

Geography B

Advanced GCE A2 7833

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS 3833

Reports for the Units

January 2009

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Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Chief Examiner's Report

The OCR GCE Geography B specification provides a contemporary course in geography and a solid foundation for further study. The philosophy of the course is essentially about understanding how physical and human systems operate in order to consider how they might be best managed to achieve a sustainable future. As such, the use of up to date examples is significant when considering future geographical challenges.

The January 2009 examinations were sat by a small number of candidates in all the available units (unit 2692 is not available in the January cycle).

The AS legacy examinations were taken mainly by re-sit candidates, and it was encouraging to note that a significant proportion of these candidates achieved an improvement in their performance. Standards appear to be consistent with the previous cycle in the A2 units, although it was noted that there were slightly fewer very poor responses in unit 2691, where it appeared that candidates were answering the resource based questions increasingly effectively.

Principal Examiners have expressed the general view that candidates appeared to be well prepared in terms of both subject knowledge and examination technique. It was encouraging to note that there were virtually no rubric errors, a testament to the excellent examination preparation of subject departments within centres.

The following sections give a more detailed breakdown of the individual units.

2687 Physical Systems and their Management

General Comments

The examination was considered appropriate for AS level candidates and almost a full range of marks was achieved. There remains an imbalance in the choices in Section A with few candidates, as usual, choosing to answer the question on Atmospheric Systems but still 95% answering the Coastal Systems questions. Candidates should be encouraged to look at the whole balance of the specification, including the headings to each module and study section. Care should be taken by A2 candidates who may be re-sitting their AS module that their more recent studies of topics such as Natural Hazards are not used in place of their AS case studies; they are rarely appropriate. Better candidates can demonstrate a synthesis and overview of the physical systems studied. This ability to see the whole picture of any of the physical systems, to understand how the processes interact, and then to appreciate the impact of management upon the system is the quality that characterises the good candidate. It was of concern how many candidates could not read the question correctly so gave largely irrelevant answers, or spell even simple locational terms e.g. Mississippi, or confused geographical terminology e.g. weathering and erosion.

Those candidates that achieved the highest grades:

- demonstrated consistently good performance throughout the paper
- showed detailed locational knowledge especially in the extended answers – there was a clear sense of place
- exemplified, even within shorter section answers
- used appropriate and accurate geographical vocabulary
- showed they understood cause-effect relationships

And, above all:

- answered the question set

Section A

The format of each question is the same as in previous examinations and as in the complementary Human Systems module. There is a choice of two from three questions, one on each of the three study units. A resource provides stimulus material and data for parts (a) and (b) to show understanding and skills in different contexts while part (c) requires greater use of knowledge. Part (a) nearly always is descriptive and part (b) explanatory – a fact that all too many candidates fail to understand. Parts (a) and (b) have 9 marks each, while part (c) has 12 marks.

Section B

In this longer essay section there is a choice of one from two questions that seek to combine elements of all three physical units, to show the ability to synthesise knowledge and understanding of all aspects of physical geography. There is space in the answer booklet to plan this more demanding task, worth 30 marks, and once again it was evident that the candidates who planned carefully were able to construct a more logical essay that fulfilled the requirements of the question. In this examination the essay responses were generally good, which augers well for the new specification.

There was no evidence of shortage of time, and few rubric errors, although a few candidates failed fully to complete all sections of some questions. It is advised that the following comments are read in conjunction with the mark scheme.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Weaker candidates often offered generic 'passage of a depression' type answers rather than directly relate the weather to the data given on the weather map Fig. 1. All of the changes could be read from the data:

Currently the temperature is 6°C but this will rise to 9°C when the warm sector passes over but then fall to 5°C after the cold front.

Candidates must appreciate the meaning of the command 'Describe' – all too many candidates wasted time and space by explaining.

- (b) Candidates seemed confused as to what diagram(s) were appropriate to answer this question. Merely offering a cross section through a depression was unlikely to help both aspects of the question. A plan view such as one along the polar front gave more direction to the answer, enabling candidates to develop arguments based on air masses. All candidates could explain why depressions bring wet conditions:

Winds in depressions blow from the west. These originate over the Atlantic so pick up a lot of moisture so bring wet conditions when forced to rise by the British Isles.

Or

Depressions contain fronts where warm moist air is undercut and forced to rise so bringing wet conditions as the rising air condenses.

But they were often unclear why the weather was mild:

The weather is mild as the sea is warm relative to the land and the air comes from the Tropics.

This was not an incorrect answer, but too loose to be fully effective. Depression was mentioned plus the land is warm in summer! This section did require explanation but too many candidates described the passage of a depression again.

- (c) Many candidates correctly described a range of appropriate hazards associated with persistent anticyclones over the British Isles including drought, frost and fog. Few gave a great range or distinguished summer and winter conditions. Most focused on just two hazards. Some did offer more extreme hazards:

Flooding is common in anticyclones due to the high and sudden rainfall in the form of summer thunderstorms.

This could have been well supported with logical explanation of why anticyclones often end with flash floods but explanation was often weak:

Anticyclones are large areas of still air so fog is common and tends to persist causing major hazards for motorists and ships.

Again not wrong but the opportunity to link the weather hazard to the inversion layer in an anticyclone was wasted. It was the explanatory part of the answer that was weak in most cases. Too many candidates failed to gain marks as they clearly didn't know what an anticyclone was:

An anticyclone is an area of low pressure where air is rapidly rising to form thick clouds.

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates demonstrated clear observational skills so answers were often quite detailed. Virtually all candidates alluded to the waterfall in the rear of the photograph but far too many failed to spot the obvious potholes although some described them as 'cavitation'.

Candidates should appreciate that single word labels such as 'vegetation', 'gorge', or 'river' go only a little way to meeting the directive to annotate, so such answers remain as a low level response. A more effective annotation was:

Steep sided gorge left by the retreat of the waterfall.

- (b) Some diagrams were excellent and needed little additional text fully to explain the development of a river landform. The more effective responses used a series of diagrams to show the development of, predominantly, waterfalls or ox-bow lakes. These were broadly successful but often crucial stages or aspects were omitted:

When the meanders meet they erode through and so the river takes the shortest route so leaving the old meander as a cutoff or lake.

