



WJEC Level 3 Applied Certificate/ Extended Certificate in Criminology

Teaching from September 2026

Outline Qualification Design

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1. Introduction

This document provides a high-level overview of the proposed WJEC Level 3 Applied Certificate/ Extended Certificate in Criminology . It draws upon feedback from the Qualification Development Advisory Group in November 2023 and provides a guide for the development of the qualification.

Information in this document will be used to inform the development of the content and sample assessment materials, related quality assurance and awarding processes. Information in this document may also be used to populate the Assessment Strategy where appropriate.

Qualification development and quality assurance

Qualification development will follow the process outlined in our Qualifications Development Framework. Qualification development is an iterative process and some of the proposed characteristics and content of the qualification may need to be adjusted as the development progresses. The outline qualification design document is therefore a working document proposal. Any changes to the proposals outlined in this document will be captured in the qualification rationale.

2. Qualification Design

2.1. Structure

The qualification(s) are made up of *two mandatory units for the Applied Certificate and two additional, mandatory units for the Extended Certificate*

Unit title and summary – Applied Certificate	Mandatory / Optional	Weighting
Year 1 Unit 1: The nature and perception of crime Different types of crime and how crime reporting affects the public perception of criminality How media representations of crime affect public perceptions of crime Patterns of Offending and Victimisation	Mandatory	40/20%
Year 1 Unit 2: Criminological Theories Social constructions of criminality Theories of criminality Causes of policy change Synoptic unit	Mandatory	60/30%
Unit title and summary – Extended Certificate	Mandatory / Optional	Weighting
Year 2 Unit 3: Crime Scene to Court Room The process of criminal investigations The process for prosecution of suspects Review criminal cases	Mandatory	20%
Year 2 Unit 4: Crime and Punishment The criminal justice system of England and Wales The role of punishment in the criminal justice system Social control Synoptic unit	Mandatory	30%

2.2. Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

The two-year qualification will be designed to require 360 Guided Learning Hours (GLH). A one-year certificate requires 180 Guided Learning Hours. Guided Learning Hours will include teaching and learning and formative assessment activities.

We propose the following breakdown of GLH:

Unit title	Teaching/Learning and formative assessment	Summative assessment
Unit 1: The nature and perception of crime	90 GLH	3 hours
Unit 2: Criminological Theories	90 GLH	2 hours
Unit 3: Crime Scene to Court Room	90 GLH	3 hours
Unit 4: Crime and Punishment	90 GLH	2 hours

2.3. Total Qualification Time

The Total Qualification Time will be determined towards the end of the qualification development process and will be informed by practitioners in line with our standard process for assigning Total Qualification Time.

2.4. Working assumptions – Qualification design

Our working assumptions for development are:

Working assumption	Rationale
There will be minimal changes to Units 2-4 subject content	It is currently fit for purpose and well received by centres
There will be more substantial changes to Unit 1 subject content	The current focus on the study of campaigns is disproportionate in the study of criminology
The assessment for Units 1 and 3 needs to be changed	The assessment burden is onerous and unmanageable on students, teachers and centres

3. Subject content

3.1. Subject content by unit

Unit title	Unit 1: The nature and perception of crime
<p>LO1 Understand different types of crime and how crime reporting affects the public perception of criminality</p>	<p>Types of Crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White collar • Organised • Moral • State • Cybercrime • Hate • Honour • Domestic abuse • Homicide
	<p>Reasons why certain crimes are not reported</p> <p>Personal reasons including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fear • shame • level of impact <p>Social and cultural reasons including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of knowledge • complexity • lack of media interest • lack of current public concern • nature of culture-bound crime including honour killing and witchcraft
	<p>Consequences of crimes not being reported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ripple effect • decriminalisation and legal change • police prioritisation • cultural change • procedural change
	<p>Methods of measuring crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police recorded crime including Home Office statistics • Victimisation surveys, including the Crime Survey for England and Wales • Self-report studies

