Key Skills – GCE Sociology

This Appendix offers detailed guidance on the Key Skills evidence that candidates might produce during their programme of study. It focuses on the evidence required to meet the criteria for the internally assessed Key Skills portfolio. For example, in producing work for assessment as evidence of C3.2 (Read and synthesise information from two extended documents about a complex subject. One of these documents should include at least one image.) a candidate is required to:

- select and read material that contains the information you need;

- identify accurately, and compare, the lines of reasoning and main points from text and images; and

- synthesise the key information in a form that is relevant to your purpose.

The Key Skills and Evidence Requirements below are quoted from the Part B of the QCA Key Skills specifications and, as such, are addressed to the candidate. The text below the Evidence Requirements is guidance for teachers about how the specification might be used to provide teaching and learning opportunities and/or assessment opportunities for the Key Skill.

For further information, teachers should refer to QCA's Key Skills specifications (for use in programmes starting from September 2000).

For further information about the assessment and certification of Key Skills, teachers should contact OCR.

C3　Communication Level 3

C3.1a　*Contribute to a group discussion about a complex subject.*

Evidence requirements

(i)　Make clear and relevant contributions in a way that suits your purpose and situation.

(ii)　Listen and respond sensitively to others, and develop points and ideas.

(iii)　Create opportunities for others to contribute when appropriate.

Possible opportunities

A sociology course will normally include many opportunities for discussion. However, candidates must not only participate in discussion but must also produce the evidence listed above. They therefore need to be fully aware of the evidence requirements. The sociology teacher/lecturer is in a position to help candidates develop their discussion skills during the course. The teacher/lecturer is likely also to be the assessor in this context and will have to keep records which will make it possible to produce valid witness testimony of a candidate's performance in discussion, for the candidate to include in their portfolio.

C3.1b　*Make a presentation about a complex subject, using at least one image to illustrate complex points.*

Evidence requirements

(i)　Speak clearly and adapt your style of presentation to suit your purpose, subject, audience and situation.

(ii)　Structure what you say so that the sequence of information and ideas may be easily followed.

(iii)　Use a range of techniques to engage the audience, including effective use of images.

Possible opportunities

While candidate presentations are not automatically part of a sociology course, they can be a valuable part of the learning process and add interest and variety to any part of the course. As with C3.1a, the sociology teacher/lecturer is in a position to help candidates develop their presentation skills during their course. The best presentation opportunities may be available to candidates who take the Research options in module 2535 and/or module 2538. Suitable images could include graphs, charts etc. If candidates work together to prepare and perhaps to deliver a presentation, they will be able to develop and produce evidence for the key skill Working with Others.

C3.2 *Read and synthesise information from two extended documents about a complex subject. One of these documents should include at least one image.*

Evidence requirements

(i)   Select and read material that contains the information you need.

(ii)   Identify accurately, and compare, the lines of reasoning and main points from texts and images.

(iii)   Synthesise the key information in a form that is relevant to your purpose.

Possible opportunities

Sociology candidates normally have to plan essays and/or reports during every part of their course. They may draw on several sources, including original sources as well as textbooks, and include images such as graphs and charts. They develop their skills as the course progresses. They therefore generate the evidence required for this part of the key skill unit. This could take the form of their notes for the essay/report. There are also many opportunities in the context of module 2535 and/or module 2538.

C3.3 *Write two different types of documents about complex subjects. One piece of writing should be an extended document and include at least one image.*

Evidence requirements

(i)   Select and use a form and style of writing that is appropriate to your purpose and complex subject matter.

(ii)   Organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate.

(iii)   Ensure your text is legible and your spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate so your meaning is clear.

Possible opportunities

Using the material they have assembled in the context of C3.2, candidates are able to generate evidence for C.3 by writing essays and reports. Opportunities can be created throughout the course in the context of homework assignments. Teachers/lecturers may need to give candidates particular guidance in developing a form and style of writing that is appropriate to a sociology essay or report, and in using the specialist vocabulary of sociology.

N3 Application of Number Level 3

You must:

Plan and carry through at least *one* substantial and complex activity that includes tasks for N3.1, N3.2 and N3.3

N3.1 *Plan, and interpret information from two different types of sources, including a large data set.*

Evidence requirements

(i)   Plan how to obtain and use the information required to meet the purpose of your activity.

(ii)   Obtain the relevant information.

(iii)   Choose appropriate methods for obtaining the results you need and justify your choice.

Possible opportunities

In modules 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537 and 2539, candidates may have opportunities to develop their skills in this part of the Application of Number key skill when they are preparing an essay or other assignment about, for example, changes in the demographic composition of families, the relationship between educational achievement and aspects of social inequality, or the prevalence of poverty. However, they are unlikely to be able to meet the evidence requirement to "plan and carry through at least one substantial and complex activity that includes tasks for N3.1, N3.2 and N3.3".

