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## GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

#### GEOGRAPHY (SPECIFICATION A)

## SUMMER 2011

# Statistical Information

The Examiners' Report may refer in general terms to statistical outcomes. Statistical information on candidates' performances in all examination components (whether internally or externally assessed) is provided when results are issued. As well as the marks achieved by individual candidates, the following information can be obtained from these printouts:

*For each component:* the maximum mark, aggregation factor, mean mark and standard deviation of marks obtained by *all* candidates entered for the examination.

*For the subject or option:* the total entry and the lowest mark needed for the award of each grade.

## *Annual Statistical Report*

Other information on a centre basis is provided when results are issued. The annual *Statistical Report* (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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**GEOGRAPHY – SPECIFICATION A**

**General Certificate of Secondary Education**

**Summer 2011**

*Chief Examiner:* Allan Carter

**Unit 1 (Core) Foundation Tier**

**General Comments**

The general impression is that the paper performed well this year. Having the paper developed in the main by one examiner has proven to be a distinct advantage in terms of gaining a better balance and range of assessment activities, assessment objectives and skills across the paper. The paper appeared to be accessible to candidates and most were able to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do and it was pleasing to see only very few exceptionally poor scripts during the marking process. Despite this, it is still a little disappointing to note that the mean mark was only 42.3 and showed little improvement on the previous year. However, it seems that the trend set last year by centers tending to enter only 'true' Foundation Tier candidates for the paper and letting the C/D borderline candidates have a go at the higher level to take advantage of the opportunity to re-sit a different tier later on if necessary has continued, and this probably goes some way to explain this statistic.

The candidature this year was different than last year in that it included a mixture of year 10 and year 11 students compared to just the former last year but any impact on the standard of responses resulting from this increase in maturity seems to have been negligible.

Most candidates were able to make a good attempt at all six questions on the paper and there was no whole question that proved inaccessible, although there was evidence of clear discrimination *between* centers in the quality of responses to one or two key parts of the paper. In particular, these included the strategies to mitigate the risks of volcanic eruptions (Q.3), factors affecting birth rates (Q.4) and, most significantly, patterns of development within a LEDC (Q.6). There was evidence of an improvement in candidates' ability to use geographical skills which reflects the changed assessment objectives of the new specification but there are aspects of this which can be further improved in the teaching of the course.

Q.1 (a) Candidates' ability to identify and use grid references was encouraging but the simple geographical skill of labeling, in this case, features on an OS map, remains problematic for many. There were many cases of arrows without words or words left hanging around the map without arrows.

Many candidates also had trouble in labeling an area prone to flooding in what was, essentially, a simple test of identifying contour patterns by indicating any place on the floodplain where contour lines were more or less absent.

(b) Many candidates were able to identify one way in which the flood risk could be reduced but only a minority were able to develop this sufficiently for all three marks by explaining how the method would work. Often the setting and scale of the area around the farm was ignored with candidates choosing to write about larger scale whole-catchment strategies which needed to relate to the area around the farm if they were to achieve full marks. The most successful responses referred to channel modifications which explained how these affected the flow of water away from the farm area although credit was invariably given for any worthwhile strategy. It was also pleasing to see reference to hard and soft engineering but credit was only given here as development of a more specific named strategy rather than the use of the terms in isolation as, for example, 'You could use hard engineering' which, on its own did not achieve any marks.

(c) (iii) This was a very good discriminator and enabled differentiation but although most were able to identify and write about a landform, few were able to answer in the necessary detail to achieve the highest level. It should also be noted here that 2 of the 5 marks available for this question were awarded for AO3, in this case, the skill of using a labeled diagram to demonstrate knowledge. The quality of diagrams was generally not of a high standard but there was evidence of individual centers where candidates had been encouraged to learn standard textbook diagrams, often of an oxbow lake or a waterfall and these scored well. A final point here is the need for candidates to try to apply, the processes of erosion to the landform identified to meet the requirement of AO2. Teachers should also be encouraged by the fact that examiners are reminded that full marks in these 'levels' questions equates only to the C grade and, as such, candidates only have to demonstrate a basic ability to satisfy the demands of the question without needing to go into any significant detail.

Q.2 This was generally done very well and it is clear that candidates are comfortable with the whole topic of climate change and that it is well taught in schools.

(a)&(b) Few had a problem with the correct sequence of events in labeling the diagram in 2(a) and with the use of a pie chart in 2(b). Sub parts (iii) and (iv) discriminated quite well in terms of the level of detail and precision that candidates were able to give. For example, they must be encouraged to name the relevant gases rather than to state, as many did, that transport 'gives off fumes'.