<p>LO2 How media representations of crime affect public perceptions of crime</p>	<p>Media representations of crime Media representations of crime including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper • Film and television • Electronic gaming • Music • Social media <p>Different social groups' representation in the media with regard to crime including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex/Gender • Ethnicity • Age <hr/> <p>The impact of media representations on the public perception of crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moral panic • changing public concerns and attitudes • perceptions of crime trends • stereotyping of criminals • levels of response to crime and types of punishment • changing priorities and emphasis
<p>LO3 Patterns of Offending and Victimization</p>	<p>Sex, gender and crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official statistics and sex/gender • The nature of male and female offending • Gender and victimisation <hr/> <p>Ethnicity and crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official statistics and ethnicity • Stop and search • Ethnicity and victimisation <hr/> <p>Age and crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official statistics and age • Youth offending • Age and victimisation
<p>Unit Title</p>	<p>Unit 2: Criminological Theories</p>
<p>LO1 Understand social constructions of criminality</p>	<p>Criminal behaviour and deviance</p> <p>Criminal behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social definition • legal definition • formal sanctions against criminals • variety of criminal acts <p>Deviance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • norms, moral codes and values • informal and formal sanctions against deviance • forms of deviance

	<p>Social construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how and why laws change from culture to culture • how and why laws change over time • how laws are applied differently according to circumstances in which actions occur
<p>LO2 Describe, apply and evaluate theories of criminality</p>	<p>Biological Theories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • genetic theories • physiological theories
	<p>Individualistic Theories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning theories • psychodynamic theories • personality theories
	<p>Sociological Theories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social structure theories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Functionalism ○ Marxism • interactionist theories • Realist theories
	<p>Situations of Criminality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • different types of crime • individual criminal behaviour
<p>LO3 Understand causes of policy change</p>	<p>Use of criminological theories in informing policy development</p> <p>How criminological theories influence policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • biological influenced policies • individualistic influenced policies • sociological influenced policies <p>How effective are policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informal policy making • formal policy making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ crime and control policies ○ state punishment policies
	<p>Social changes and policy development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social values, norms and morals • public perception of crime • demographic changes • cultural changes

	<p>Campaigns relating to crime and policy development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • newspaper campaigns • individual campaigns • pressure group campaigns
Unit title	Unit 3: Crime Scene to Court Room
LO1 Understand the process of criminal investigation	<p>The roles and efficacy of personnel in criminal investigations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crime scene investigators • forensic scientists • police officers/detectives • Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) • Pathologists
	<p>The usefulness of investigative techniques in criminal investigations</p> <p>Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forensic • surveillance • profiling <p>Criminal Investigations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • situations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ crime scene ○ laboratory ○ police station ○ 'street' • Types of crime <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ violent crime ○ e-crime ○ property crime
	<p>How evidence is processed</p> <p>Types of evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical evidence • testimonial evidence <p>Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collection • transfer • storage • analysis • personnel involved
	<p>The rights of individuals in criminal investigations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suspects • victims • witnesses
LO2 Understand the process for prosecution	<p>Requirements of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for prosecuting suspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • charging role – Criminal Justice Act 2003 • Prosecution of Offences Act 1985

of suspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Code Test <hr/> <p>Trial processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-trial • bail • roles • plea bargaining • courts • appeals <hr/> <p>Rules of evidence in criminal cases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relevance and admissibility • disclosure of evidence • hearsay rule and exceptions • legislation and case law <hr/> <p>Influences on the outcomes of criminal cases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence • media • witnesses • experts • politics • judiciary • barristers and legal teams <hr/> <p>The use of laypeople in criminal cases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • juries • magistrates
LO3 Reviewing case outcomes	<p>The validity of sources of information in criminal cases in relation to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bias • opinion • circumstances • currency • accuracy <p>Sources of information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence- physical and testimonial • media reports (crime) • judgements/verdicts in criminal trials and public inquiries <hr/> <p>Case outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • just/unjust verdicts • miscarriage • safe verdict • just/unjust sentencing
Unit Title	Unit 4: Crime and Punishment
LO1 Understand the criminal justice system in England and Wales	<p>Processes for law-making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parliamentary processes • judicial processes <hr/> <p>Organisation of the Criminal justice system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ police ○ CPS ○ judiciary

