AQA Geography A Level at a Glance:

AS Examinations:

Unit 1 – GEOG1 Physical and Human Geography
70% of AS, 35% of A Level
2 hour written examination
120 marks
Structured short and extended questions
Examined June 2014

Unit 2 – GEOG2 Geographical Skills
30% of AS, 15% of A Level
1 hour written examination
50 marks
Structured skills and generic fieldwork questions
Examined June 2014

AS Award
1031

A2 Examinations:

Unit 3 – GEOG3 Contemporary Geographical Issues
30% of A Level
2 hour 30 minutes written examination
90 marks
Structured short and extended answer questions, plus one 40 mark essay

Unit 4 - GEO4A Geographical Fieldwork Investigations
20 % of A Level
1 hour 30 minutes written examination
60 marks
Structured short and extended answer questions based on a piece of geographical fieldwork you have undertaken during the course of the A2 course and generic geographical skills

A Level Award
2031
AQA Geography A2

This year you will follow a more issues-based approach to your geographical studies with a focus on contemporary (current) themes. There are two Units of Study for A2. These are:

Unit 3 GEOG 3 - Contemporary Geographical Issues. Examined in June 2014
Unit 4 GEOG 4A – Geographical Fieldwork Investigation. Examined in June 2014

GEOG 3 – Contemporary Geographical Issues:

In this Unit you will study 3 topics, 2 of which will be physical and the other human centred. The examination paper carries 90 marks and is divided into 3 sections labelled A, B and C. Sections A and B are short / extended style questions marked out of 25. Section C is synoptic essay based. You are expected to answer 1 essay question which carries 40 marks.

Physical Option One: Plate tectonics and associated hazards

- Earth structure, theory of plate tectonics and supporting evidence
- Types of plate margins and associated processes and landforms
- Hot spot activity

Vulcanicity:
- Variations in volcanic activity in relation to type of plate boundary and types of lava
- Intrusive and extrusive volcanic activity
- Minor volcanic activity including geysers and hot springs
- Major forms of extrusive activity – types of volcanoes
- Nature, associated hazards and management of volcanic events with focus on case studies – at least 2

Seismicity:
- Causes, characteristics and associated hazards of earthquake events – with focus on case studies – at least 2
- Types of seismic waves
- Earthquake measurement techniques
- Tsunamis
Physical Option Two: Ecosystems: Change and Challenge

- Definition of key terms
- Identification of what an ecosystem is and how it is structured
- Energy flows, trophic levels, food chains and webs within an ecosystem

Ecosystems in the British Isles with changes over time:
- In-depth study of succession and climatic climax on a psammosere and halosere with fieldwork opportunities. POSSIBLE COURSEWORK AREA.
- Characteristics of the climatic climax in the temperate deciduous woodland biome
- Study of heather moorland to illustrate the impacts of human activity on succession – concept of a plagioclimax

The study of one tropical biome – the Tropical Equatorial Rainforests:
- Main characteristics, adaptations and flora and fauna
- Development issues in the biome in relation to biodiversity and potential for sustainability

Ecosystem issues on a local scale:
- Impact of human activity in relation to urbanisation
- Urban niches, colonisation of waste land, ecologies along route ways
- Planned and unplanned introduction of new species and impact of this
- Changes in the rural urban fringe
- One case study of ecological conservation area

Ecosystem issues on a global scale:
- Relationship between human activity, biodiversity and sustainability
- Management of fragile environments – conservation versus exploitation via 2 contrasting case studies

Human Option: Global Cities

- Global pattern of world cities, millionaire cities and mega cities
- Economic development and change in relation to urbanisation

Contemporary urbanisation processes:
- Issues examined via case studies from countries and contrasting stages of development
- Causes, effects and character of urbanisation, suburbanisation, counter-urbanisation, re-urbanisation
• Planning and management issues

Urban decline and regeneration within an urban areas:
• Character and causes of urban decline
• Urban regeneration, gentrification, property-led regeneration, co-operation between local, regional, national and private sectors

Retail and other services:
• Decentralisation of retail and other services
• Case study of an out-of-town shopping centre
• Case study of redevelopment of an urban centre – impacts and response

Contemporary sustainability issues in urban areas:
• Waste management, recycling and other options
• Transport and its management with focus on the development of integrated, efficient and sustainable systems

GEOG 4A

In this Unit you will have the opportunity to undertake some fieldwork based on the ecosystems topic in GEOG3. You will extend your skills associated with planning an enquiry, collecting primary and secondary data, presentation and analysis of data and concluding and evaluating your enquiry. The exam for this unit has a similar structure to the GEOG2 paper that you sat for AS. There are 2 questions: one based on your own fieldwork experience and the tests your ability to apply your skills to an unfamiliar context.
A2 Examinations

Unit 3 GEOG3 Contemporary Geographical Issues Examination

- **Examination date:**
  - 2 hr 30 min exam
  - 90 marks
  - 120 UMS (30 % of A Level)
  - 3 Sections :

