

WJEC GCSE Geography

Approved by Qualifications Wales

Delivery Guide

Teaching from 2025

For award from 2027



This Qualifications Wales regulated qualification
is not available to centres in England.

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Aims of the Delivery Guide

The aim of the Delivery Guide is to give an overview of the qualification and to help teachers understand how we assess the GCSE. It will offer an introduction to the specification, an assessment overview, and will support teachers in better understanding how to prepare their learners for the assessment of the different units. More information on each unit can be found in the separate unit guides.

Qualification Structure

WJEC GCSE Geography consists of 4 units:

	Unit title	Type of Assessment	Weighting
Unit 1	Our Physical and Human World	Written examination	30%
Unit 2	Developing Fieldwork Skills	Non-examination assessment	25%
Unit 3	Our Dynamic and Diverse World	Written examination	30%
Unit 4	Sustainable Solutions	Non-examination assessment	15%

All units are compulsory.

This is a unitised qualification. It is not tiered.

Unit 1

Our Physical and Human World

Written examination

30% of qualification

90 marks

Overview of unit

The purpose of this unit is to:

- introduce learners to the key concepts to be explored throughout the course
- explore an equal balance of physical and human geography
- include core topics that will set the context for the course and give the background needed to complete the other three units.

Learners should also develop their mathematical and statistical skills whilst preparing for this Unit. The depth of coverage required of these skills is given in Appendix B on pages 44-45 of the specification.

Unit 2

Developing Fieldwork Skills

Non-examination assessment – Fieldwork enquiry

Set and marked by WJEC

25% of qualification

90 marks

Overview of unit

The purpose of this unit is to:

- explore both fieldwork and skills
- develop an understanding of the six-stage enquiry model.

Learners should also develop their mathematical and statistical skills whilst preparing for this Unit. The depth of coverage required of these skills is given in Appendix B on pages 44-45 of the specification.

Assessment overview

For this assessment learners are required to undertake a fieldwork enquiry following the six-stage enquiry process.

The assignment, which includes several tasks, will be issued to centres in an Assessment Pack via the WJEC portal. Tasks are not intended to change for the lifetime of the qualification. The two selected themes will change annually. Centres can select **one** of the two themes. The themes are published in the Assessment Pack for Unit 2 for five years. This will be updated to ensure there are always five years' worth of themes to allow for forward planning. Centres have the flexibility to decide when during the year learners undertake the assignment. However, it is important that centres select the topic from the year that they plan to submit the work for marking as this may be different to the year that the candidates undertake the assessment. If candidates choose to re-sit this unit later, they must undertake a fieldwork enquiry for one of the themes selected for the academic year they are submitting.

This assessment contributes to 25% of the overall qualification grade and will take 7 hours for candidates to complete the tasks (this does not include the time it takes to undertake the fieldwork). The tasks will be marked out of a total of 90 marks.

This unit will be assessed through an externally set assignment and will be set and marked by WJEC. Assessments must be submitted digitally (they may be handwritten and scanned or completed digitally).

Centres will be expected to carry out fieldwork for the Unit 2 enquiry on one day, outside the classroom and school grounds. This must be accompanied by a fieldwork statement, signed by the Head of Centre, outlining the date, location and nature of the fieldwork conducted. Centres are encouraged to undertake further fieldwork during the course, either to support learning or to practice for the Unit 2 enquiry, however this is not required to be declared on the fieldwork statement.

Unit 3

Our dynamic and diverse world

Written examination:

30% of qualification

90 marks

Overview of unit

The purpose of this unit is to introduce learners to key areas of human and physical geography, exploring the economic, social, cultural and political inter-connectedness between people and places. Learners will investigate:

- inequality, focusing on human rights and diversity
- weather
- climate and climate change
- physical and human global challenges, including a focus on endangered environments (land and ocean).

Learners should also develop their mathematical and statistical skills whilst preparing for this Unit. The depth of coverage required of these skills is given in Appendix B on pages 44-45 of the specification.

Unit 4

Sustainable Solutions

Non-examination assessment – Decision making exercise

Set by WJEC, marked by centre and moderated by WJEC

15% of qualification

60 marks

Overview of unit

The purpose of this unit is to:

- explore current geographical issues and sustainable futures
- introduce the three pillars of sustainability and sustainability goals, based on taking action
- increase problem solving skills.

Learners should also develop their mathematical and statistical skills whilst preparing for this Unit. The depth of coverage required of these skills is given in Appendix B on pages 44-45 of the specification.

Assessment overview

For this assessment learners are required to undertake a decision-making exercise based on a Resource Pack that contains sustainable issues with several possible options. In Phase 1 of the decision-making candidates will need to research the issue beyond the Resource Pack. Candidates should then produce a maximum of two sides of A4 notes to be used during the assessment. These notes will be submitted alongside the response to the tasks.

