

What is 'controlled assessment'?

Controlled assessment is really just supervised coursework. The key difference between the old-style coursework and the new controlled assessment is that some aspects of the coursework project are completed under strictly supervised conditions (similar to exam conditions).

What are the controlled assessment requirements for each specification?

AQA A requires one 'local fieldwork investigation' in Unit 3, worth 25% (2000 word limit).

AQA B requires one 'local investigation including fieldwork' in Unit 4, worth 15% (1200 word limit), PLUS one 'geographical issue investigation' worth 10% (800 word limit). The 'geographical issue investigation' has no fieldwork requirement and will therefore be done at schools using secondary data.

Edexcel A and Edexcel B both require one fieldwork investigation in Unit 4, worth 25% (2000 word limit).

OCR A requires one investigation on 'how consumer decisions may have a positive or negative impact on people' (1000 word limit) PLUS one investigation on 'a local retail area' (1000 word limit) in Unit A672. They are marked together and are worth 25% in total, but only one of them *must* include primary data collection. This means that FSC is only likely to sell courses on the 'local retail area' task.

OCR B requires one 'fieldwork focus' (1200 word limit) PLUS one 'geographical investigation' (800 word limit) in Unit B562. They are worth 25% in total. The 'geographical investigation' has no *compulsory* fieldwork requirement but schools may include it where relevant. We may therefore get occasional requests to add on a short piece of fieldwork on ecosystems, crime or tourism if schools have chosen one of these topics for their 'geographical investigation'.

WJEC A requires one 'fieldwork enquiry' in Unit 3, worth 10% (1000 word limit) PLUS one 'problem solving exercise' worth 15% (1000 word limit). There is no requirement for fieldwork in the problem solving task but it can be included if appropriate.

WJEC B requires one 'geographical enquiry' in Unit 3, worth 15% (no word limit mentioned) PLUS 'the issue', worth 10% (no word limit mentioned). 'The issue' has no fieldwork requirement but it can be included if appropriate.

CCEA requires one 'fieldwork report' in Unit 3, worth 25% (2000 word limit).

What format can the completed controlled assessment task take?

Most students will write their controlled assessment in the style of a coursework report. Edexcel A (page 49), Edexcel B (page 36) and OCR A (page 14) state in their specifications that students can mix and match their outputs. They can use a traditional report-style write-up or combine video clips, Powerpoint slides etc.

Who marks the work?

Teachers mark the work (which is then cross-moderated by another teacher in their department) and a sample number of projects are sent for external moderation.

What is a 'task statement'?

A term used to mean a broad title for a controlled assessment task, given by the exam board (e.g. "Rivers environments are very different in their upper and lower sections"). The tasks are changed each year in line with QCA requirements. Most specifications are encouraging personalisation of the task briefs. Therefore, the task statements are broad enough to allow a number of different hypotheses to be investigated for the same site.

### When is controlled assessment carried out?

It is up to the school to decide when to undertake the controlled assessment fieldwork. There is no requirement for all stages of the controlled assessment to be done at once and the report can be completed and then stored for subsequent entry.

It is important that tutors check they are delivering the right controlled assessment task. **The task statement chosen needs to be relevant to the year in which it is being examined.** For example, if an AQA school do fieldwork in 2010 (before May) then they can technically submit it for June 2010 or June 2011 assessment. If they intend to submit the controlled assessment for the June 2011 series then they must do the 2011 title (as the 2010 titles will only be examined up to June 2010). The exam boards will continue to release task statements on a two year advanced basis. The task statements can be found on the intranet or in the relevant teacher's guides produced by the exam boards.

All specifications except OCR B are offering examination of controlled assessment in June only (OCR B also have a January entry). WJEC and CCEA's first assessment opportunity is 2011 but AQA, Edexcel and OCR's first assessment opportunity is 2010.

A previous year's task may not be **re-submitted** in the following examination session.

### What are the different levels of control?

There are three different levels of control: limited, medium and high. Nationally, controlled assessment has been divided into: task setting; task taking and task marking.

**Task setting** has a high level of control. This means that the exam board have set the broad task statements and change these each year.

**Task taking** is done under a mixture of limited and high control, depending on the exact stage of the coursework (see below). The 'write-up' is a term used by exam boards to refer to the bit of the controlled assessment that is written under high control conditions.

**Task marking** has a medium level of control. This is because the work is marked by teachers, then internally moderated, and then moderated by the exam board.

### 'Task taking' levels of control

**Fieldwork** is carried out under **limited control** for all specifications. Students can work in groups to collect data and can discuss their findings with the teacher.

The **research and data collection** stages for all specifications are carried out under **limited control**.

The **analysis and evaluation** stages for all specifications are carried out under **high control**.

Processing and presenting data is limited control **but** as soon as there is further selection and refinement of data leading to analysis and interpretation then high control must start.

Tutors should ensure that the maximum time limits for each section (given in the specification) are adhered to.

### What happens during the limited control 'research and data collection' stage?

Students can:

- communicate with each other and the teacher.
- work in groups to collect fieldwork data and discuss their findings with the teacher but must complete their research individually.
- carry out fieldwork in groups whilst not being *directly* supervised by a teacher (i.e. usual GAPS procedure).
- have access to secondary resources (such as books, journals, internet) to do their research and planning.