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Questions Description</th>
<th>Marks and Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Short / extended questions on physical topics – <strong>Plate Tectonics OR Ecosystems</strong></td>
<td>25 marks are available at a range of 7, 8 and 10 mark questions, 45 minutes approx for each set of questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Short / extended questions on human topic – <strong>MUST be World Cities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Essay – Physical topics – <strong>EITHER Plate Tectonics OR Ecosystems</strong></td>
<td>40 marks, 60 minutes approx</td>
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- I advise you to choose the essay question from Section C first and remember that you MAY NOT answer the same topic question from Section A. i.e. if you choose the plate tectonic essay from Section C you MUST answer the ecosystems question from Section A

Unit 4 GEOG4A Geographical Fieldwork Investigation

- **Examination date:**
  - 1 hr 30 min exam
  - 60 marks
  - 80 UMS (20 % of A Level)
  - Structured short and extended questions based on data collected during the fieldtrip and generic geographical skills
Our Expectations of You

You have made the decision to study Geography and therefore you are expected to take responsibility for your own learning and to develop a positive and proactive approach to your A Level studies. We expect you to:

- Be motivated, enthusiastic and engaged with your learning
- Be an independent learner
- Have an enquiring mind and ask lots of questions
- Arrive on time prepared to learn with correct equipment
- Complete and hand in all homework and assessment work on time and completed to the best of your ability
- Keep your file organised and bring it to lectures
- Respect all individuals and value their opinions

If you find a topic difficult
In the first instance see your subject lecturer, if this is not possible ask your tutor for support.

If you want extra reading material
We have a wide range of books, magazines and hand-outs in addition to those in class. The librarians will help you use the Learning Resource Centre facilities, such as the journals, books, electronic resources and internet research sites.

If your lecturer is absent
If the absence is known in advance, work will be set. If the absence is unexpected you are required to wait until another staff member arrives with work for you to complete. We will contact you via email and it is important that you check your Hartpury email on a daily basis.

If you are absent
If you know you will be absent complete the Authorised Absence forms. These will be explained to you in detail during tutorial session. If your absence is unexpected you must inform Student Services before 9.30am in accordance with your student contract.

We would also like you to email us so that we are aware of your absence as soon as possible. This means that we can give you the details of the work you will be missing and any important messages that might be given out that day. This should make it easier for you to keep up with everything that happens in the course.

You can also use Moodle to catch up on any work missed. It is your responsibility to collect/download the relevant hand-outs.

Because all students here at the A Level Centre have other activities that take up a lot of time, e.g. horses, football, we use Moodle to store a lot of information to help you catch up on missed lessons and to improve your knowledge in general.
How we will Monitor and Support You:

The department spends a lot of time following the progress of its students:

- Homework is set, marked and returned regularly. This includes detailed feedback on how to improve.
- After each topic questions are set to review topic knowledge. All are marked and returned with mark schemes and how to improve feedback.
- Past exam questions and papers are visited regularly to improve familiarity with expectations and skill requirements.
- All students receive grades following a discussion of their progress. A written record is kept of these interviews so that points raised can be reviewed. Targets will be discussed and set at each review.
- Each student is encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. This means working in the manner which best suits each individual, lecturers and tutors are always available for advice on how to improve study skills.
- Spot file checks will be completed throughout the year so make sure they are organised and brought to every lecture
- Each student’s presence/absence is recorded in every lesson and tutors are informed if attendance gives cause for concern

Resources you will need:

You will be expected to arrive promptly in lectures with all the appropriate equipment. The Department does have some resources that will be made available to you but you are expected to have the following:

- Pens, pencils, rubber, ruler, highlighter / coloured pens, lined paper
- Calculator, textbooks and homework diary
- A file to store your notes in with subject dividers for each topic of study
Homework Policy

You are expected to spend 5 hours a week on independent study. This will range from completion of personal notes, research of case studies, preparation of presentations, essay writing and past paper questions. Task sheets, lesson notes and instructions are posted on the VLE for you to refer to outside of lecture time.

Sufficient time is set for the completion of homework and you are expected to hand in work on time and to a good standard. Peer marking will be used in conjunction with AQA mark schemes to allow you to have a clear understanding of how to improve your work. Your work will be marked using the Levelled Criteria unless a % mark is appropriate. You will also receive an HTI (How To Improve) comment to enable you to understand what you need to do to improve.

What you can do to enhance your knowledge and understanding:

As geography is the study of the world there does plenty you can do to further develop you geographical understand. The following list is just the tip of the iceberg!

- It sounds silly but use your lecture notes and course textbook when completing homework

- Read widely, e.g. newspapers, geographical magazines such as National Geographic and take cuttings of current issues that relate to the Units of study

- Watch the news… BBC breakfast regularly has many interesting slots that relate to the AQA specification. The weather forecast is also a good way of developing an understanding of weather and climate

- Geography is all around us and so by just going for a walk and talking about the landscape or specific features or even the weather you will be developing your knowledge of geography

- When you take a holiday try to find some aspect of geographical interest, e.g. volcanoes, waterfalls, rivers, and collect local information and pictures on them
Assessment of your A Level

The marking scheme includes an overall assessment of quality of your written communication. There are no discrete marks for the assessment of written communications, but where questions are "Levels" marked, written communication will be assessed as one of the criteria within each level.