The assignment, including the Resource Pack, will be released during the first week of September for assessment in that academic year. The Resource Pack will change annually. Learners should not have access to the Resource Pack until the start of the assessment. Centres have the flexibility to decide when during the year learners undertake the assignment.

This assessment contributes to 15% of the overall qualification grade and will take 5 hours to complete. The assignment could be completed in one sitting, or in multiple, shorter sessions. The assignment will be marked out of a total of 60 marks.

This unit will be assessed through an externally set assignment and will be marked by the centre and moderated by WJEC. Assessments must be submitted digitally (they may be handwritten and scanned or completed digitally).

Summary of assessment

Unit 1: Our Physical and Human World
Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes
30% of qualification
90 marks
Questions requiring objective responses, short and extended answers, with some based around applied situations.
Unit 2: Developing Fieldwork Skills
Non-examination assessment: 7 hours (not including the time it takes to undertake the fieldwork)
25% of qualification
90 marks
Set and marked by WJEC. WJEC will set two topic areas a year from: cycles and flows, settlement, sustainability, mitigating risk, inequality, population, place and space, change over time.
Unit 3: Our Dynamic and Diverse World
Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes
30% of qualification
90 marks
Questions requiring objective responses, short and extended answers, with some based around applied situations.
Unit 4: Sustainable Solutions
Non-examination assessment: 6 hours (3 hours for research and 3 hours to respond to tasks)
15% of qualification
60 marks
Set by WJEC, marked by the Centre and moderated by WJEC.

Aside from Unit 1, which is an introductory unit, there is no hierarchy implied by the order in which the three other units are presented. Therefore, the order does not imply a prescribed teaching order.

Units 1-3 will be available from 2026, with Unit 4 available in 2027.

The first award of the qualification will be 2027.

Assessment Objectives

Unit 1

The distribution of the assessment objectives for this unit is:

AO1	AO2	AO3	Total
15%	10%	5%	30%

Unit 2

The distribution of the assessment objectives for this unit is:

AO2	AO3	AO4	Total
5%	5%	15%	25%

Unit 3

The distribution of the assessment objectives for this unit is:

AO1	AO2	AO3	Total
10%	10%	10%	30%

Unit 4

The distribution of the assessment objectives for this unit is:

AO2	AO3	AO4	Total
5%	5%	5%	15%

Specification and Assessment Pack

When we develop new qualifications, we produce the following documents:

- Specification – this covers all the information and skills that learners are expected to know by the end of their course.
- Assessment Pack – this contains the Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs) i.e.: sample exam papers and sample NEA tasks, relevant controls for the NEA and, mark schemes

This guide builds upon the information in the specification and assessment pack to help further your understanding of said documents.

Understanding the specification amplification

Learners should be made aware of:

- the specification stems
- what the specification stems mean.

Specification Stems

When you look through the specification you will notice in the amplification column, we use a variety of wording before the list of content learners need to know; we call this a stem:

Amplification	
Specification Stem	Learners should:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how water moves through the drainage basin • Know the characteristics of an open system

Each stem is used for a slightly different reason

Specification Stem	When it is used
Learners should know	When learners are required to use direct recall.
Learners should be aware of	When learners do not need to understand all aspects of the specified content in detail. Teachers should refer to guidance for teaching documents for further guidance on the depth and breadth to which this content should be taught.
Learners should understand	When learners are required to demonstrate greater depth than straight identification or recall, for example they can apply knowledge to familiar or unfamiliar contexts and can synthesise and evaluate information for a given purpose.
Learners should be able to	When learners need to apply their knowledge and understanding to a practical situation or demonstrate application of practical skills and techniques.

Command words

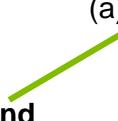
Learners should be made aware of:

- what command words are
- what each command word means
- what each command word assesses.

Command words are the words and phrases used in assessments that tell learners how they should answer the question or complete the task. Command words direct the learner through the question or task and indicate the nature of the response required.

(a) **Describe** **two** reasons why the amount of water in the rivers of a drainage basin is usually higher in winter than in summer.

Command word



The following tables are not exhaustive, but will give you a good idea of the command words we typically use:

Command words for direct recall	
Command Word	Requirements of response
Account	Give reasons for.
Collate	Collect and combine texts, information, or data.
Define	Give the precise meaning of a term.
Describe	Identify distinctive features and give descriptive, factual detail. <i>This is one of the most widely used command words. If an explanation is required, then use two command words: 'describe and explain'.</i>
Drag and drop	Move to another part of a screen using a mouse or similar device.
Find	In response to a mathematical problem.
Give	Produce an answer from recall.
Identify/ Tick/ Click/ Circle	Point out and name from several possibilities.
Label	To designate with a name.
List	State the factors (with no explanation or elaboration).
Match/Link	To choose something that has the same quality as something.
Name	Identify or make a list.
Outline	Set out the main characteristics.
Place	Put in a particular position.
Sort/ Order	Arrange systematically.
State	Express in clear terms.