So why did the meanders meet? Likewise many candidates are unclear on the initial formation of a waterfall although they offer effective answers as to why they retreat. Also too many candidates seem to think there is only the horizontal cap type of waterfall.

It is a puzzle as to why a significant number of candidates described the formation of stacks and stumps.

- (c) This was often a disappointing section with the Tees and Mississippi (usually spelt wrongly) the most common choices, although some candidates chose examples that offered a limited number of methods of flood control. The Three Gorges dam was not a good choice as it encouraged too much irrelevancy to flood control. As previously noted in the examiner's report too many candidates spend up to 50% of their answers describing the river – its length, history etc.

The focus was the basin so not all the content needed to be kept in the river channel:

One method of flood control is to plant trees on the catchment slopes. These slow runoff, increase infiltration and transpire water back into the atmosphere so there is less to enter the river and cause flooding.

Most candidates were sound at describing a range of methods of flood control but explanation was often thin or limited. For example - compare:

Channels were straightened to ensure floodwater caused less flooding.

With

Channels were straightened and shortened so speeding up the river flow. As the floodwater could flow away more rapidly it was less likely to overflow and flood the surrounding area.

There was a surprising lack of diagrams, which would have greatly helped the description aspect of the question.

Question 3

- (a) This was very disappointing as so few went beyond a list such as: *dunes, beach*. Most at least did quote grid references, although some do confuse eastings and northings, or referred clearly to the map by using place names. Candidates seemed unsure about other features, so missed the all too obvious spits and bars let alone the salt marshes, although often responded to map names rather than geographical evidence e.g. *Brancaster Bay*.

Description is not always easy but few went beyond listing features. Description invites some idea of size, area, direction or relationship to places:

Dunes are extensive. They form a half kilometre belt along the coast stretching at least 9 km east to west.

Many candidates did decide to explain why the features formed so much time and space was taken up with material better suited to part (b).

- (b) Again, all too often these answers described the formation of a coastal depositional landform rather than explained it. Most chose dunes - not a good choice as formation was rarely known - or spits, but many seemed to think this question was similar to Question 2(b) and so focused on development rather than formation. Again it was the choice of dunes that seemed to subvert candidates' logic:

As the vegetation increases more humus is added to the sand so increasing water storage. This means larger plants can grow and so the dunes develop further.

This doesn't really explain the formation and effectively answers Question 3(c) instead. All too often the basic formation mechanism was not known or was confused:

Spits are the result of longshore drift moving material along the beach. As material moves down-drift so a spit is formed.

So why is the material deposited? Few knew. Again an alarming number of candidates wrote about bays or stacks.

- (c) This was another disappointing question. All too many saw this as a question requiring them to describe sand dunes – in some cases for the third time! Salt marshes or sand dunes were the expected ecosystems but there were some other valid ecosystems suggested:

Cliffs create their own distinctive ecosystems usually for seabirds which nest on sheltered rocky ledges. Their droppings fertilise the ledges increasing the variety of salt tolerant vegetation.

Examples were often very effective but other candidates' examples were weak and they would have been better advised to use the areas shown in the map extract.

The crucial aspect was why these ecosystems are so distinctive of, and develop in, coastal areas. Few candidates could explain this aspect effectively. The highest level responses clearly did explain their distinctiveness:

Sand dunes are a very distinctive environment as they are constantly being moved by the strong coastal winds, are often dry and there is a high salt content with occasional flooding in storm conditions.

So again candidates need to read the question carefully and be prepared to go beyond the most obvious to achieve at the highest level.

Section B

It is noticeable that in nearly every examination more candidates answer Question 4 than Question 5. In this case the imbalance was quite extreme, with perhaps only 10% attempting Question 5. Did this mean Question 5 was seen as more difficult, or do candidates see they can do the first question they come to so read no further? If so, this is a poor strategy.

Question 4

This proved a very popular question and on the whole was answered well. Candidates are reminded that when the term 'natural systems' is used then at least two of the three systems referred to in the specification are expected. Some tried a single case study approach such as the 'death' of the Aral Sea. These are unlikely to get above a Level 3 range of marks, as it is a single system.

The majority of candidates agreed with the viewpoint and saw it as a tale of negative impacts resulting from well intentioned efforts to control a natural system:

People can also affect the coast. In Cromer the building of coastal defences such as sea walls and groynes has trapped sand so the rate of erosion is reduced. Yet by stopping erosion in one place it may increase it leading to cliff falls and other mass movement hazards in another further down the coast. The interference on river systems and drainage basins was particularly well known as was global warming.

Many wasted time and space by describing the resulting hazard and how it was reduced. Exemplification was effective and often wide-ranging offering comparisons. Many candidates did not ignore climatic phenomena but showed how they can produce flooding in their own right. Some candidates made comments more in line with those expected at A2:

Flooding is a natural process and human activity doesn't so much cause it as make it worse or more likely. The highest level responses did examine the view stated and gave examples of where human interference reduced hazards, possibly in only the short term.

Beach replenishment is one way humans reduce the threat of coastal erosion. The added sand and shingle is used to reduce marine erosion and the threat of coastal flooding.

Question 5

This was not a popular question but was often done well often with good use of diagrams to illustrate the point:

As can be seen above the coastline shape of the Swanage area is dominated by rock structure. Where it is end on to the sea (Atlantic or discordant coastline) processes can erode the softer rocks producing a jagged coastline whilst where the rock structure is parallel to the sea less differential erosion is likely so the coastline is straighter.

The other very effective illustration was that of a waterfall. It was pleasing to see clear cause-effect and good appreciation of both 'rock structure' and 'processes'. Most agreed that they were of equal importance and were interconnected. Only the very highest level candidates suggested that the relationship it might depend upon some other factor:

With time rock structure becomes less important as the system is low in energy and deposits obscure the underlying structure protecting it from erosional processes.

Candidates should be given practice in this extended writing, as the longer essay gives the examiner the opportunity to assess the quality of written communication to a greater degree than the shorter answers. This examination, as in most, suggested that candidates performed better in such answers than in the shorter section ones. Crucial in this is the ability to read the

Report on the Units taken in January 2009

question carefully and respond in a focused way to the key concepts or terms used. Fluent use of geographical terminology, the logical structure of the essay, and the ability to draw together elements from all three of the study units of the specification fulfil the requirement to synthesise knowledge throughout the AS course, and provide a good foundation for the higher level skills required in the synoptic paper at A2. It also provides confirmation of progression beyond GCSE in both knowledge and understanding of the subject.