Tutors can:

- give students a copy of the assessment criteria and ensure that they are familiar with the route to enquiry.
- give unlimited feedback and guidance to students but must keep a record of this.
- provide some research material to students if gaining access to it is problematic (e.g. local plans, GOAD maps) but need to give the visiting member of staff a copy.
- consolidate the data collected with the students.

Tutors must not:

- carry out a practice run / pilot study using the actual controlled assessment titles.
- provide writing frames, model answers or written feedback on drafts.
- allow students to copy research material from each other.
- allow students to introduce any material into their assessment that has been prepared elsewhere (unless it is material sourced during an earlier planning lesson under supervision in their school).

Each student should have a folder in which draft material is stored alongside work completed for submission. This folder must be collected in at the end of each session and re-issued to students at the start of the next session (or left in a **locked** classroom so that they cannot gain access to it without supervision). Students must include a list of any resources (including websites) that are used during the research section. They must also reference any secondary data or direct quotes used in their controlled assessment.

#### What happens during the high control 'analysis and evaluation' stage?

This level of control refers to the write-up phase of the controlled assessment, i.e. the description, interpretation, analysis, conclusion and evaluation. **Tutors must ensure that work is saved securely so that students cannot amend or add to the saved material between sessions.**

Students can:

- have access to any resources that were sourced and checked during their research stage.
- use a laptop to write their report (assuming other high control conditions are met) or hand write it.
- use a spelling and grammar checker on their laptop if they are following the AQA A or B specification.

Students must not:

- work collaboratively with another student.
- communicate with each other in any way.
- have access to the internet\*.
- have access to new resources (they are allowed access to those collected during the research stage, e.g. maps).
- have access to removable media (e.g. USB pens).
- use the spell checker on their laptop if they are following the WJEC A or B specification.

Tutors can:

- assist with technical issues such as ICT problems.
- give guidance over the use of time (e.g. a reminder of the time left).

Tutors must not:

- give any further guidance or advise students how to approach the task (other than mentioned above).
- leave students without direct formal supervision.
- allow students to take any materials away with them at the end of a session.

\* Edexcel is permitting access to a limited number of approved websites under high control to allow the production and analysis of personalised GIS maps. Edexcel will provide the list of which sites are acceptable.

#### What are the ICT requirements?

Ideally all students should have access to the internet to support their research stage, but this is not a compulsory requirement. Students can hand write or type their final report but in order to access the highest mark bands for some specifications they must show evidence of ICT use. Edexcel, OCR and WJEC are also encouraging the use of a range of modes, e.g. Powerpoint, video etc.

**For AQA A, there is a requirement for at least one presentation technique to be ICT based and 'some' of the presentation techniques need to be ICT based for Level 3. For AQA B, there must be 'an element of ICT data presentation within the work' for Level 1 and 'clear evidence of data presentation within the work' for Level 3.**

For WJEC A, 'where opportunities exist to use ICT to access GIS, collate group work findings and present results, these should be promoted'. There is reference to aerial and satellite imagery, GIS, maps at different scales etc. in the top mark range for the skills section. A range, but not all, of these skills are needed and it would be difficult to achieve this without access to ICT. For WJEC B, there is no explicit mention of GIS etc. in the mark scheme. However, the general blurb in the specification says students need to select and process data using a range of techniques 'which may include utilising graphical skills, annotating photographs and / or sketches, utilising illustrations, mapping, refining material gained from ICT sources'. **Students studying WJEC A or B must not use their computer spell check and grammar facility during the high control sections.**

For OCR A and B, the specification says 'where appropriate candidates should be given opportunities to use ICT' but there is no explicit mark scheme requirement. The use of ICT is 'strongly advised' during the Geographical Investigation component for OCR B. OCR have specified acceptable digital file formats for the controlled assessment (e.g. audio formats must be MPEG .mp3). These can be found on the back page of the specification.

For Edexcel A, the use of alternative formats is encouraged but there is nothing explicit in the mark scheme. However, in Unit 1 of the specification (Geographical Skills and Challenges) students must study GIS and ICT skills so including these in our controlled assessment courses would be a huge selling point. The general blurb in the controlled assessment skills section of the specification says that says students should demonstrate 'extraction and interpretation of information from a range of different sources, such as Ordnance Survey maps, photographs, drawing, diagrams and tables, and use of technologies, such as GIS and the internet'. **Edexcel B is much more explicit and says 'the use of GIS and digital maps should be used during the students' fieldwork investigations'**. Assessment criterion b (methods of data collection) and assessment criterion c (data presentation and report production) assess the student's ability to use GIS in the fieldwork investigation. Examples of GIS are Google Earth and Google Maps as well as dedicated mapping or GIS software (Anquet Maps, Infomapper, Aegis, ArcMapper).

### Other considerations

Ideally students should do a practice day at an FSC centre as part of a 5 day course before doing their controlled assessment. They are not allowed to practice using the actual title but they can be given a mock title. There is nothing to prevent students from being taught techniques of data presentation and analysis using a mock title. Students can practice suggesting possible investigation hypotheses and should consider data collection and sampling. They should be given a copy of the mark scheme and a briefing about the format, timing and available / acceptable techniques for the production and presentation of the report. During their practice day, students should be encouraged to critically evaluate choices and limitations of locations, sampling, measurement, equipment and techniques. These points will ensure that they are better prepared to tackle their real controlled assessment.