Command words for application/demonstration of skills:

Command Word	Requirements of response
Apply	Use knowledge and understanding of a theory or concept and relate it to a specified context. Put into effect in an appropriate way.
Calculate	Work out from given facts, figures or information. <i>This command word should only be used in the context of a mathematical question e.g. calculate the value of.</i>
Categorise/classify	Arrange into a particular classification or group.
Clarify	Make (an idea or situation) clear by describing it in more detail.
Change	Make an amendment to, for example, code as required by the question
Collaborate	Contribute to the work of a team, supporting team members as required.
Communicate, write and speak	Share information by speaking or writing.
Complete	Add necessary items/information.
Compose	Write or create.
Construct	Create a framework or argument.
Convert	Change data from one specified form to another
Demonstrate	Exemplify, describe with reference to examples.
Design	Decide upon the look and functioning of something by making or drawing plans.
Discuss	Present key points.
Display	Present information diagrammatically.
Draw	Draw a diagram/graph/line/picture.
Estimate	Assign an approximate value.
Explain	Give reasons or causes. Show an understanding of how or why something has occurred.
Explore	Investigate without preconceptions about the outcome.
Express	Use given information to rewrite a number or an expression in a specified form.
Illustrate>Show	Use a diagram or words to make clear how a concept or theory works in a particular context. Present clarifying examples. Refer to a case study or example.
Implement/Run	Put (a decision, plan, agreement, etc.) into effect/action.
Interrogate	Question formally and systematically.
Investigate	Carry out research or study into a subject or problem.

Make/Produce/Create	To create/make/manufacture.
Modify	Make changes to give a new orientation to or to serve a new end.
Monitor	Observe, check, or keep a continuous record of something.
Participate	Play a role in.
Perform	To carry out or execute a task, action, or activity.
Place	Put in a particular position.
Plan	A detailed proposal for doing or achieving something.
Populate	Add specified items to.
Present	Communicate in a way that can be clearly followed and understood.
Propose	Suggest a course of action based on supported reasons.
Prove	Demonstrate validity based on evidence.
Record	Obtain and store data and information.
Relate	Demonstrate connections between items.
Report	To prepare a detailed account or statement about an event or a topic.
Review	Survey information.
Select/Choose	Make an appropriate choice from a range of options.
Shift	Use arithmetic shift functions
Simplify	Re-write an expression or a number in a simpler form.
Suggest	Put forward an idea, reason or course of action.
Summarise	Give a shortened version of something, stating its main points without detail.
Test	To apply a test as a means of diagnosis.
Transform	To change something into a new form.
Translate	Change words into a different language.
Use	Apply the information provided to a particular theory or concept. Employ, take or hold something for a purpose.
Write	Formulate and write down (for example an algorithm).

Command words for synthesis and evaluation

Command Word	Requirements of response
Advise	Suggest a proposal or course of action based on supported reasons.
Analyse	Separate information into components identify their characteristics.
Argue	Present a reasoned case.
Assess	This is an evaluative question, meaning that there are several possible explanations/arguments/outcomes. Make an informed judgement. Make a judgement about the quality or value of something.
Comment	Present an informed opinion.
Compare	Identify similarities .
Consider	Review and respond to given info.
Contrast	Identify differences only .
Criticise	Assess worth against explicit expectations.
Debate	Present different perspectives on an issue.
Deduce	Draw conclusions from information provided.
Develop	To extend, advance, or elaborate.
Discuss	Examine an issue in detail in a structured way, taking into account different ideas.
Distinguish	Identify the differences between two or more factors.
Evaluate	Judge from available evidence.
Examine	Investigate closely.
Judge	To form an opinion/decide upon critically.
Justify	Support case with evidence.
Recommend/Improve	To suggest as appropriate.
Reflect	To consider thoughts, experiences, situation or issue.
Review	To consider something with the intention making changes if necessary.
Solve	Obtain the answer(s) using a relevant or specified mathematical method.
Suggest	State a possible reason or course of action.
Support	To maintain or advocate.
Synthesise	Combine information, objects or ideas.

Skills Questions and Assessment Objectives

Skills can cover both AO2 and AO3 questions. Please use the following table as a guide to distinguish the difference between the two.