Reading the question carefully and answering it in a relevant and focused way remain the keys to success.

2688 Human Systems and their Management

General Comments

The number of candidates who took the examination was similar to many of the other January sessions of this examination, but as usual, far less than for the May/June session. There were a number of candidates who seemed poorly prepared for the examination. These candidates often ignored several parts of questions they had chosen to answer, and offered no answer to them. In particular, these candidates often wrote very short and simplistic answers in Section B.

Only a few very good candidates were entered, with the majority of candidates presenting sound answers, but without a great deal of outstanding material. The small number of very good candidates supported sound points with a good knowledge of case studies. The majority of answers were in good English, but there were a number of poor scripts where the English was either very simple or so ungrammatical that it was often difficult to understand the meaning.

Most candidates provided sound examples where these were requested, but only a few provided good detail that showed that they had studied the examples extensively.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

- (a) The best candidates took information from the resource and used it well to support their answer. Good candidates grouped countries and types of activity to show the global nature of the computer industry, and showed how tasks were allocated to countries at different levels of development. A common failing amongst weaker answers was just to repeat the data from the map in words, without trying to determine any pattern or illustrate globalisation.
- (b) Good answers identified specific changes in both transport and communication, then went on to show how these had helped globalisation. Many middle range candidates successfully showed how globalisation had taken place, but only implied that transport and communications had changed. Better answers were often supported by observations from examples.
- (c) There were a few good answers that responded fully. These usually started with an economic change which was clearly stated and accurately located within a country. Several answers dealing with Malaysia had this degree of accuracy. Where such answers then showed both economic and social issues arising from the economic change, it was easy to attain marks in the Level 3 range. The main weaknesses were not identifying an economic change, and then only discuss some economic and social issues in general, or ignore either social or economic issues.

Question 2

- (a) Several good answers directly compared changes in population, areal extent and density between all three urban areas. Weaker answers tended just to repeat the data in words without any comparison at all. Most answers were only partial in some way, leaving out either one of the urban areas, or one of the measures shown on the table.
- (b) The best answers identified different urban functions, and for each, explained both pushes from the centre and pulls at the fringes and beyond. Some candidates did not mention any functions, and explained a movement outwards in general. Such answers usually fell in the Level 2 range. It was good to see reference to real places in several of the better answers.
- (c) The main weakness here was that some candidates dealt only with lack of housing rather than with services. Those who dealt with services could easily gain high marks if they explained the roles of both individuals and government. Of those who did focus on services, it was usual to deal with individuals and government, but the discussion was only rarely supported by specific place reference.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates were able to read the graph accurately and make some comment on the relationship. The majority of answers were in a middle range, and dealt with the extremes only. Better answers identified the general trend, and used information from the resource to support this, and noted that it was not a simple relationship, and identified countries that did not follow the relationship well.
- (b) The best answers identified youth dependency for LEDCs, old age dependency for MEDCs and discussed the issues related to each. A middle band of candidates dealt with only one kind of dependency, or identified both, but stated little about related issues. It was noted that quite a large number of candidates answering this question did not know what dependency was, and could only achieve Level 1 marks.
- (c) There were a few good answers here, but the numbers were very limited. The majority of candidates did not identify population trends, but instead tried to describe and explain static characteristics of the population in different regions. There were a number of candidates who had very little, or faulty knowledge of regional differences of any EU country. In particular, many inaccurate answers were given for the UK.

Question 4

A very wide range of responses appeared here with answers given marks ranging from Level 5 to Level 1. The most common approach was to illustrate the accuracy of the statement first, and then show that economic development could take place with a rapidly growing population, and do this with sound place support. An equally good, but less frequent line of reasoning was to illustrate other limiting factors. The main reason for many low marks was the lack of good place knowledge.

Mauritius was used well referring to eras when it had rapid growth, and later when population had become more stable. A significant number of candidates, who had chosen China to illustrate their answer, thought that China had experienced little or no economic development.

Question 5

Once again a wide range of quality was noted. A small number of very good answers showed that economic opportunities did occur in large urban areas, but also that some large urban areas had few. The best were given detailed support for each type. A few answers showed that some rural areas had also experienced large numbers of economic opportunities, again well supported. One really good answer considered urban areas of different size, and their different experiences of economic opportunity. The principal weakness was poor knowledge of places, so that potentially sound points were just not supported by any attempt to refer to a place. The simplest answers just agreed or disagreed with the statement, giving some very generalised reason and no support from any example at all.

2689 Geographical Investigations 1

The Written Paper General Comments

The overall standard of the responses to this paper was similar to June 2008 and January 2008. Candidates were generally able to address all the assessment objectives of the report. Where a choice existed (Questions 1 to 3), Question 3 was the most popular choice, followed by Question 2 and then Question 1. Overall they were answered well. Question 4 presented the usual challenge of a varying format and content of question between sessions. Most candidates responded quite well, demonstrating an understanding how to rectify errors that have been made in a data collection programme.

The answer booklet clearly states that material from the report is to be extended and not repeated in Questions 1, 2 and 3. Repetition of the report is generally a characteristic of lower ability candidates. For January 2009 repetition from the report was a risk for Questions 2 and 3.

Very few candidates remained in Levels 1 and 2 and many entered at least Level 4. Questions 1, 2 and 3 must be read carefully by the candidate to ensure that they understand what the question requires – rather than attempt to use an answer that has been rehearsed as part of examination preparation.

Questions 1 and 2 were approximately equally popular choices, whilst more attempted question 3. Most candidates generally understood the requirements of the questions. The level of attainment for all questions was good, with most responses entering Level 3 and a good number entering Levels 4 and 5. The level of attainment was lowest for Question 1, as many candidates do not understand representativeness.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

This question was the least popular choice. Many candidates reached Level 3 or 4; few stayed in Levels 1 and 2. Well developed answers clearly understood representativeness as opposed to accuracy or reliability and the response was related to several aspects of sampling.

