



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2017

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

INTRODUCTION

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2017 examination. It was finalised after detailed discussion at examiners' conferences by all the examiners involved in the assessment. The conference was held shortly after the paper was taken so that reference could be made to the full range of candidates' responses, with photocopied scripts forming the basis of discussion. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to centres but it is recognised at the same time that, without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation.

WJEC regrets that it cannot enter into any discussion or correspondence about this marking scheme.

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 (no relevant sociological point).

GCE A LEVEL SOCIOLOGY
SUMMER 2017 MARK SCHEME

Read the following item and answer all of the questions:

'Lad culture' in Higher Education

The University of Sussex conducted qualitative research with 40 women students in higher education on their experiences of 'lad culture'. Nineteen of the women participated in four focus groups. There were between four to six women in each group. The women in these groups came from four major cities, three English and one Scottish. The remaining 21 women took part in semi-structured interviews. Five of the interviews were in person, ten by Skype and the remaining six by email. The sample was small and self-selecting but attempts were made to achieve some diversity. The majority of the women were white, British and the rest were from a range of other ethnicities. All but two were between the ages of 18 and 25. Most were heterosexual and middle class. Six participants identified themselves as disabled.

Adapted from The University of Sussex. (2013). 'That's what she said: Women students' experiences of 'lad culture' in higher education.'

1. (a) Using material from the item and sociological knowledge, explain one possible weakness of this research. [5]

AO1 band answers will contain accurate knowledge points, one of which will be an accurate identification of a possible weakness. For band 3 AO2, answers should demonstrate sound understanding through examples, one of which should be drawn from the item.

Indicative content:

- One possible weakness identified, for example:
 - small sample
 - lack of representativeness
 - focus on urban universities for focus groups
 - not safe to generalise
 - not reliable
 - limited quantitative data
 - difficult to be certain who has responded to the emails
- Reference to sociological terminology and understanding, for example:
 - lacks reliability
 - data in the form of words – limited quantitative data
 - generalisability problematic
 - interviews subject to interviewer bias
 - interpretation of the data could be open to researcher bias
 - positivists would consider it problematic
- There should be reference to the item

Band	AO1 <i>elements 2a & 2b</i>	AO2 <i>element 1b</i>
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 marks NRSP	0 marks NRSP

- (b) Explain one possible reason why the researchers choose to use focus groups. [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:

- Sensitivity – subject matter could lead to some of the women respondents more likely to open up when in a group situation, socially interacting with others in a similar situation, rather than just one on one with an interviewer – this could be linked to validity.
- The focus groups would have enabled the researchers to reach more women than they might otherwise have done compared to one on one interviews– this could be linked to representativeness and generalisability.
- The researchers were looking for qualitative data and the focus groups would have supplied that – this could be linked to validity.
- Focus groups would have enabled researchers to save time and therefore money – by reaching a larger sample of women.
- The researchers could triangulate the data from the focus groups with the data from the interviews.

The item should be used to contextualise the reason offered.

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

- (c) With reference to the item and sociological studies, discuss the issues sociologists need to consider when choosing sampling techniques for social research. [20]

Answers should address several issues for band 4 AO1 and include at least two studies. For band 4 AO2, the explanation of the issues will be linked to at least one key concept at least one example/explanation should be drawn from the item.

Expect to see a range of sampling techniques discussed

Indicative content

- A definition of sampling.
- There should be reference to the item.
- Concepts such as representativeness, generalisability, reliability and validity are likely to be used.

Issues

- Theoretical – interpretivist v positivist.
 - Whether the researcher is seeking qualitative or quantitative data or both.
 - Extent to which researcher wants to identify patterns and trends.
 - Extent to which researcher wants to be able to generalise from the findings so needs a large representative sample.
 - Extent to which the researcher is seeking in-depth data – validity.
 - Nature of the target population.
 - Accessibility.
 - Research method to be used.
 - Practical – time, access to the target population, funds available.
 - Ethical issues.
-
- There should be reference to appropriate sociological examples such as Jackson (2006), Devine (1992), Bhopal (2001), Archer (2003), MacDonald and Marsh (2005), Willis (1977), Briggs (2012).

Band	AO1 <i>elements 2a & 2b</i>	AO2 <i>element 1b</i>
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. As an A level Sociology student you have been asked to design a research project to collect data on the career aspirations of young people in your local area. [30]
- (i) Describe each stage of your research design, justifying the reasons for your choices at each stage.
- (ii) Discuss problems that may occur and the impact of these problems on the quality of the data collected.

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 problem.

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 <i>elements 2a & 2b</i>	AO2 <i>element 1b</i>	AO3 <i>strands 1-3</i>
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