(c) This proved accessible to most but access to the top level was reserved for candidates who were able to offer some explanation, even at a rudimentary level, of the problems caused by climate change. A great many referred to melting ice caps as a cause of coastal flooding but few were able to relate increased heat to more intense storms or to give any explanation for the changing patterns of rainfall and aridity shown in the first photo.

Q.3 This was also accessible to most and it is quite clear that the theme 'Living in an Active Zone' is being well taught and received favourably by candidates.

(a)&(b) This was generally done very well. However, where candidates failed to achieve full marks, it was often due to ignoring the command to use an example to illustrate the answer. Generally, candidates were able to demonstrate a good knowledge of the hazards and it was pleasing to see many topical references to the Icelandic ash cloud of 2010 in relation to air travel.

(c) (i) This was done well, although candidates need to understand that they must take the answer forward for the second mark and not simply state the converse of their first point as development. To illustrate, many correctly stated that Plymouth was in a high risk zone but then simply went on to say that St Peters is in a low risk zone, rather than making reference to the fact that the new location was safer from volcanic hazards or by using the map scale to interpret distance.

(c) (ii) This showed a significant difference between centres and it was clear that this topic is being delivered in varied levels of detail. Whereas some were only able to refer to evacuation, there were many good responses referring to the various forms of technology available to monitor volcanoes and how these could be used to provide information to people to aid decisions relating to keeping people safe.

Q.4 This showed that most candidates are confident in their interpretation of different types of graph and there was a pleasing response to the requirement to describe a trend, using figures as in 4(b)(i). Some failed to achieve full marks, however due to being a little careless in using the vertical scale. Rough approximations are not enough and a level of accuracy is still required at this level as an important geographical skill.

(c) This proved accessible to most, although the stock response related often to a bland answer surrounding access to contraception. However, there were many good answers which talked confidently about the changing status of women in determining birth rates in MEDCs and the economic asset and/or liability of children. Reference to China's one child policy was very common but this was one question where there has been a definite improvement in candidates' ability to use examples to illustrate their points from last year and this was a pleasing development.

Q.5 (a) This was done well and candidates were clearly able to interpret the diagram and understand the significance of the different widths on the lines.

(b) (i) This proved to be problem for most and few candidates were able to use map evidence to describe the spread of McDonald's as a global company. Again, this is relates to the increased emphasis on AO2 and AO3 and candidates would benefit from being exposed to as many different methods of presenting information as possible. The map shows a clear trend in the development of the company across the world and the question required only a detailed scrutiny of the key in relation to the continents named for candidates in the key. 5bii was attempted by most but there was only a limited understanding of the disadvantages of globalisation and few were able to give the necessary detail to enter Level 3. Again, there was discrimination between centres here and it is clear that more attention needs to be given to the economic, social and environmental problems created by globalisation.

Q.6 (a) This was generally answered well, with the majority of candidates able to interpret the map and apply their understanding of development in terms of high disease rates.

(b) This was also answered quite well, although many were unable to relate the importance of improved literacy to governments in terms of helping the development process at a macro level, preferring to focus more basically on the ability of people to obtain better jobs in order to help their families. This is an important aspect of development and many candidates tend to view it in very simplistic terms at this level.

(c) This was answered very poorly and proved to be the only part of the paper that was almost universally inaccessible to candidates. However, a small number of very good answers, again from notable centres, showed what was possible and it is clear that this part of the specification is being ignored by many in the teaching. These good responses were able to focus on the regional differences in development in mainly either Kenya or Ghana and a basic, well described account within the allotted space was able to achieve full marks with little difficulty. Unfortunately, the vast majority of answers were little more than simplistic, irrelevant, rambling accounts based on the words provided in the box, many spilling copiously onto the continuation page only to be awarded no marks.

On the whole, it is felt that there has been an improvement in the general response of candidates from the previous year and that all parts of the paper were accessible. Given that the candidature seems to have changed significantly at this level from the old specification, the following points may be of use to teachers in improving their student's performance for future years:

• Pay attention to the different weightings of Assessment Objectives, particularly AO2 and AO3;

**•** In terms of AO3, expose candidates to as many different types of map, graph and diagram as possible and ensure that they are confident in describing trends and patterns shown;

• Improve the candidates' ability to draw and label relevant diagrams;

• Continue to encourage the use of relevant examples and case studies to illustrate answers and to meet the demands of AO2;

• Understand how to approach questions marked in levels and how to access the higher levels;

• Include relevant material to develop basic answers in greater detail.