This question asked candidates to explain the extent to which their data collection methods produced a representative sample. The concepts involved understanding the population, sampling and representativeness. Examples of a population include a river/river system; a beach; a sand dune system; the population of a settlement; the users of a shop/service; the total number of pedestrians in a settlement; all land use in a settlement. In theory, sampling includes anything between more than 0% and 100%. Representativeness is the level of certainty that the sample is an indicator of how the population (from which it was taken) behaves. Factors affecting the extent of representativeness (including the rejection of alternatives) include sampling methodology and sample size; data collection techniques, e.g. the quality of equipment, and the ability to use equipment; access to sites; the time of day/month/season that the sampling was carried out; compatibility between sites in terms of the time of data collection and whether they represent the population (e.g. in proportion to the actual population); and recognition that at AS it is hard to obtain a representative sample due to time and skills constraints. The sample can be discussed in the context of whether it is suitable to answer the hypothesis or to compare with theory, or whether the method of data collection is error free or accurate and therefore suitable.

Qualities of A grade candidates: the extent of data representativeness is discussed quite well and the concept of sampling is understood quite well. Well developed answers will clearly

understand representativeness as opposed to accuracy or reliability. The response will be related to several aspects of sampling. The answer is generally logically ordered and well presented.

Some good candidates commenced with a definition of representativeness. Some candidates extended their definition of the population from the local study area to the whole country. Many reached Level 3 or 4; few stayed in Levels 1 and 2. The more able candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of representativeness – they did not confuse it with reliability or accuracy or use them as if they were interchangeable; some even defined a representative sample. However, those that used the inappropriate term often had the correct context of representativeness. More able candidates also understood the terms ‘sample’ and ‘population’, although some had a broad view of the population as they extended it to the whole country whereas the locality of their investigation was more appropriate. The most well developed responses addressed the question directly by considering the extent that data collection methods were appropriate, giving both positive and negative comments, whereas less able candidates only supplied negative comments. Middle ability candidates tended to be repetitive and have unbalanced answers that concentrated on one or two aspects of the data collection. The least able candidates tended to repeat information from the Report without expanding it in any way or simply described their data collection methods without indicating representativeness at all.

Question 2

This question was a little more popular than Question 1. Many candidates reached Level 4; some entered Level 5; few stayed in Levels 1 and 2. Well developed answers clearly stated the additional datasets and suggested several ways in which the investigation would be improved, with some of the improvements being different for each data set.

Candidates were asked to discuss how their investigation could have been improved by collecting two additional sets of data. Acceptable types of additional data include new variables, e.g. building height in addition to pedestrian flow; newspaper delivery and secondary school catchments as well as police and supermarket catchments; data collection being repeated on additional occasions; and repeat data collection at new locations (at the original site or a new site). Likely improvements include more data in order to enable more rigorous descriptive, statistical and graphical analysis; the additional data would enable a better explanation of the outcomes, e.g. patterns, relationships, differences and anomalies in terms of time and space; improvements to the sampling methodology, e.g. more sites or a different sampling method; overcoming data collection errors made in the original investigation; the ability to compare contrasting locations and times; and being more able to relate the results to geographical theory. Qualities of A grade candidates: Either improvements resulting from two additional datasets are discussed quite well or one dataset is discussed quite well and the other adequately. Well developed answers clearly state the additional datasets and suggest several ways in which the investigation would be improved, with some of the improvements being different for each dataset. The answer is generally logically ordered and well presented.

The understanding of ‘two additional datasets’ varied considerably between candidates: most interpretations were capable of achieving Level 5. However, weak candidates did not clearly specify what the data sets would be; by implication this was usually repeating two sets of data already collected. Responses tended to consider either two new variables or repeating two existing variables at existing or new locations (i.e. they did not mix the applications). Weaker candidates described how they would collect the new datasets rather than placing them in the context of why they would have improved the investigation. The discussion of the improvements was also simplistic, e.g. ‘it would have been better,’ ‘it would have been more accurate’ whereas more sophisticated responses described improvements such as how anomalies would be overcome or identified with the additional data, or they would be able to confirm or reject

geographical theory as a result of using more locations or repeating data collection at different times or with better equipment.

Question 3

This was the most popular choice of question. Many candidates reached Level 4 or 5; very few stayed in Levels 1 and 2. More able candidates gave answers that were well organised, clearly stating each error and method of avoidance together. Several methods of avoidance were considered.

This question asked the candidate to identify errors that were made when collecting their data and how could they have been avoided. Typically this will refer to the sampling locations, such as making a poor choice of locations, the inability to use the planned sites and a poor choice of days/times/seasons. All these require conducting a pilot study, better planning before going into the field and possibly better decision-making once in the field. There are numerous types of errors surrounding the lack of or incorrect data. If the equipment did not work it should have been checked before going into the field. If equipment not used correctly a pilot should have been carried out in order to learn how to use the equipment. If data was not collected from all the planned sites/respondents, the data collection strategy should have been planned better, e.g. by testing how long it takes to make measurements or conduct questionnaires; looking at tide times; checking river levels; and checking that the equipment is suitable for conditions in the field. Instances of lost data suggest that the data collection strategy should be improved and more care should be taken in the field, e.g. using a file for notes and waterproof paper. Incorrect data signifies poor organisation of responsibilities in the group, e.g. when writing down results and using poor procedures, e.g. not standing upstream of a tape measure in river or standing in the way of a lux meter. The collection of irrelevant data/variables against implies better planning is needed before going into the field.

Qualities of A grade candidates: either data collection errors and methods of avoidance are discussed quite well or one of errors/avoidance is discussed well and the other moderately well. Well developed answers are well organised, clearly stating each error and method of avoidance together. Several methods of avoidance are considered. The answer is generally logically ordered and well presented.

The straightforward theme of this question is well known to candidates and this enabled them to produce some good answers. At the more able end of the spectrum, candidates selected several errors: the errors and methods of avoidance were discussed for one error before moving onto the next one, whereas less able candidates separated all the errors from all the methods of avoidance. Both strong and weak candidates considered a range of errors that were a combination of sampling errors and those that emanated from insufficient or incorrect data being collected: the difference between them lay in the depth of the discussion and the quality of geographical terminology, plus the ability to extend rather than repeat text in the report.

Question 4

Most candidates reached Level 3; few entered Level 5 or stayed in Level 1. Good candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the weaknesses. The answers were balanced and logical, stating the weaknesses followed by the description and justification of each improvement. At least two parts of the data collection table were considered.