Candidates taking the Personal Study option in module 2538 may, however, choose to design and carry through a Study which involves obtaining quantitative secondary data, possibly through electronic databases, and on-line sources such as the official statistics obtainable on government websites (eg the ONS website). In this case, candidates may be able to generate portfolio evidence for both their AoN and their IT key skills at the same time. See IT3.1 above.

N3.2 *Carry out multi-stage calculations to do with:*

(a)   amounts and sizes;

(b)   scales and proportion;

(c)   handling statistics;

(d)   rearranging and using formulae.

You should work with a large data set on at least **one** occasion.

Evidence requirements

(i)   Carry out calculations to appropriate levels of accuracy, clearly showing your methods.

(ii)   Check methods and results to help ensure errors are found and corrected.

(iii)   Possible opportunities

Sociology candidates should be encouraged throughout their course to develop skills in handling, analysing and presenting statistical evidence, thus developing this part of the key skill of Application of Number, especially (a) (b) and (c).

However, see also N3.1.

N3.3 *Interpret results of your calculations, present your findings and justify your methods. You must use at least one graph, one chart and one diagram.*

Evidence requirements

(i)   Select appropriate methods of presentation and justify your choice.

(ii)   Present your findings effectively.

(iii)   Explain how the results of your calculations relate to the purpose of your activity.

Possible opportunities

See N3.2 above. Modules 2534, 2535, 2537, 2538 and 2539 are particularly rich in statistical material, as are all the options in module 2536. Diagrams are often a valuable method of presenting the logical flow of an argument, or the relationship between the theoretical perspectives of different sociologists and research studies.

IT3 IT Level 3

You must:

Plan and carry through at least one substantial activity that includes tasks for IT3.1, IT3.2 and IT 3.3

IT3.1 *Plan and use different sources to search for, and select, information required for two different purposes.*

Evidence requirements

(i)   Plan how to obtain and use the information required to meet the purpose of your activity.

(ii)   Choose appropriate sources and techniques for finding information and carry out effective searches.

(iii)   Make selections based on judgements of relevance and quality.

Possible opportunities

In modules 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537 and 2539, candidates may have opportunities to develop their skills in this part of the IT key skill (eg by searching the internet or other databases) when preparing an essay or other assignment. However, they are unlikely to be able to meet the evidence requirement to "plan and carry through at least one substantial activity that includes tasks for IT3.1, IT3.2 and IT 3.3".

Candidates taking the Personal Study option in module 2538 may, however, choose to design and carry through a Study which is based on secondary data obtainable through electronic databases, and on-line sources such as the official statistics obtainable on government websites (eg the ONS website). In this case, they may be able to generate portfolio evidence for their IT key skill. For other website suggestions, please see the Reading List in Section 7 of this specification.

IT3.2 *Explore, develop, and exchange information and derive new information to meet two different purposes.*

Evidence requirements

(i)   Enter and bring together information in a consistent form, using automated routines where appropriate.

(ii)   Create and use appropriate structures and procedures to explore and develop information and derive new information.

(iii)   Use effective methods of exchanging information to support your purpose.

Possible opportunities

See IT3.1 above.

IT3.3 *Present information from different sources for two different purposes and audiences. Your work must include at least one example of text, one example of images and one example of numbers.*

Evidence requirements

(i)   Develop the structure and content of your presentation using the views of others, where appropriate, to guide refinements.

(ii)   Present information effectively, using a format and style that suits your purpose and audience.

(iii)   Ensure your work is accurate and makes sense.

Possible opportunities

See IT3.1 above. Please note the requirement to present information from different sources for two different purposes and audiences.

WO3 Working with Others Level 3

You must:

Provide at least *one* substantial example of meeting the standard for WO3.1, WO3.2 and WO 3.3. (You must show you can work in both one-to-one and group situations.)

WO3.1 *Plan complex work with others, agreeing objectives, responsibilities and working arrangements.*

Evidence requirements

(i)   Agree realistic objectives for working together and what needs to be done to achieve them.

(ii)   Exchange information, based on appropriate evidence, to help agree responsibilities.

(iii)   Agree suitable working arrangements with those involved.

Possible opportunities

The best opportunities to develop these skills during a course based on these specification, and to generate portfolio evidence, are likely to occur if candidates work in pairs and/or groups to prepare presentations. This will also generate evidence for Communication. However, as explained in Appendix E, paragraph 5, candidates who opt for module 2538 (the Personal Study) may work in pairs or groups in the early stages of their work, though they must submit individual Studies. Teachers/lecturers may well need to help candidates develop their skills in identifying "realistic objectives" especially in the context of the Personal Study.

WO3.2 *Seek to establish and maintain co-operative working relationships over an extended period of time, agreeing changes to achieve agreed objectives.*

Evidence requirements

(i)   Organise and carry out tasks so you can be effective and efficient in meeting your responsibilities and produce the equality of work required.

(ii)   Seek to establish and maintain co-operative working relationships, agreeing ways to overcome any difficulties.

(iii)   Exchange accurate information on progress of work, agreeing changes where necessary to achieve objectives.