I am grateful, once again, to an outstanding team of examiners who have worked accurately and diligently to ensure that, not only was the paper marked fairly and consistently for all candidates but also that there was empathy for candidates at this level in interpreting the assessment requirements of the paper. In particular, I would like to thank my Team Leaders, Glyn Owen and Roger Evans for their professionalism and support throughout the process.

**GEOGRAPHY – SPECIFICATION A**

**General Certificate of Secondary Education**

**Summer 2011**

*Chief Examiner:* Dirk Sykes

**Unit 1 (Core) Higher Tier**

**General Comments**

The examination performance was pleasing and proved an effective test of knowledge, understanding, application and skills. A mean of 52.3 a range of 9-90 and a standard deviation of 13.3 confirms the paper's positive performance.

All questions were accessible to the majority of candidates. A significant number of candidates achieved low marks and would have clearly been more suited to the Foundation Tier. Examination technique proved crucial to success, there is a particular need to ensure candidates address all parts of the question and develop points to score both marks on 2 mark questions.

Answers to the six mark questions generally lacked the detail and case study knowledge necessary to achieve Level 3 in the mark scheme. However there seemed to be a greater number of better quality answers than in 2010, perhaps explained by the more mature entry in 2011 and greater familiarity with the new style of paper. Performance, particularly in the six mark questions, varied between centres reflecting the quality of teaching, this was particularly significant in question 6.

Q.1 (a) (i)&(ii) Most candidates correctly gave the direction and six figure grid reference in these parts.

(iii)&(iv) Candidates were less confident on higher order map skills of interpretation in these parts. Relatively few candidates gave valid reasons for the location of the B4300. Some were confused over reasons for the location of the castle, some explaining it as a tourist attraction, although the majority were able to identify the hill or river as important locational factors.

(b) Most candidates chose either waterfalls or ox-bow lakes as a landform. There were many good quality diagrams and many were well annotated. Many described the formation of the landform but often failed to identify clearly and explain how river processes led to the formation of the landform. Many candidates simply used terms such as erosion and deposition, where candidates identified a specific processes, such as hydraulic action, they often failed to explain the term.

(c) Many candidates gave impressive descriptions of management strategies, many discussing hard and soft engineering, using examples such as river widening, deepening, dams, afforestation and managed flooding. However, fewer candidates answered the second part of the question in sufficient detail, simply making statements like the land should not have been built on and it would be too expensive to protect. A minority of candidates linked their answers to case studies such as Boscastle.

Hence in parts (b) and (c) there is a need to stress the importance of answering all parts of the question to achieve Level 3 in the mark scheme.

Q.2 (a) The majority of candidates explained in detail and scored well on this question, although some candidates described the diagram and did not give the explanation required, hence, demonstrating the importance of understanding command words.

(b) Most gave the contribution of the United States and most gave relevant reasons for carbon dioxide increases in the future linking increased population to more cars, more energy demands leading to more fossil fuels as well as deforestation. However, a significant number of candidates did not answer the question directly and described how human actions produced CO₂, failing to explain why the amount may increase in the future.

(c) Some candidates were able to explain in detail impacts of climate change on people's lives demonstrating good knowledge and understanding. Many simply listed effects such as flooding and tourism failing to demonstrate the detailed knowledge needed for Level 3 answers.

Q3 (a) (i) Nearly all knew the meaning of the term "plate margin".

(ii) Annotating the diagram proved more challenging, the question testing their understanding of the command word as well as the processes.

(b) (i) It was impressive to see that methods of monitoring had clearly been learnt.

(ii) Most candidates achieved one mark, using evidence from the map of Montserrat, although few scored the development mark either giving further detail from the map e.g. using the scale to give an accurate distance from the volcano or by using prior knowledge. Once again this demonstrates the importance of examination technique and ensuring that enough detail is given to score all the marks available for a question.

(iii) This gave a range of very good quality answers identifying tourism, farming, geothermal power, lack of money to move and belief that eruptions would not occur in their lifetime. Many also gave specific examples such as Iceland and Vesuvius.

Q.4 (a) (i) Most achieved 2 marks by identifying an increase in urban population and a decrease in rural population. However many did not develop their answers e.g. by using quantification to score the available 3 marks.

(ii) It was clear that pull factors had been studied but some candidates lost a mark by repeating simplistic ideas rather than giving two clearly different reasons e.g. stating jobs/money for both.

(b) Few candidates seemed to have a clear explanation for the increases in natural change although most scored. Perhaps the difficulties arose because the trend identified in the news report went against what many had learnt about population change:- European countries. Many identified falling death rates due to factors such as improved healthcare but only a small number identified increased birth rate due to increased migration of couples of child bearing age.