The candidates were given background information about an investigation that had been poorly planned. They were asked to identify weaknesses then describe and justify how the investigation could have been improved. Four flawed hypotheses were given. 'Pedestrian flows increase across the town' needed to specify expectations of how pedestrian flows change. 'A building's function changes in an urban area' should state that the position in an urban area affects its building function; the word 'change' is not clear: it could imply that the function

changes at different times, e.g. day and night. 'Building height is less away from the town centre' should be the number of storeys (or the method of measurement needs to be changed). 'The value of buildings is greatest in the centre of the town' – the value of buildings is usually greatest at the PLVI and not necessarily the centre of the town; 'value' was not specified. Indicative content for the methodology. The pedestrian flow transects need to be longer, account needs to be taken how the road system is accommodated by the plan and the type of road needs to be identified. It presupposes that the centre of the town is known. There are not enough students to do simultaneous data collection and 1500/200m gives a last distance of <200m. The collection date was not specific enough ('morning'). Only one day in the week is not representative. The data collection needs to specify the number of people going past, the direction and duration of the collection and how people are counted/recorded. The building function methodology does not consider the likely variation in buildings in between sampling points. Building function along a main road is often different to those on minor roads. The data is collected from an old plan and therefore out of date: additional primary data collection or more recent secondary data are required. The method chosen for building height does not address land not used for buildings. The sampling method is not very realistic. Building height and function should be sampled in the same way and at the same time for convenience (it is unlikely to change in a short period of time). The number of storeys of the buildings does not specify which or how many buildings. Building value data is available from a local authority, giving a more accurate set of data than by personal assessment. There is no strategy for contacting council. The strategy does not specify which buildings are sampled. Data needs to be converted to a value per square metre. The improvements suggested need to be realistic and relate to the variables in the original investigation.

Qualities of A grade candidates: the description and justification of improvements are discussed quite well or one of description/justification is discussed well and the other moderately well. There is some understanding of weaknesses. Well developed answers are balanced and logical, stating the weaknesses followed by the description and justification of each improvement. At least two parts of the data collection table are considered. The answer is generally logically ordered and well presented.

Some candidates deviated into a discussion of collecting additional variables, whilst others suggested a reduction in the number of variables, deviating to some extent from the objective of the question. As in previous examinations, candidates of all abilities were able to write lengthy answers when asked to criticise a set of information. However, good organisation was the key to a successful answer. Well structured responses identified the weakness before describing and justifying improvements, whereas weak candidates started with the description and justification without stating what the weakness was. Good answers concentrated on working their way through some or even all of the hypotheses and some aspects of data collection, whilst weaker answers deviated from the question and suggested a completely different investigation with different variables that were not even appropriate for the stated investigation. Many candidates remarked that the pedestrian flows hypothesis did not specify an end point in the centre of the urban area and that the building function needed to be assigned to a location in the urban area (in accordance with a land use model). Many also spotted the difficulty of the sampling interval for the pedestrian transects, the vagueness of the counting strategy and the need for repeat surveys. The problem of building function changing rapidly was frequently noted, as was the out of data land use plan. The inconsistency caused by counting storeys (easily done) instead of measuring building height (harder, but the stated variable) was also noted by many. Fewer noted the inconsistent data collection for the different variables. Overall, most of the improvements that were directly related to the given information (i.e. not a new variable or in a new study) were appropriate and realistic. The most common error was poor understanding of rateable value, which is not the same as house prices, so the 'improvement' of going to an estate agent was not valid. Differentiation was often achieved by the level of detail rather than inappropriate responses.

The Report

Guidance given to candidates: It is common practice for AS Level for all reports to be guided by the Centre or a field centre with group collection of data, therefore to some extent the outcomes reflect the expertise of the Centre or field centre. The assessment criteria achieve differentiation by outcome, although there is necessarily commonality in the reports and subsequent marks at each Centre. There was sufficient differentiation between candidates at most Centres to suggest that an appropriate level of support had been offered to candidates. Nearly all Centres stated how candidates had been assisted, usually by selecting the general topic, study location and sampling points. Candidates contributed to developing the methodology for planning, undertaking data collection and analysing the outcomes.

Length of Report: As in the last few years, there were few rubric infringements of the 1,500 word limit. Candidates that substantially exceeded the word limit were penalised according to the guidelines given.

Supporting figures: A maximum of two pages of relevant figures in support of the text is required in the guidelines. Overall most Centres adhered to the guidelines, without any detrimental impact on the mark awarded since credit is awarded for presenting the most appropriate data in the most appropriate formats, e.g. enabling like for like variables to be compared readily on the same page. Figures should not be photocopied and reduced in size in order to submit excessive quantities of data. The inclusion of raw data such as field notes and completed questionnaires is not required. However, templates for data collection are useful, e.g. a blank environmental quality survey form.

Content: A maximum of three hypotheses gave the most successful outcomes, as this enabled deeper analysis and evaluation than was possible with more than three hypotheses. Data collection and analysis should relate to the aims and hypotheses that the candidate has proposed at the beginning of the report: a description of the data collection for variables that are not part of the hypotheses is irrelevant. Average and good candidates now produce little irrelevant material. As in previous years the majority of reports covered physical topics, typically rivers, coasts or psammoseres. Human geography reports were mostly based on the CBD or urban environment.

Benefit from experience: If re-sitting, it is a good opportunity for candidates to improve the report submitted or even to submit a new one based on a different topic or improved data collection.

Preparing for the report: A good set of field notes can provide valuable explanations for the outcomes of the data analysis – particularly any anomalies that are present.

Detailed Comments

The following comments regarding the report have been made for previous examinations. Many candidates have the potential to benefit substantially by addressing the issues outlined below, most of which are simple to act upon.

1 Coursework Cover Sheet CCS205

- (a) CCS205 was used by nearly all centres. It is needed to identify the context of the studies, the conduct of group work and special circumstances relating to the conduct of the study.
- (b) Centres should ensure that the following information is provided:
 - the number of words in the report. Titles and headings are excluded from the word count. Text presented as sentences or detailed notes in tables are included in the word count.
 - the reports are signed and dated individually, i.e. not photocopied, by a member of staff at the centre.

2 Authentication Sheet CCS160

The use of CCS160, introduced in November 2003, is compulsory: not all centres used it. Marks will not be ratified without a signed CCS160.