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ prisons ○ probation ● Other agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ charities ○ pressure groups ● Role of each agency including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ aims and objectives ○ funding ○ philosophy ○ working practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ types of criminality ▪ types of offenders ▪ reach (local, national) ● Relationships between agencies <hr/> <p>Models of criminal justice, including relevant theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● due process ● crime control
<p>LO2 Understand the role of punishment in a criminal justice system</p>	<p>Aims of punishment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● retribution ● rehabilitation ● deterrence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ prevention of reoffending (individual) ○ deterrence of others from committing similar crimes (general) ● public protection ● reparation <hr/> <p>What are the forms of punishment and how effectively do they meet the aims of punishment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● imprisonment ● community ● financial ● discharge

<p>LO3 Social Control</p>	<p>What is social control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • internal forms • external forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ coercion ○ fear of punishment • control theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reasons for abiding by the law
	<p>How agencies achieve social control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime prevention measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Environmental and surveillance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ design ▪ gated lanes • behavioural and disciplinary measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CBO ○ token economy ○ institutional disciplinary procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ rule making ▪ staged/phased
	<p>The effectiveness of agencies in achieving social control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • government sponsored agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ police ○ CPS ○ judiciary ○ prisons ○ probation • charities • pressure groups
	<p>Barriers to social control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repeat offenders/recidivism • civil liberties and legal barriers • funding • local and national policies • environment • crime committed by those with moral imperatives

3.2. Working assumptions – Subject content

Our working assumptions for subject content are:

Working assumption	Rationale
See above for subject content working assumptions for all units	

4. Assessment

4.1. Assessment Objectives

The qualification will target the following assessment objectives:

AO1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Criminological theory, concepts and evidence
- Criminal justice

AO2 Apply knowledge and understanding of criminological theory, concepts, evidence and criminal justice to case studies and scenarios

AO3 Analyse and evaluate criminological theory, concepts, evidence and criminal justice in order to:

- present arguments
- make judgements
- draw conclusions

4.2. Approach to assessment by examination (worth 60% of the qualification(s))

Unit 2 will be assessed by a 2 hour examination worth 100 marks worth 30% (60% of the Applied Certificate) of the overall qualification.

Unit 4 will be assessed by a 2 hour examination worth 100 marks worth 30% of the overall qualification.

4.3. Approach to non-examination assessment (NEA) (worth 40% of the qualification(s))

Unit 1 will be assessed by a 3 hour structured internal assessment. Time will be allocated per task and tasks will be based upon an unseen brief released at the start of each academic year. The assessment will cover aspects of each LO but will not cover the entirety of the unit. This assessment will be worth 20% (40% of the Applied Certificate) of the overall qualification.

Unit 3 will be assessed by a 3 hour structured internal assessment. Time will be allocated per task and tasks will be based upon an unseen brief and related case documents released at the start of each academic year. The assessment will cover aspects of each LO but will not cover the entirety of the unit.

This assessment will worth 20% of the overall qualification.

4.4. Order of assessments and synoptic assessments

Unit assessments are designed to be taken in the order in which they are presented in this document ie Unit 1, 2, 3 and then 4.

Unit 2 and 4 assessments will be synoptic; Unit 2 will require students to use knowledge and understanding from Unit 1; Unit 4 will require students to use knowledge and understanding from across the whole course of study.

4.5. Working assumptions – Assessment

The weighting of examination assessment will change from 50% to 60%.

The weighting of the assessment by NEA will change from 50% to 40%.