(c) Most candidates were able to explain how birth and death rates affect population numbers although often the explanations were simplistic and anachronistic. Fewer candidates identified and explained the effects of birth rates and death rates on population structure, hence answers were often limited to Level 2.

Q.5 (a) Most candidates could explain the reasons for trade being unfair for LEDCs, it was pleasing to see many using the diagram to help gain marks. Not all scored 4 marks again demonstrating the need to be aware of the demands of a points marking scheme.

(b) Most were able to describe in detail the expansion of McDonalds using the world map. Many failed to score in part (ii) either because they appeared to have limited understanding of the factors responsible for globalisation or they failed to qualify their factor e.g. "trade" would not have been worth a mark "increased trade" would have scored.

(c) Many of the answers were simplistic and lacked detail and/or case study material e.g. benefits described as jobs and money. There were some exceptions to this with candidates using case study material e.g. Tata and describing in some detail the multiplier effect.

Q.6 (a) Most candidates were able to calculate how many more people are infected in Africa although once again relatively few candidates scored both marks in part (ii) by developing the first point e.g. by quantification.

(b) The majority of candidates could compare the pattern of aid receivers/providers, some confused hemispheres with the Brandt Line and some failed to score the third mark due to a lack of development. Candidates demonstrated clear understanding of the impact of aid ranging from mosquito nets to education programmes, training and providing vaccinations.

(c) This proved to be the most testing question on the paper, candidates either answered extremely well (whole centres) or had little idea. The question therefore differentiated well both between candidates and between centres. Ghana was the most popular choice of country. Sketch maps were generally poor.

In summary, examination technique and quality of teaching continue to be crucial factors in success together, of course, with ability. Quality of teaching was particularly evident in this examination especially in the (c) parts to the questions and questions 5(c) and 6(c) in particular. It was pleasing to see candidates using resources more intelligently than in the past and to see good development of skills.

The most successful candidates:

• Have a good knowledge of basic geographical terms and concepts.

• Read questions and instructions carefully.

• Understand the meaning of command words.

• Answer in detail, guided by the marks for that question.

• Develop points to give a full description or explanation

• Address all parts of a question.

• Make good use of real examples and case studies.

• Study resources and use them effectively.

**GEOGRAPHY – SPECIFICATION A**

**General Certificate of Secondary Education**

**Summer 2011**

*Principal Examiner: Glyn Owen*

**Unit 2 Foundation Tier**

**General Comments**

As this is the first examination of the Options Unit it is clearly very difficult to make comparisons with performances in previous years.

Unfortunately, there were very few examples of high scoring scripts and the mean mark of 26.0 was disappointing, on what was felt to be a quite accessible paper.

With notable exceptions, answers to the 6 mark questions – questions which did demand extended writing – lacked the detail and case study knowledge necessary to achieve Level 3 marks.

The 3 most popular options were Theme 7 – Our Changing Coastline, Theme 10 – Tourism and Theme 11 – Retail and Urban Change.

However, there were a number of rubric infringements with candidates from a significant number of centres answering the questions for all 6 themes.

Q.1 This proved to be a fairly accessible question.

(a) (i) This was generally answered correctly.

(ii) Most candidates gained at least one mark by identifying erosion at the base of the cliff or labelling the wave cut notch.

(iii) A significant number described hydraulic action rather than abrasion.

(b) Many candidates were able to gain some marks by completing the diagram but the better answers included the terms swash and backwash.

(c) The vast majority of candidates focused on the loss of homes only.

(d) This was well answered on the whole, but only some candidates referred to specific examples as instructed in the question.

Q.2 (a)&(b) This proved to be more demanding for the vast majority of candidates who chose this option.

(a) (ii) Many described the differences in weather rather than relief.

(iii) A large number of candidates wrote the numbers more than once.

(b) This was poorly answered. One mark for the air temperature was very common.

(c) Most candidates answered the effects on farming well but generally the answers were not developed fully.

(d) There were some very good answers to this part which detailed strategies in named parts of the world although some answers concentrated only on ways to prevent the effects of flooding.

Q.3 (a) (i) This was generally well answered.

(ii) This was generally well answered.

(iii) Very few candidates gained full marks, with most not being able to go beyond the problem of littering or the possibility of cutting down trees.

(b) (i) A majority scored at least 3 marks.

(ii) This was often well answered. Candidates showed a good understanding of food chains with some reference to correct terminology such as photosynthesis and herbivores.

(c) Most candidates were able to correctly identify an ecosystem, with the tropical rainforest being the most commonly chosen. Many answers, however, focused on the stimulus material only but there were some very good answers which referred to specific examples and showed good understanding of the concept of sustainability.