3 Overall performance

- (a) The vast majority of candidates entered Level 2; very few candidates remained in Level 1. Stronger candidates produced well organised reports that linked their outcomes with their initial expectations when accepting or rejecting their hypotheses and also considered geographical theory. Weak candidates included little analysis and the structure was poor, with weak hypotheses that were not clearly referred to throughout the Report.
- (b) Nearly all reports represented a substantial development from GCSE, showing independent thinking when analysing and evaluating outcomes.

4 Presentation

- (a) The *standard* of presentation in the reports was generally good. Good characteristics were:
- easy to read text.
 - use of the third person rather than the first person.
 - the sheets were in the *order* in which they should be read. *Page numbering* was used.
 - figures and tables were *cross-referenced* at the appropriate place in the text.
 - if graphs and other *materials were scanned* in, care was taken to maintain quality (legibility/clarity).
- (b) The use of *excessive text* describing data collection and the evaluation of the method in a tabular format can attract a penalty against entering Level 3 if the word count is not adhered to. However, this technique was highly effective when used carefully.
- (c) The recommendation for two pages of *supporting material* was not adhered to by all candidates. These figures should:
- (i) provide evidence of the data collected.
 - (ii) relate to the stated aims and hypotheses of the investigation.
 - (iii) show an awareness of appropriate methods of representing data, e.g.:
- One map extract of an appropriate scale (not the UK) should show the location of the investigation and/or sampling sites.
 - Insert figures/tables at the appropriate place within the text, so that they complement rather than detract from the text.
 - Do not photocopy and excessively reduce the size of figures in order to add more information in the recommended space: this leads to loss of quality in information.
 - Do not spread graphs over a number of pages, making it difficult to compare like for like variables, e.g. if 10 river cross sections are made, they should be presented on the same page using the same scale.
 - Do not use more than one technique to present the same data.
- (d) *Word processing skills* were generally good, but *proof reading* was often neglected. In a few cases the standard of English was weak.

5 Length

- (a) At a few centres some reports exceeded 1,500 words. The word count must be adhered to and an accurate word count stated, since fairness for all candidates is paramount. Candidates should think carefully about how to use the word resource effectively.

- (b) As noted in 4(b), the use of tables to describe and evaluate data collection may be used to “save words” – but such tables with continuous text are part of the word count.

6 Format

Most candidates used a recognisable format based upon the specification: introduction, aims and/or hypothesis, data collection, analysis, and evaluation. An essay style approach without headings was seldom used – it often made the structure of the report more difficult to understand and was symptomatic of lower quality candidates.

7 Content

- (a) The *subject matter* of reports was nearly always appropriate. At AS level candidates have not covered a great variety of topics. As in previous sessions, physical studies such as rivers, psammoseres and human studies of spheres of influence and definition of the CBD are very popular and suitable topics. Physical geography reports dominated.
- (b) *Specific topics* selected within these subject areas need to be chosen with care, e.g. the comparison of two sites along a river, one being on a straight and one on a meander, is unlikely to demonstrate typical downstream river changes.
- (c) Many reports still have a *weak introduction*. It should be short and balanced, summarising the context of the study by stating: (i) where the study is based; (ii) something about the study area; and (iii) why it was selected.
- (d) *Hypotheses* should be founded in geographical theory: there is no point in testing a hypothesis that the candidate knows is not geographically feasible, e.g. air temperature increases whilst soil pH decreases across a sand dune.
- (e) The *aims* were given in nearly all reports, but in some cases the *hypothesis* was not given or it was not clearly linked to the aims. Some even had no hypotheses at all, these being replaced with an unachievable or lengthy or inappropriate wish list of expectations. A simple hypothesis demonstrates an understanding of what is expected to happen, according to theoretical knowledge, e.g. the velocity of a river will increase downstream; larger shopping centres have a greater sphere of influence. Additional justification can be given here. Expectations presented here can be used to explain the results later in the report. The purpose of the null and alternative hypothesis, when stated, is sometimes misunderstood. *The null hypothesis should state that there is not a relationship expected between two variables, whilst the alternative hypothesis should state that a relationship is expected, and preferably indicate the direction/nature of this expected relationship.*

Candidates should be sure that the *theory presented is correct*: common errors include the belief the velocity decreases downstream and that a U shaped valley always characterises the later stages of a river whilst a V-shaped valley is always found in the early stages.

All relationships to be analysed should be stated clearly in this section.

One or two hypotheses are adequate. Highly diverse and/or numerous hypotheses (up to nine have been presented) do not lend themselves to an easily managed Report, often leading to lengthy methodology and limited data analysis / evaluation sections.

The hypothesis must precede the methodology, otherwise it is not possible for the reader to know whether appropriate variables are being collected.

- (f) The *method* was usually presented well (as in previous years). Appropriate methods of enquiry were used. The following are good characteristics:
- The *choice of variables* must relate to the hypotheses and the rationale for their choice must be clear, e.g. the use of two methods of measuring velocity must be justified.

- How the sites/transects for measurement were selected. *However, many candidates did not justify the site selection.*
 - Type of sampling used (random, pragmatic, systematic, stratified – *candidates often confuse these definitions*).
 - Sample size for each sampling site was clearly stated. *However, this was frequently omitted. An appropriate sample size is important, e.g. three sites along a river will not yield useful results, nor will 20 questionnaires for a sphere of influence study.*
 - The data collected was relevant to the aims/hypotheses, *otherwise the analysis would not be relevant to the aims. When groups collect many variables, individual candidates should only refer to variables relevant to their chosen hypotheses both in data collection and analysis.*
 - A precise definition is given for the variables.
 - Template of questionnaires and survey forms, e.g. environmental impact.
 - Field notes made whilst collecting data, to be referred to in explanations of results.
- (g) *Analysis* was of variable quality, as in previous years. Good characteristics included:
- A clear indication of the hypothesis being discussed.
 - Text describing the results of the investigations was linked to graphs, tables, figures or photographs.
 - The results of statistical tests were discussed within the text.
 - Theoretical knowledge was used to explain the outcomes.
 - Anomalies were looked for and an attempt made to explain them by referring to secondary knowledge and field notes. The source of the explanatory material was stated.
 - The outcomes from more than one hypothesis/aim were linked – *this is a Level 3 type response.*
 - All the data collected was referred to and was relevant to the hypotheses, e.g. a questionnaire may be a relevant supplementary to the investigation, but if carried out, it should form part of the analysis. Conversely, irrelevant data should not be collected, e.g. pH and soil moisture are not relevant to wind speed across dunes.
 - The source of supplementary data (i.e. secondary and anecdotal evidence) was used to support the interpretation of data. *This was often omitted with coastal management schemes and responses to questionnaires.*
 - Statistical tests carried out well included:
 - An appropriate test was carried out. *If a mean is taken of 10 readings at each of two locations, the appropriate test is the difference of means not Mann-Whitney.*
 - Numerical evidence to demonstrate that a test has been carried out.
 - Careful use of the term “significant”. The level of statistical significance of a relationship (if any) was stated when carrying out a suitable test such as Spearman’s Rank Correlation.
 - Calculations checked carefully. *A logic check by the Candidate will quickly reveal unrealistic results, e.g. the direction and strength of an appropriate relationship based upon Spearman’s Rank Correlation should be checked against scatter graphs. Units should be checked, e.g. discharge is often miscalculated. Rs can only be between +1 and -1.*