Skills covered	
AO2 Skills questions	AO3 Skills questions
annotating	considering limitations or strengths
calculating	describing why
categorising	drawing conclusions
completing	extracting
constructing	extrapolating
discussing where/how/what from sources	interpolating
drawing	interpreting
identifying from a source	looking at patterns and trends
labelling	predicting
measuring	

Mark Schemes

Mark schemes and/or assessment criteria test the intended learning outcomes for a component. They describe the knowledge and skills (and possibly attitude) that a candidate is expected to demonstrate in their responses, and they are then used in marking the work.

Objective based mark scheme:

For very short answer questions requiring one correct response.

Question		Answer	AO1	AO2	AO3	Total Mark
1.	(a)	Find the correct definition for the term 'drainage basin' below. Put a tick (✓) next to the correct definition.				
		Award one mark for: • An area of land drained by a river and its tributaries.	1			1

Points based mark scheme

For short answer questions with a range of possible responses

Question		Answer	AO1	AO2	AO3	Total Mark
(c)		<p>Give two reasons why the amount of water in the rivers of a Welsh drainage basin, like the one in Diagram 1, is usually higher in winter than in summer.</p> <p>Award one or two marks for basic reasons, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fewer leaves on trees in winter so less interception of rainfall • precipitation is higher in winter so more water in the rivers • lower temperatures meaning less evaporation from the river surfaces • snow is more likely in winter so adds water to the rivers when melting • winter storms bring more rainfall so more water in the rivers. <p>Award three or four marks for more developed reasons, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fewer leaves on trees in winter so less interception meaning water gets into the rivers more quickly and increases flow/discharge • precipitation is higher in winter, so soil becomes saturated more quickly and water enters rivers more quickly • lower temperatures give frozen ground, so less water is available to evaporate from the rivers • snow is more likely in winter so adds water to rivers when melting, especially if the soil is frozen underneath and infiltration doesn't happen • winter storms bring more rainfall that leads to rapid infiltration and saturation of the soil, leading to increased overland flow and subsequently more water in the rivers. <p>Credit any other valid response.</p>	4			4

Levels based mark schemes

For questions requiring extended responses

5.	(d)	Discuss impacts of international migration on one named source country and one named host country you have studied.
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Indicative Content

Impacts selected should be appropriate to the countries selected.

Impacts could include:

- spread and appreciation of other cultures in the host country
- money sent home in remittances to families in the home country
- integration into the host country society creating first - and second - generation families
- population density and unemployment in the source country is reduced
- host country receives skilled migrants to fill key positions e.g. healthcare professionals, and migrants willing to do low paid, menial jobs so a range of employment is available
- migrants who return home are often more skilled, experienced and talented
- reduces labour shortages in the host country
- segregation/discrimination/racism/alienation of migrants in the host country often occurs
- use of detention centres often keeping migrants in poor, prison like conditions
- highly skilled migrants often end up in low paid jobs not suited to the knowledge and skills they can offer the host country
- high risk of death and disease during the migration journey
- brain drain from the source country
- increased pressure on housing, services and amenities in the host country
- break up of families in the source country if some family members migrate and some stay at home.

Examples could vary but might include Mexicans to the USA, Polish (and other EU) migrants to the UK since 2004, African, Caribbean & Asian Migrants to Europe (historical and present day) or a recent environmental example e.g. Haitians to the USA (Florida) after the 2010 earthquake.

Band	AO2
4	<p style="text-align: center;">7-8 marks</p> <p>An excellent discussion, which demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detailed knowledge and understanding of impacts of international migration • balance and coherence • the use of detailed examples which draw on information from different impacts • a clear response that has purpose, is organised and well structured.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">5-6 marks</p> <p>A good discussion, which demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sound knowledge and understanding of impacts of international migration • balance • the use of examples which draw on information from different impacts • a clear response that is organised and well structured.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">3-4 marks</p> <p>A basic discussion, which demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some knowledge and understanding of impacts of international migration • imbalance • partial use of examples which draw on information from different impacts • a generally clear and structured response.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-2 marks</p> <p>A limited discussion, which demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimal knowledge and understanding of impacts of international migration • a one-sided viewpoint • no use of examples • a lack of clarity in parts, and statements that are linked by a basic structure.
0	<p style="text-align: center;">0 marks</p> <p>Response not creditworthy or not attempted.</p>

Important Dates

First Teaching of WJEC GCSE subject	2025
First assessment for Unit 1 (external assessment)	2026
First assessment for Unit 2 (external assessment)	2026
First assessment for Unit 3 (external assessment)	2026
First release of Unit 2 NEA assignment brief	2026
First release of Unit 4 NEA assignment brief	2027
First submission of Unit 2 NEA	2026
First submission of Unit 4 NEA	2027
First Certification	2027