Q.4 (a) (i)&(ii) The vast majority of candidates were able to read the graph correctly to answer.

(iii) This part did not score well. Many answers did not focus on the number of UK visits abroad but rather gave answers which were more relevant to the next sub-question. The best answers referred to seasonality and the impact of school holidays.

(b) Many candidates were able to give two reasons but then failed to expand their answers fully.

(c) This was generally well answered, but the impact on local people was often done better than effects on the environment. There were some very good answers on sustainable tourism with reference to specific examples in different parts of the world but there were, however, a large number of responses which were generalised and lacked case study material. Candidates in centres which had studied this theme alongside Theme

9 – Living Things produced very similar answers in the final question for these themes.

Q.5 (a) All the sub questions in this part were generally accessible to the majority of candidates.

(b) This was not at all well answered. Many candidates failed to identify changes and instead focussed on the architectural features of the buildings in the photographs. The better answers explained the advantages of indoor shopping centres/malls and traffic free zones.

(c) Most candidates scored well here, demonstrating sound knowledge of both negative and positive aspects.

(d) This was also well answered on the whole with most reaching Level 2. Once again, however, candidates need to write in sufficient detail to gain full marks.

Q.6 This theme was studied by a small number of centres only and the question was generally accessible.

(a) (i)&(ii) This posed few problems.

(iii) The reasons for the decline in manufacturing were not developed fully and, therefore, many of the answers lacked detail.

(b) (i)&(ii) Some candidates made full use of the resource materials to answer these parts, but once again there were many responses that were not developed fully. There were some good answers related to economic changes to farming in those centres that had actually studied this theme.

**Action points**

• Note the change in the weighting of assessment objectives compared to the legacy specification.

• There is now a much greater emphasis on geographical skills and the application of knowledge.

• Answers which require explanation need to be developed fully.

• In the final part of each question write answers which are detailed and which use case study material.

**GEOGRAPHY – SPECIFICATION A**

**General Certificate of Secondary Education**

**Summer 2011**

*Principal Examiner: Huw Cripps*

**Unit 2 Higher Tier**

**General Comments**

In general, this exam proved to be a fair test of knowledge, understanding, application and skills. The element of choice proved a challenge for a minority of candidates who on occasions attempted all 6 questions. In such instances the overall totals were often low and there is nothing to be gained by this 'tactic'. However, teachers should continue to emphasise the importance of answering questions for which candidates have been prepared.

Q.1 This was a popular question for candidates to answer.

(a) (i) This showed that most candidates had a good knowledge and understanding of hydraulic action. Reference to wave power and the exertion of pressure were evident in most answers. Any improvement could be gained for some candidates by using more complex terminology such as referring to 'gaps' in the cliff as lines of weakness, cracks or faults.

(ii) This provided the opportunity for candidates to draw an annotated diagram though the quality of most was disappointing. Very good answers were able to produce one clear diagram or a sequence showing the point of erosion and subsequent undercutting and collapse. Such annotation was supported by one or more named processes of erosion. Candidates must be made aware of the importance of drawing well annotated diagrams. Marks for annotation could not be credited where there is a lack of clarity regarding text and diagram(s).

(b) Most candidates were able to achieve a Level 2 for their answer to this part by using the information provided individuals were able to identify the nature of cliff collapse and in the majority of cases link this to homeowners and likely social and / or economic impacts. Better answers developed other case studies but widened the scope of impacts by referring to tourism, the local community and cliff defence strategies. Certainly, the better quality answers were able to deal with different impacts but illustrate them fully by developing their significance both in the short and long term.

(c) Very few answers were awarded Level 1. Indeed, there were many excellent answers where candidates clearly understood a number of strategies and were able to apply this to different case studies. Where answers could not be awarded higher levels, candidates too often listed strategies but did not explain them in sufficient detail to draw out advantages and/or disadvantages. Many referred to hard and soft engineering as collective terms and were able to draw on examples from the UK and elsewhere. Candidates must continue to focus on key terms such as 'explain' and in this instance 'advantages' and 'disadvantages'.

Q.2 (a) (i) This was a popular question for candidates to answer and most candidates were able to score 2 marks. Reference to points of the compass and names of places was notable in clear description of highland areas.