- Appropriate formulae used to calculate results, e.g. the calculation of velocity based on the number of propeller counts or the time taken for a float to travel over a given distance must be converted to metres per second.
 - Make sure *both* variables are ranked from high to low (or low to high) for Spearman's Rank Correlation.
 - The conclusion does not repeat information verbatim from the analysis.
 - Candidates should be aware of geographical theory, e.g. velocity increases with distance from the source of a river; rain on the day preceding data collection does not make the results inaccurate or incorrect.
 - An appropriate test should be used, e.g. Mann-Whitney could be used to compare vegetation site A and site B, whereas Spearman cannot (ranking 2 sites for one variable is inappropriate)
- (h) Nearly all Candidates *evaluated* the project by considering two main aspects:
- (i) difficulties in selecting the sample and field data collection, and (ii) possible modifications and extensions to the study. Weaker candidates stated that the study went well and that the outcomes were as predicted. They also overestimated the potential usefulness of the studies, e.g. it is highly unlikely that one off small studies would be useful to any local authority or government agency. Most studies could be linked to a geographical theory, but this third area of evaluation was usually not mentioned *or* the theory stated early in the report was not returned to in the outcomes – particularly in the case of land use models.
- (i) The presentation of *maps* was reasonable, e.g. title, scale and key. *Few candidates used the map to show precise locations of sampling sites on, for example, rivers or sand dunes. Furthermore, many did not include any map – yet they are a fundamental part of Geography!*
- (j) *Graphs*: Candidates usually selected appropriate ways of presenting data, but most made one or more of the following errors:
- More than one technique used to present the same data.
 - Poor choice of scale for variables with small variations.
 - Variable scales for the same pairs of variables on different graphs, so that comparisons were difficult and/or misleading.
 - Axes not labelled or inaccurately labelled.
 - Two types of graph used to represent the same variables at two different sites, thereby making comparison difficult.
 - Independent variable placed on y-axis.
 - Set of related graphs on successive sheets made it difficult to compare like with like, e.g. river cross sections.
 - Line graphs erroneously purported to show a link between qualitative descriptors such as types of land use or a set of 10 randomly selected pebbles on a river bed.
 - Titles stating “A graph to show.....” The graph obviously shows something!
 - Graphs and diagrams not relevant to the variables used, e.g. a pie chart is inappropriate if a question permits multiple responses, e.g. different products purchased – this must go on a bar chart.

2690 Geographical Investigation 2

General Comments

Entries for this session were generally of a sound standard with a wide variety of suitable topics and skills. Many candidates displayed a good understanding of the design and format that the studies should take. In contrast with previous sessions there were many more urban and microclimate studies showing a wide variety of methods and data presentation. Most reports were of sufficient length with fewer being too long this session.

Marking, for the most, was well within the acceptable tolerance limits and accurate around the grade boundaries. As with other sessions some of marking at the very top end tended to be a little generous and marking at the bottom end a little harsh. Many of the lower level candidates put in a satisfactory effort and did merit some more marks.

Map and diagram presentation was perhaps a little poorer this session. While the ideas behind the presentation were excellent, the end products in some cases were a little untidy and lacked the necessary detail.

Graphical presentation was generally good and candidates seemed to have grasped the idea of presentations with suitable scales and titles. Some candidates confuse line graph with scatter graph presentation by joining the points on the latter. This may be due in part to the variations of chart wizards in Excel programmes. Other candidates still struggle with the terminology required for graph analysis and the term correlation seems to be used a little loosely.

Many of the skills this session were well thought out and very original. A number of candidates invented perception matrices and environmental quality scales that seemed to work very well. Some candidates still choose to include large appendices with copies of data collection and all workings of statistical tests. As long as the data is presented in a suitable form and statistical test outcomes are accurate such bulk is not necessary.

Again, centres have encouraged candidates to put their data collection along with limitations, justification for sampling, equipment required etc. in table form. This appears to have been highly successful with the vast majority of candidates linking their data collection to key questions very well. For the poorer candidates this provides for maintenance of focus.

Use of pilot studies were again very successful this session and contributed to some well thought out and executed investigations.

Several candidates used secondary data collection to the full, making comparisons with other studies that had been conducted on similar topics and in the same places. This showed a high degree of skill and application and centres are to be commended on encouraging this.

Choice of Topic

In the vast majority of cases the choices of topics were most suitable and produced very successful outcomes for candidates. This is perhaps one of the most difficult parts of the investigation and a sensible amount of guidance to candidates is permitted. It is a pity when candidates are allowed to proceed with unworkable topics and do not produce work that reflects their potential ability.

Microclimate studies were popular this session and candidates obviously took advantage of the considerable scope for data collection and presentation. Very few candidates chose the IT route of enquiry. These can be successful if candidates are encouraged to collect data that they can actually do something with - create graphs, run some statistical tests etc.

Successful topics this session;

- To what extent can urban heat island theory be demonstrated in X?
- An investigation into the effects of socio-economic status on attitudes towards recycling and waste issues.
- An investigation into the relationship between salinity of soil and the biodiversity in a halosere.
- Spatial patterns of graffiti in a given area.
- Investigating the core frame model in and urban centre.

