

## N Ireland GCE Design Principles

Audience: Awarding Organisations whose qualifications will be accredited by CCEA

Purpose: To detail the design principles to be used when designing GCE qualifications. As well as adhering to these principles, GCEs should also comply with the CCEA General Conditions of Recognition and the N Ireland GCE and GCSE Qualifications Criteria.

Principles	
<p><b>1</b> This principle reflects the requirements of the CCEA General Condition of Recognition D.5</p>	<p><b>Compliance with Regulatory requirements</b></p> <p>Each GCE qualification must meet all the requirements specified in the CCEA Accreditation General Conditions of Recognition, the N Ireland GCE and GCSE Qualifications Criteria, the CCEA GCE Design Principles and any other regulatory documents which may be published by CCEA.</p>
<p><b>2</b> This principle is in line with the CCEA General Condition of Recognition B.4</p>	<p><b>Qualification Strategy</b></p> <p>A qualification strategy must be designed for each GCE qualification. This document must be submitted to and approved by CCEA Accreditation prior to the submission of a qualification for accreditation. It must detail the policies and procedures that the awarding organisation has in place to ensure quality in its:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• specification development</li><li>• assessment design</li><li>• assessment delivery</li><li>• assessment monitoring.</li></ul>

Principles	
3	<p><b>Design of GCE Qualifications</b></p> <p><b>3.1 Level of Demand</b>  Each GCE specification must specify the knowledge, understanding and skills required, giving a clear indication of coverage and depth. This must be expressed in terms of what a successful candidate will have learned or be able to do, including where there are optional components.</p> <p>The level of demand of an assessment for a GCE AS qualification must be appropriate to the knowledge, skills and understanding to be reasonably expected of learners who have completed the first year of a course of study designed to lead to the award of a GCE A level qualification in that subject.</p> <p>The level of demand of an assessment for a GCE A level qualification must be appropriate to the knowledge, skills and understanding to be reasonably expected of learners who have completed the full course of study designed to lead to the award of a GCE A level qualification in that subject.  A2 assessments should have an element of synoptic assessment.</p> <p><b>3.2 Qualification size</b>  Each A level qualification must be designed to ensure that it is capable of being assigned 360 hours of Guided Learning.  Each AS qualification must be designed to ensure that it is capable of being assigned 180 hours of Guided Learning.</p> <p><b>3.3 Qualification structure</b>  Each GCE A level qualification must consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 assessed units: 2 units at AS and 2 at A2</li> <li>• an AS contribution of 40% and an A2 contribution of 60% to the overall A level grade;</li> </ul> <p>and permit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only one re-sit opportunity per unit.</li> </ul> <p>Each GCE AS qualification must consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 assessed units</li> <li>• an AS contribution of 40% and an A2 contribution of 60% to the overall A level grade;</li> </ul> <p>and permit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only one re-sit opportunity per unit.</li> </ul>

Principles	
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Assessment in GCE qualifications</b></p> <p>The specification and specimen assessment materials must make clear how the assessments for each GCE qualification allow learners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate their ability to use higher order thinking skills</li> <li>• provide extended responses and evidence of Quality of Written Communication (where appropriate).</li> </ul> <p>In addition, for each GCE A level qualification, A2 units must allow learners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate their ability to draw together different areas of knowledge, skills and / or understanding from across a full course of study for that qualification.</li> </ul> <p>Assessments should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only be available in the summer period</li> <li>• consist of a maximum of 3 hours written examination time at AS (across both units)</li> <li>• consist of a maximum of 4 hours written examination time at A2 (across both units)</li> </ul> <p>Internal assessment should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only be included where it is the most valid way of assessing essential elements of the subject;</li> <li>• have a maximum weighting of 20% of the AS and the total GCE A level marks, unless the awarding organisation provides a rationale for a weighting in excess of 20%</li> </ul>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Grading in GCE qualifications</b></p> <p>Each GCE A level qualification must have specified levels of attainment on a scale (from highest to lowest) of A*, A, B, C, D, E. The designation 'U' or 'unclassified' may be used to indicate performance falling below the specified levels of attainment.</p> <p>Each GCE AS qualification must have specified levels of attainment on a scale (from highest to lowest) of A, B, C, D, E. The designation 'U' or 'unclassified' may be used to indicate performance falling below the specified levels of attainment.</p>

<b>Principles</b>	
<b>6</b>	<p data-bbox="409 223 560 247"><b>Exemptions</b></p> <p data-bbox="409 295 1912 391">Prior to the submission of a GCE qualification for accreditation, an exemption from the Design Principles may be applied for in respect of that qualification. The rationale for the exemption should be detailed in the Qualification Strategy for the subject and must:</p> <ul data-bbox="459 438 1814 614" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="459 438 929 462">• be submitted to CCEA Accreditation</li><li data-bbox="459 470 1243 494">• detail why the exemption is required in relation to the subject</li><li data-bbox="459 502 1388 526">• provide evidence of support for the exemption from relevant stakeholders</li><li data-bbox="459 534 1814 614">• detail how comparability and consistency with similar qualifications will be achieved in the assessment of that qualification.</li></ul>