(ii) Similar areas for improvement exist. Whilst a diagram from scratch was not required some candidates lacked the knowledge, understanding and skills to make clear the reasons for increased rainfall over the highest ground. In some instances there was repetition of the data from rainfall maps above without any explanation. Some were not able to complete the diagram so that the location of most rainfall was clear. This is a well examined area of any specification and it is disappointing to read answers that still appear to show a lack of familiarity when annotating such a cross-section. Whilst most were able to gain more than 2 marks fewer achieved all 4 because they did not explain the pattern fully from west to east; i.e. 1 mark was awarded for reference to a 'rain shadow' in the east or by explaining that air is descending, warming up and therefore drier.

(b) The overall quality of answers was disappointing. Those that were credited with Level 3 were able to describe typical weather associated with a winter anticyclone and then explain them. In such cases good reference was made to clear skies allowing air to escape, significant air masses and the formation of fog due to condensation at lower levels with calm conditions. Such answers were often the exception. Many candidates confused anticyclones with depressions and included what could only be described as a random selection of weather characteristics. In these cases there was no attempt to explain. Candidates must be better prepared should a question directly related to anticyclones and high pressure be examined again.

(c) Most answers were credited with at least Level 2 for part c). A selection of hazards was evident which included hurricanes, hot, dry conditions and hazards linked to extremes of wet and cold. Many candidates were able to name case studies with the highest levels awarded to those who could link the weather to the impact on both people and the environment. Many candidates were not able to balance their answer between the impact on people and the environment, often favouring links to people. By learning specific facts candidates were able to support points well and such application shows good development. This is a key area for many of the candidates who are writing competent answers for Level 3 but not showing the depth of knowledge required for Level 4.

Q.3 (a) (i) The unit on 'Living Things' proved less popular as an option within Section A. Very good use was made of the map and most candidates achieved full marks by correctly identifying map evidence for tourism.

(ii) Some good answers identified negative and positive effects but these were the exception. In too many cases the negative influence is termed 'pollution'. Candidates must learn to be more specific and name noise, air or visual reasons to be credited. Indeed 'too many people' is not a negative point in itself unless there is some additional information to suggest what these extra people or visitors are doing to the area in question. Similarly, 'people bring money' is not a positive effect in its own right. These examples reflect an area of improvement for many candidates whereby they need to be far more specific and not produce answers which point to the examiner having to assume a higher level of understanding. There were a number of different links shown in the diagram as part (b).

(b) Too many answers described the links such as those between one consumer and another, in a few instances providing a likely example of what living thing could exist at each level of consumption. Such descriptions with limited explanation may have gained a low Level 2. Those that achieved Level 3 were able to explain the transfer of energy through the system and identify changing levels of energy and the relationship between biotic and abiotic factors.

(c) Most answers were able to identify a suitable ecosystem. However, credit is often limited for those candidates who select a poor example. Focus on a smaller area as part of the 'rainforest' would enable the candidate to show more knowledge linked to specific examples. Better quality answers show that the candidate can apply knowledge to the demands of the question. Whilst there were few Level 4 answers, those that did achieve this were detailed on fewer strategies with good reference to place and data.

Q.4 (a) (i) This was a popular question for candidates to answer and most candidates were able to interpret the graph accurately and describe the pattern, selecting suitable quantification to support key points.

(ii) Most candidates were able to achieve some credit. However, in many cases candidates gained no credit for repeating the converse ; i.e. 'more people go abroad at time x and fewer go abroad at time y'. Others confused their responses by referring to people visiting the UK and as such there was little clarity of the point being made. Those that achieved 3 or 4 marks were able to link climate in the UK with visits abroad. In addition they were able to suggest reasons why people may visit a certain place and name the location. Candidates need to name different times of the year for all 4 marks and this was successful where candidates referred to the more favourable conditions for skiing abroad in the winter or more reliable sunshine in summer months.

(b) To the credit of most candidates, it was clear that they needed to express an opinion. This has not always been apparent in examination answers but this shows an improvement. Most achieved at least a Level 2 with many Level 3 answers credited. In general candidates tended to favour the argument that 'staycations' were more likely. This term was clearly understood by candidates who made good reference to the impact of the recession, more favourable weather and environmental considerations. At Level 3 the ability of candidates to write concisely showed good communication skills and on occasions this can be an important factor in deciding which level to award. In this sense the range of responses and application of knowledge was impressive from many candidates. It is apparent that over the last few years schools have developed good case studies of tourism and its impact on people, the economy and environment. To this extent the overall standard of answers to part c) was encouraging with very few level 1 answers and most achieving at least half marks. However, candidates must practice applying their knowledge and understanding to the demands of the question. Many included lengthy explanations of economic factors that were not required. Advantages and disadvantages were not always balanced and many correctly identified 'jobs' as an example of both. Better candidates named the 'multiplier effect' and explained it by developing examples from their chosen case study. Such detail is the key to taking answers from Level 2 to Levels 3 and 4. Some excellent answers showed a depth of knowledge and understanding that addressed all aspects of the question. Some linked such detail to more than one named example. Whilst this was not necessary it illustrates the importance of candidates being taught good case studies that have experienced these factors. Some identified a case study that is within an MEDC but not a region. Such smaller scale examples rarely have the range of detail necessary to address all aspects of a question like the one set.

