

# GCE AS and A Level Subject Criteria for Accounting

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## **The criteria**

### **Introduction**

AS and A level subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all AS and A level specifications in a given subject.

They provide the framework within which the awarding organisation creates the detail of the specification.

### **Aims and objectives**

1. AS and A level specifications in accounting should encourage learners to develop:
  - an understanding of the importance of effective accounting information systems and an awareness of their limitations through a critical consideration of current financial issues and modern business practices;
  - an understanding of the purposes, principles, concepts and techniques of accounting;
  - the transferable skills of numeracy, communication, ICT, application, presentation, interpretation, analysis and evaluation in an accounting context;
  - an appreciation of the effects of economic, legal, ethical, social, environmental and technological influences on accounting decisions;
  - a capacity for methodical and critical thought which would serve as an end in itself, as well as a basis for further study of accounting and other subjects.

### **Subject content**

2. **AS** accounting specifications must include:
  - purposes of accounting;
  - preparation of the accounting records of a sole trader:
    - accounting equation and double-entry bookkeeping;
    - classification of capital and revenue expenditure;

- verification of accounting records:
    - trial balance;
    - control accounts;
    - correction of errors and suspense accounts;
  - final accounts and adjustments;
  - accounting concepts;
  - analysis and evaluation of accounting statements;
  - an introduction to budgeting;
  - the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) in accounting.
3. **A2** accounting specifications must include:
- management accounting:
    - standard costing and variance analysis;
    - absorption costing, marginal costing and decision making;
    - capital appraisal;
    - social implications of decision making;
  - published accounts of limited companies:
    - purposes, format and structure, analysis and evaluation;
    - schedule of fixed assets;
    - accounting standards;
    - cash-flow statements;
    - role of the auditor;
    - sources of finance.

## Assessment objectives

4. All learners must meet the following assessment objectives. The assessment objectives are to be weighted in all specifications as indicated in the following table.

Assessment objectives		Weighting		
		AS level	A2 level	A level
<b>AO1</b>	<p><b>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding</b> Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques</p>	30–40%	20–30%	25–35%
<b>AO2</b>	<p><b>Application</b> Select and apply knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques to familiar and unfamiliar situations</p>	40–50%	40–50%	40–50%
<b>AO3</b>	<p><b>Analysis and evaluation</b> Order, interpret and analyse accounting information in an appropriate format</p> <p>Evaluate accounting information, taking into consideration internal and external factors to make reasoned judgements, decisions and recommendations, and assess alternative courses of action using an appropriate form and style of writing</p>	20–30%	30–40%	25–35%

### **Scheme of assessment**

5. Assessment must be entirely through external assessment.

### **Synoptic assessment**

6. Synoptic assessment should be included and test learners' understanding of the connections between different elements of the subject. It relates to all the assessment objectives.
7. Learners should understand the purposes and concepts of accounting and be able to apply these concepts and to prepare, analyse and evaluate accounting records and statements.
8. The emphasis in synoptic assessment should be on learners' ability to think as accountants and to use effectively the accountant's 'tool kit' of concepts, theories and techniques in familiar and unfamiliar situations.

**AS performance descriptions for accounting**

	<b>Assessment objective 1</b>	<b>Assessment objective 2</b>	<b>Assessment objective 3</b>
<b>Assessment objectives</b>	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques.	Select and apply knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques to familiar and unfamiliar situations.	Order, interpret and analyse accounting information in an appropriate format.  Evaluate accounting information, taking into consideration internal and external factors to make reasoned judgments, decisions and recommendations, and assess alternative courses of action using an appropriate form and style of writing.
<b>A/B boundary performance descriptors</b>	Learners characteristically:  a) demonstrate knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques.	Learners characteristically:  a) apply knowledge and understanding of accounting principles and concepts;  b) select and apply appropriate techniques for use in familiar and unfamiliar situations	Learners characteristically:  a) analyse problems, issues and situations drawn from the AS specification in a clear, coherent and effective manner, by selecting, ordering and using appropriate data;  b) evaluate accounting information by taking into account internal and external factors, making

			<p>reasoned decisions and judgements and, where appropriate, recommending a course of action from alternatives;</p> <p>c) use written expression that conveys appropriate meaning, using accurate, specialist vocabulary.</p>
<p><b>E/U boundary performance descriptions</b></p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) apply limited knowledge and understanding of accounting principles and concepts;</p> <p>b) select and apply some appropriate techniques for use in familiar situations.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) analyse problems, issues and situations drawn from the AS specification in a limited manner, by selecting, ordering and using some appropriate data;</p> <p>b) evaluate accounting information by taking into account internal and external factors, making limited decisions and judgements;</p> <p>c) use written expression that conveys some meaning, using limited specialist vocabulary.</p>

**A2 performance descriptions for accounting**

	<b>Assessment objective 1</b>	<b>Assessment objective 2</b>	<b>Assessment objective 3</b>
<b>Assessment objectives</b>	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques.	Select and apply knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques to familiar and unfamiliar situations.	Order, interpret and analyse accounting information in an appropriate format.  Evaluate accounting information, taking into consideration internal and external factors to make reasoned judgments, decisions and recommendations, and assess alternative courses of action using an appropriate form and style of writing.
<b>A/B boundary performance descriptors</b>	Learners characteristically:  a) demonstrate a depth of knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques.	Learners characteristically:  a) apply a depth of knowledge and understanding of accounting principles and concepts;  b) select and apply appropriate techniques for use in familiar and unfamiliar situations, drawn from the AS and A2 specifications, as appropriate.	Learners characteristically:  a) analyse problems, issues and situations drawn from the AS and A2 specifications in a clear, coherent and effective manner:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ select, order and use appropriate data;</li> <li>■ evaluate accounting information, taking into account internal and external</li> </ul>

			<p>factors;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ make reasoned judgements;</li> </ul> <p>b) recommend a course of action based on appropriate decisions;</p> <p>c) use written expression that conveys appropriate meaning, using accurate, specialist vocabulary.</p>
<p><b>E/U boundary performance descriptions</b></p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) apply some knowledge and understanding of accounting principles and concepts;</p> <p>b) select and apply some appropriate techniques for use in familiar and unfamiliar situations, drawn from the AS and A2 specifications, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) analyse problems, issues and strategies drawn from the AS and A2 specifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ select, order and use data;</li> <li>■ evaluate accounting information, taking into account internal and external factors;</li> <li>■ make some reasoned judgements;</li> </ul> <p>b) use written expression adequate to convey meaning, including some specialist vocabulary.</p>

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation	
Spring Place	2nd Floor
Coventry Business Park	Glendinning House
Herald Avenue	6 Murray Street
Coventry CV5 6UB	Belfast BT1 6DN

Telephone 0300 303 3344

Textphone 0300 303 3345

Helpline 0300 303 3346