Level 1
Language is basic, descriptions and explanations are over simplified and lack clarity.

Level 2:
Generally accurate use of language; descriptions and explanations can be easily followed, but are not clearly expressed throughout.

Level 3:
Accurate and appropriate use of language; descriptions and explanations are expressed with clarity throughout.

There are 3 Assessment Objectives which apply to both AS and A2:

A01 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the content, concepts and processes

A02 Analyse, interpret and evaluate geographical information, issues and viewpoints and apply understanding in unfamiliar contexts

A03 Select and use a variety of methods, skills and techniques to investigate questions, issues, reach conclusions and communicate findings

Levels Marking - General Criteria:

The following general criteria relate to knowledge, understanding and their critical application and the quality of written communication as outlined in the AQA Geography subject specification. They are designed to assist examiners in determining into which band the quality of your answer should be placed. The general guidelines for each level are as follows:

Level 1: An answer at this level is likely to:

• display a basic understanding of the topic;

• make one of two points without support of appropriate exemplification or application of principle;

• demonstrate a simplistic style of writing perhaps lacking close relation to the term of the question and unlikely to communicate complexity of subject matter;

• lack organisation, relevance and specialist vocabulary;
• demonstrate deficiencies in legibility, spelling, grammar and punctuation which detract from the clarity of meaning.

**Level 2: An answer at this level is likely to:**

• display a clear understanding of the topic;

• make one or two points with support of appropriate exemplification and/or application of principle;

• demonstrate a style of writing which matches the requirements of the question and acknowledges the potential complexity of the subject matter;

• demonstrate relevance and coherence with appropriate use of specialist vocabulary;

• demonstrate legibility of text, and qualities of spelling, grammar and punctuation which do not detract from the clarity of meaning.

**Level 3: An answer at this level is likely to:**

• display a detailed understanding of the topic;

• make several points with support of appropriate exemplification and/or application of principle;

• demonstrate a sophisticated style of writing incorporating measured and qualified explanation and comment as required by the question and reflecting awareness of the complexity of subject matter and incompleteness/tentativeness of explanation;

• demonstrate a clear sense of purpose so that the responses are seen to closely relate to the requirements of the question with confident use of specialist vocabulary;

• demonstrate legibility of text, and qualities of spelling, grammar and punctuation which contribute to complete clarity of meaning.

**NB** A perfect answer is not usually required for full marks. Clearly it will be possible for you to demonstrate variable performance between the levels. In such cases the principle of best-fit should be applied.
External Assessment
It is not about the grade, it’s the points that count! Each of your AS and A2 Units of Study are allocated a number of UMS points (Uniform Scaled Marks). These are NOT the number of marks available on the actual paper. During your subject meeting we will tell you what your AS UMS score is and what this means in relation to progression in A2.

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<th>GEOG2</th>
<th>GEOG3</th>
<th>GEOG4B</th>
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Internal Assessments
Throughout the course of your A2 year you will sit a number of assessments which will help to prepare you for your June A2 module examinations. The dates for these assessments will vary and will be confirmed nearer to the day. All internal assessments will be graded as follows:

A* 90% and above
A 80 – 89%
B 70-79%
C 60-69%
D 50-59%
E 40-49%

These grade boundaries are standard for all AS and A2 examinations. You will not always get a grade or % on your homework. More often you will get a Level with an HTI comment. It is more about developing the skill, knowledge and understanding of how to apply what you know in an unfamiliar context.
Top tips for exam success

Give a range of examples
If the question allows, give at least two contrasting examples, ie in terms of development, or scale.

Show balance
If you are discussing a topic or issues, give both sides of the argument, eg costs and benefits, advantages and disadvantages. Don’t be one-sided.

Provide facts
Include some hard facts. It is much better to say ‘$3.5 billion’ than ‘lots of money’.

Show style
Avoid writing in the first person for essays. Instead, use the third person, eg ‘A common view is’ or ‘Overall the evidence suggests that’.

Give a sense of place
When you use examples, name them, and say where they are.

Provide a structure
Write to a structure. When writing about impacts, commonly used examples are social, economic and environmental; or positives and negatives.

Be relevant
Make sure that case studies are ‘fit for purpose’. Be selective. Don’t say more about a case study than you need to.

Get real
Avoid sweeping statements and simplistic statements.

Give an overview
Provide an overview to summarise your answer.

Be modern – use the media
The more contemporary examples that can be included in an answer, the more likely it is that you will convince and impress the examiner that you have a sound knowledge and understanding of today’s world. You should ‘read around’ the subject, which can include using the new media. Being contemporary also can demonstrate ‘flair’.

Get Reading - wider reading really is essential in terms of:
- Understanding the real world, as opposed to the world in the textbook.
- Writing skills; reading improves vocabulary and tends to quickly erode misunderstanding of terminology and words.
- Knowledge of place and people; many candidates have serious misunderstandings, or stereotypical views about many places in the world.
- Being exposed to a range of views, opinions, attitudes and ideas