Q.5 This was a popular question for candidates to answer.

(a) (i) Most candidates were able to identify at least one reason for the M25 from map evidence provided. Credit can be more readily given if answers are more specific about certain points and avoid the word 'easy' in terms of 'easy to get to London', 'easy to avoid traffic'. Candidates need to be encouraged to use terms such as 'improve access' or 'faster'. The term 'easy' is often too general and simplifies a situation.

(ii) This point is also relevant to answers in part (i). However many answers achieved 3 or 4 marks because they were able to apply their knowledge and understanding of other shopping centres they have studied to this question. Indeed many named and developed such knowledge to good effect.

(b) The photo resource should have helped every candidate to answer with confidence. To this extent some answers at the higher tier were disappointing because they were unable to develop points beyond a lack of traffic and public safety. This often limited credit to Level 1 with better answers referring to examples and identifying at least 2 or 3 recent changes. These included reference to environmental improvements, aspects of leisure and recreation and the attraction of 'chain stores'. Candidates should study at least one case study to ensure they can explore various factors related to improving city centres.

(c) This assessed a new area of the specification. Most answers were credit worthy though overall the greatest emphasis was on the problems caused for local people by anti-social behaviour and its associated patterns of behaviour. For many this was the extent of their knowledge with brief reference to the creation of jobs as an opportunity. To this extent the majority of answers were grouped into Level 2 or lower Level 3. Opportunities for both locals and visitors were not well developed and it is worth considering how candidates can develop a more positive idea of the benefits of a city centre at 'night time' in the future.

Q.6 This proved to be the least popular question amongst those candidates who completed the paper.

(a) (i) Manufacturing was understood to be 'making something' by most candidates but many did not achieve both marks because they did not offer an example or make reference to the use of raw or natural materials.

(ii) Interpretation of the data allowed most to gain at least 2 marks. However, the analysis was not always comprehensive and did not consider all of the sources or add quantification. This should have proved to be a very accessible question for all candidates on a higher tier exam.

(b) The resources provided to support were comprehensive. Candidates correctly identified the impact of the oil refinery and the how the quality of the environment could have improved. Again, a more specific reference to 'pollution' is required to show greater understanding. Reference to the economy was less well developed and overall there were few candidates who identified with all the possible benefits both environmentally and economically from the new developments at this site.

(c) Some very good answers made reference to case studies which highlighted the challenges face, both traditional and more contemporary in relation to farming. As with the other questions the identification of a good case study(ies) is essential in giving each candidate the confidence to meet the demands of the question. Answers outlined problems relating to physical factors and competition from abroad in relation to price of goods but higher levels could have been awarded if candidates had more extensive knowledge of how such issues challenge the named economic activity; e.g. how does a 'cold and wet mountainous environment' make it difficult for hill farmers?

**Key areas for Improvement**

• Quality of drawn or annotated / labelled diagrams has been a weakness of many candidates for a number of years. This is an important skill and an improved standard can enable many candidates to be awarded higher marks;

• Be clear on case studies that apply to different units studied;

• Candidates must apply their knowledge and understanding to explain different factors that are appropriate to their answer. Case studies are often named but not developed within the answer. Add specific detail from case studies to show better knowledge and understanding;

• Ensure all aspects of the question are attempted, such as advantages and disadvantages, people and the environment. Whenever possible, apply knowledge to each aspect of the question;

• Emphasise the importance of producing 3 high quality answers and not attempting all 6 questions. Evidence from this exam shows that overall standards were lower when more than 3 questions were attempted.

**CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT REPORT 2011**

Principal Moderator: Geraint Williams

At the end of the first cycle of the new specification, it is pleasing to note, that the overall response was good, with many centres:-

* having set tasks with clear links to a particular unit;
* giving individual candidates the opportunity to demonstrate ability;
* giving individual candidates the opportunity to carry out research;
* using their locality and centre expertise to develop meaningful tasks;
* using the prescribed time allocation wisely;
* providing a range of resources which enabled candidates to make individual choices and keeping within the confines of what is allowed in the specification.

