item should be used to contextualise the reason offered

Any other relevant point.

Band	AO1 <i>elements 2a & 2b</i>	AO2 <i>element 1b</i>
3	2 marks Answers demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods	3 marks Answers demonstrate accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/concepts/evidence applied to research methods. These are interpreted in the context of the debate/question. Reference will be made to the item to show high level ability to select appropriate examples to illustrate the reason offered.
2	1 mark Answers demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods	2 marks Answers demonstrate some accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/concepts/evidence applied to research methods, some of which are interpreted in the context of the debate/question. Reference will be made to the item to show some ability to select appropriate examples to explain.
1		1 mark Answers demonstrate a basic ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/concepts/evidence applied to research methods in the context of the debate/question. Basic or cursory reference is made to the item.
	0 marks NRSP	0 marks NRSP

- 1.3 Using material from the item and sociological studies, explain the strengths and weaknesses of using more than one method in sociological research. [20]
Answers should address several strengths and several weaknesses for band 4 AO1 and include at least two studies. For band 4 AO2, the explanation of the strengths and weaknesses will be linked to at least one key concept and at least one example should be drawn from the item.

Indicative content:

- Definition and discussion of the use of more than one method in sociological research
- Triangulation
- Realism
- Methodological pluralism
- There will be a balanced argument
- There will be accurate use of sociological concepts such as validity, reliability, representativeness, generalisability and ethics
- There should be reference to appropriate sociological studies such as Barker, Willis, Humphreys, Hey or MacKeogh

Strengths

- Increases validity
- Holistic view of the group being studied
- Can cross check data from one method to another
- Can compare quantitative data and qualitative data
- Can clarify findings from one method by using another
- Can use one method to generate ideas for another one
- Will make it safer to generalise findings to the target population
- Strengths of one method compensate for the weaknesses of another

Weaknesses

- Expensive
- Time consuming
- The research design may be very complicated
- Data from the different methods may be conflicting
- Analysis can be quite complex (researcher needs to be skilled)

Any other relevant point.

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

Band	AO1 elements 2a & 2b	AO2 element 1b
4	12-14 marks Answers demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/ evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods	6 marks Answers demonstrate accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/concepts/ evidence applied to research methods. These are applied interpreted in the context of the debate/question. Reference will be made to the item to show high level ability to select appropriate examples.
3	8-11 marks Answers demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/ evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods	4-5 marks Answers demonstrate some accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/ concepts/ evidence applied to research methods, some of which are interpreted in the context of the debate/question. Reference will be made to the item to show some ability to select appropriate examples.
2	4-7 marks Answers demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/ evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods.	2-3 marks Answers demonstrate a basic ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/ concepts/ evidence applied to research methods in the context of the debate/question.
1	1-3 marks Answers demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/ evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods.	1 mark Answers demonstrate limited ability to select and/or interpret and/or apply sociological theories/concepts/ evidence applied to research methods in the context of the debate/question.
	0 marks NRSP	0 marks NRSP

2.1 As an A Level Sociology student you have been asked to design a research project to collect data on attitudes towards online shopping amongst a sample of young adults in your area.

- Describe each stage of your research design, justifying the reasons for your choices at each stage.
- Discuss some of the problems that may occur and their impact on the quality of data collected. [30]

The research design should be ethical, achievable and appropriate to the theme of the proposed study. Candidates should make their choices, justify their research approach and design in the context of the research brief.

Expect to see the following stages addressed in the proposed design:

- Operationalisation of key terms in the brief.
- Sampling:
 - Population.
 - Sampling technique.
 - Access.
- Research method.
- Ethical issues.
- Practical considerations.

Expect to see the research design justified and potential problems identified in relation to key methodological concepts and other relevant issues such as:

- Ethics.
- Validity.
- Reliability.
- Practical considerations.
- Generalisability.
- Representativeness.
- Operationalisation.

Band	AO1 elements 2a & 2b	AO2 element 1b	AO3 strands 1-3
4	7-8 marks Answers demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods	9-10 marks Answers demonstrate detailed, accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/concepts/ evidence applied to research methods. These are interpreted in the context of the debate/ question	10-12 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/ evidence as applied to research methods
3	5-6 marks Answers demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods	6-8 marks Answers demonstrate some accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/ concepts/ evidence as applied to research methods, some of which are interpreted in the context of the debate/ question	7-9 marks Answers demonstrate some, well-organised and logical arguments. Judgements and conclusions offered will show some evaluation of the relevant theories/ concepts/evidence as applied to research methods examined
2	3-4 marks Answers demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods	3-5 marks Answers demonstrate a basic ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/ concepts/ evidence as applied to research methods in the context of the debate/ question	4-6 marks Answers demonstrate basic arguments. Judgements and conclusions offered will show basic evaluation of the theories/ concepts/ evidence as applied to research methods examined
1	1-2 marks Answers demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods	1-2 marks Answers demonstrate limited ability to select and/or interpret and/ or apply sociological theories/concepts/ evidence as applied to research methods in the context of the debate/ question	1-3 marks Answers demonstrate limited argument. Any judgements and conclusions offered will show limited evaluation of any theories/ concepts/ evidence as applied to research methods examined
	0 marks NRSP	0 marks NRSP	0 marks NRSP

MARK SCHEME

Notes for examiners

The mark scheme for each question is in two parts.

Part 1 is advice on the specific question outlining indicative content which can be used to assess the quality of candidate responses. The content is not prescriptive nor are candidates expected to cover all the material mentioned.

Part 2 is an assessment grid advising bands and associated marks that should be given to responses which demonstrate the qualities needed in AO1, AO2 and, where appropriate, AO3. Where a response is not credit worthy or not attempted it is indicated on the grid as NRSP.