Possible opportunities

See WO 3.1

WO3.3 *Review work with others and agree ways of improving collaborative work in the future.*

Evidence requirements

(i)   Agree the extent to which work with others has been successful and the objectives have been met.

(ii)   Identify factors that have influenced the outcome.

(iii)   Agree ways of improving work with others in the future.

Possible opportunities

See WO3.1. It is in this part of the key skill that candidates are likely to need most help from teachers/lecturers as they develop their skills, and advice on how best to generate and present evidence of their achievements. Please note that it is not necessary for the activity to have been "successful" for this evidence to be generated. An activity that has failed to produce the desired result can be evaluated just as effectively, and may be particularly useful for (iii).

LP3 Improving own Learning and Performance Level 3

You must:

Provide at least *one* substantial example of meeting the standard for LP3.1, LP3.2 and LP3.3.

LP3.1 *Agree targets and plan how these will be met over an extended period of time, using support from appropriate people.*

Evidence requirements

(i) Seek information on ways to achieve what you want to do, and identify factors that might affect your plans.

(ii) Use this information to agree realistic targets with appropriate people.

(iii) Plan how you will effectively manage your time and use of support to meet targets, including alternative action for overcoming possible difficulties.

Possible opportunities

Portfolio evidence for this part of this key skill is likely to be generated across the breadth of a candidate's Advanced Level programme. The sociology teacher/lecturer can make an important contribution to candidates' development of the necessary skills by being clear about deadlines and targets and by discussing strategies to meet them. Candidates who opt for module 2538 (the Personal Study) are well advised to practise and develop the skills in this unit and will be able to generate evidence for their portfolio. Part-time candidates, especially adults, may be in particular need of this key skill and will be in a strong position to generate evidence for their portfolio.

LP3.2 *Take responsibility for your learning by using your plan, and seeking feedback and support from relevant sources, to help meet targets.*

Improve your performance by:

- studying a complex subject;
- learning through a complex practical activity;
- further study a practical activity that involves independent learning.

Evidence requirements

(i) Manage your time effectively to complete tasks, revising your plan as necessary.

(ii) Seek and actively use feedback and support from relevant sources to help you meet targets; and

(iii) Select and use different ways of learning to improve your performance, adapting approaches to meet new demands.

Possible opportunities

See LP3.1. The teacher/lecturer is likely to be one of the "relevant sources" in (ii).

LP3.3 *Review progress on two occasions and, establish evidence of achievements, including how you have used learning from other tasks to meet new demands.*

Evidence requirements

(i)   Provide information on the quality of your learning and performance, including factors that have affected the outcome.

(ii)   Identify targets you have met, seeking information from relevant sources to establish evidence of your achievements.

(iii)   Exchange views with appropriate people to agree ways to further improve your performance.

Possible opportunities

See LP3.1 and LP3.2. The teacher/lecturer is likely to be one of the "relevant sources" in (ii) and "appropriate people" in (iii).

PS3   Problem Solving Level 3

You must:

Provide at least **one** substantial example of meeting the standard for PS3.1, PS3.2 and PS3.3.

PS3.1   *Explore a complex problem, come up with* three *options for solving it and justify the option selected for taking forward.*

Evidence requirements

(i)   Explore the problem, accurately analysing its features, and agree with others on how to show success in solving it.

(ii)   Select and use a variety of methods to come up with different methods of tackling the problem.

(iii)   Compare the main features of each possible option, including risk factors, and justify the option you select to take forward.

Possible opportunities

"A problem exists when there is a gap between an existing situation and what is desirable". It excludes personal problems and routine "problems" such as difficulty in meeting homework deadlines. Such a problem is therefore unlikely to arise in the normal course of a programme based on these specifications. However, the skills that are needed in problem solving can be developed during the programme. Candidates who opt for the Personal Study in module 2538 are more likely to encounter problems of the type to which this unit relates. Teachers/lecturers can support them as they tackle the problem and should play a key role in (i) above and will probably be the person to whom the selected option has to be justified in (iii).

PS3.2   *Plan and implement at least one option for solving the problem, review progress and revise your approach as necessary.*

Evidence requirements

(i)   Plan how to carry out your chosen option and obtain agreement to go ahead from appropriate person.

(ii)   Implement your plan, effectively using support and feedback from others as necessary.

(iii)   Review progress towards solving the problem and revise your approach as necessary.

Possible opportunities

See PS3.1. Teachers/lecturers will be able to help candidates identify resource needs and risk factors in (ii).

PS3.3 *Apply agreed methods to check if problem has been solved, describe the results and review your approach to problem solving.*

Evidence requirements

(i)   Agree with an appropriate person, methods to check if the problem has been solved.

(ii)   Apply these methods accurately, draw conclusions and fully describe the results.

(iii)   Review your approach to problem solving, including whether alternative methods and options might have proved more effective.

Possible opportunities

See PS3.1 and PS3.2. The teacher/lecturer is likely to be the "appropriate person" in (i), and to be one of the people who provide support and feedback in (ii). They may also be able to help candidates with their reviews and revised approaches in (iii). The problem-solving process may also generate evidence for Working with Others.