**PARTS OF THE SPECIFICATION THAT WERE COVERED**.

The most popular for the DME was Tourism, and for the fieldwork - rivers. It was the intention, when developing the specification, of giving centres as wide a choice as possible so that teachers could use their local area as much as possible, and also the expertise within a centre. It seems that many chose in the first instance to hang their hat on a safe traditional peg. After the initial first-hand experience and further information given at CPD and on the WJEC website, perhaps more will feel more confident to develop their tasks linked to other parts of the specification.

There were examples of very good tasks both in the DME and fieldwork, where teachers had obviously read the specification and the teacher guide. Many had also benefited from consulting with an advisor, although this was not always fruitful, sometime because not enough information was shared. In many successful examples, there was more than one contact between the teacher and the adviser.

**AREAS WHICH NEED TO BE DEVELOPED AND/OR ARE A CAUSE FOR SOME CONCERN.**

The problems associated with the tasks were in the minority, although unfortunately one or two were quite significant. These were the main reasons behind any scaling of centres' marks which had to be carried out.

**FIELDWORK**

* In many examples, it was not focused enough. In the conclusion, candidates do not refer back to the initial question. Lack of focus also did not help candidates to choose relevant data and therefore conclusions made little sense. The data collected needs to be relevant to the task e.g. why collect data on pebbles if nothing is done with it?

Candidates should identify questions of their own and many are not doing this. If the teacher gives a question then candidates could identify their own sub questions from this or identify some for further development in the evaluation.

* Greater individuality should be encouraged. This would happen if the above point was addressed. One centre provided detailed writing frames and scaffolds which precluded a lot of individual effort.
* More in depth analysis and interpretation of the data is needed. Many candidates just describe graphs and no more. They need to know that they must explain why their results are as they are because of processes for example. Also, they must just not name the process e.g. the river gets wider because of hydraulic action, but say **how** the hydraulic action has made it wider.
* If maps and other presentation techniques are included they need to have headings, annotation. All presentation techniques should be referred to in the work in order for them to have a purpose within the task. Examples of extremes in the fieldwork regarding presentation techniques, ranging from nothing to numerous graphs and diagrams which were of no value some centres need to use a greater range of presentation techniques. Just a few bar graphs are not really sufficient.
* Contextualising in relation to wider geographical questions could be further developed by some. Some did not fully understand what was required.

**DME**

* Some centres did not appreciate what decision making meant. This does involve coming to a conclusion (individually) after looking at more than one point of view. It involves more than just a simple report or stating an opinion.
* Examples of extremes again e.g. one centre gave 3 photocopied sheets, one of which was not relevant; another referred candidates to the internet, instead of providing one or two sites which candidates could use.
* Greater individuality is needed and exactly the same maps, tables should not be included in every candidates work. Some obviously will be duplicated as they will be in the resources provided by the teacher but, if it is a decision making exercise then candidates should decide themselves what to include and not be told by the teacher. They should also include material that they have found themselves to increase the individuality. This will help ensure that the work is all slightly different. Choosing what to use is a skill.
* Greater emphasis is needed on AO2. Many centres did not refer to people and the environment interactions or sustainability other than a passing comment. Some candidates seem unsure about what sustainability means. It perhaps may help if sustainable is included in the title e.g. sustainable tourism in...../ How can the coastline at ....be managed sustainably to prevent flooding for example. Candidates that did this performed slightly better.
* Bias was rarely seen. Candidates need to recognise that many opinions are influenced by where we live or/and what we do.

**ADMINISTRATION**

Although the number of issues was minimal it is worth going over the main points.

• Sampling procedure: some centres had not followed the prescribed sampling procedure.

• Noting the total number of candidates on the CAA1 form.

• Work needs to be authenticated by the candidate and tutor.

• A copy of the resources and guidance notes should be sent to the moderator.

• Information regarding extra guidance to any candidate.

• Whether the services of a consultative moderator were used.

• Using the correct mark schemes. There was one example of a centre using the mark scheme for the old specification coursework.

Some centres were guilty of not following the prescribed procedures, many of which were laid down by JCQ and not by the WJEC. The ultimate penalty for some could be the withholding of a final grade.

Comments were made regarding the time allowed for the work. It is well worth remembering that what is in the specification is the maximum time allowed, and not necessarily what should be taken. There should be a centre policy regarding Controlled Assessment.

**SUMMARY**

The most important point to remember when setting a task is to look first at the marking scheme. Before starting, the question should be, whether the task gives access to all parts of the mark scheme. Are the resources relevant? Using the grid for recording marks did help in the moderation process, and especially so when there were page references for actual examples.

GCSE Geography (Spec A) Examiners Report – Summer 2011 JF

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