General Comments - Administration

The New Moderation Manager System

This new system will be in full operation for the June session.

a) Samples - centres will be notified by email about samples to be sent to the moderator.

Please continue to despatch samples in the same way and to include authentication.

b) Clerical Errors - centres will be notified by email. Attachments will be the familiar Clerical Error letters and the Amend forms. Centres are encouraged to respond promptly.

Cover Sheets - where possible please make some comment on the cover sheet attached to candidates' work. These comments along with annotations in the coursework are useful for the moderation team and allow a little more insight into the candidate and their work.

Internal Moderation - Those centres who internally moderate their coursework tend to fare better in the final outcome, being far more accurate and consistent in awarding marks. Internal moderation is encouraged as it serves to identify problems at a departmental level. Centres are in a far better position to solve these problems.

Authentication Forms - Were received from every centre this session. These can be sent as a separate document with the samples or attached to samples themselves.

2691 Issues in the Environment

General Comments

The most popular questions were 1 and 7. The remainder of the questions were all attempted, some by very few candidates. There appeared to be no problems in completing the paper and there were no major rubric infringements.

The quality of the responses was variable – but in most cases candidates showed some understanding of the question and used the resources effectively. There were very few extremely poor responses. At the highest level candidates showed an impressive understanding and brought in a wide range of well documented examples. In the middle mark ranges responses were generally more descriptive with limited discussion of the key ideas. Addressing the question commands and responding to the key idea of the question were the major factors in differentiating responses.

Question 1

- (a) The majority of candidates used the resource effectively and were able to explain the importance of aid following a natural disaster. The distinction between short and long term aid was not always clearly made by candidates. Those that did make the distinction usually achieved the higher levels, particularly when they brought in additional exemplification to support their answer.
- (b)(i) For many candidates 'human activity' was seen almost exclusively as global warming. This approach often led to discussion about changing weather patterns and increasing storm frequency. This was an interesting avenue but tended to be slightly self-limiting. A broader approach was taken by a significant number of candidates. This took in ideas about increasing numbers of people living on floodplains or other vulnerable areas or modifications to landscape or land use increasing the risk of hazards. When supported with appropriate examples this was a very successful approach to the question.
At the highest level candidates clearly separated the ideas of frequency and impact and a number considered that the frequency of many hazards and remained constant but were simply increasingly reported. Any discussion of this type took the response from the simply descriptive to the increasingly analytical.
- (ii) The majority of candidates selected appropriate examples to show that planning and preparation can reduce the impact of hazards. A basic agreement of the idea tended to produce descriptive responses which lacked discussion about the idea of 'extent'. Those candidates who looked at different types of hazard and the relative impact of planning and preparation often produced more analytical responses. A number of candidates made some excellent comparative points by bringing in examples where planning and preparation had only had marginal effects or had even made the situation worse or made the population of an area complacent about the possibility of a hazard.
A small number of candidates drifted into detailed essays about prediction. Unless this was clearly linked to planning and preparation this approach tended to be slightly self-limiting.

Question 2

Very few candidates attempted this question.

- (a) Candidates used the resource effectively to identify the potential impacts of climate change on both physical and human systems. This often resulted in copying key points from the resource with only marginal elaboration or development. This approach allowed candidates to achieve a reasonable mark, but without discussion or use of broader examples this was at times slightly limiting.

- (b)(i) The majority of candidates showed a good general understanding of the question and were able to consider the limitations of international agreements in attempting to control the levels of pollution. The discussion generally focused on the failure of some governments to agree to sign up to particular conference recommendations. A small number of candidates made comparative points in relation to national legislation. This often produced some thoughtful discussion and when supported by appropriate examples led to very useful responses.
- (ii) Responses to this question were often quite vague and lacking in depth and detail. The causes were often seen simply as industry and vehicles and impacts considered in terms of general pollution points. Some candidates drifted into a slightly more detailed discussion about health issues was a useful approach. Locational detail was very limited and in some cases no place information at all was given.

Question 3

- (a) Candidates used the resource effectively to identify the environmental pressures created by the growth of tourism. A small number of candidates developed this theme successfully by introducing other examples, usually Alaska or The Alps. At the highest mark levels candidates considered the idea of 'extent' by considering the part played by sustainable management in reducing environmental pressures. It was slightly disturbing to note that some candidates saw Antarctica as a 'mass tourism resort' and described potential pressures in light of this.
- (b)(i) There were some very impressive responses to this question. A number of candidates offered detailed observations about landforms associated with periods of glaciation and also went on to discuss the use of ice cores, pollen analysis etc as a means of identifying previous glacial conditions. These observations were frequently supported by appropriate and well located examples.
- (ii) There was a good general appreciation of the fragile nature of cold environments and the subsequent need for careful management. Beyond that, most candidates offered quite a descriptive account which had elements of ecosystem understanding and often quite vague accounts of the types of management that might be appropriate. Locational exemplification was linked and responses generally lacked depth and detail. Consequently most responses were somewhat self-limiting.

Question 4

Very few candidates attempted this question.

- (a) Candidates used the resource effectively to identify the opportunities expressed but generally failed to develop the ideas or bring in wider observations. The constraints on tourism development were not considered in any depth by most candidates. Consequently, responses were often quite descriptive and did not fully address the range of the question.
- (b)(i) Candidates showed a good understanding of how tropical environments can be damaged, frequently bringing in ideas about deforestation and desertification. Consequently the link between human interference and damage to tropical systems was well established. Few candidates showed a detailed appreciation of the nature of tropical environments or an understanding of tropical ecosystems. Those that did, and then built on these ideas to express the reasons why tropical environments are fragile, generally developed a sound response.
- (ii) The tendency with this question was for candidates to simply agree with the statement and then look for examples to support that view. Where the examples were well chosen and carefully developed answers were thoughtful and showed a good awareness of the question.
In a number of cases candidates simply described the way that development projects had damaged environments without any real discussion. While this approach showed some understanding it tended to be rather self-limiting.

Question 5

- (a) The majority of candidates used the resource effectively to describe the actions of FARM Africa in improving food security. A number then went on to develop this theme by using examples of other NGOs in other parts of the world. This approach gave candidates the opportunity to show a sound awareness of the question but did not always fully address the key idea of 'How important' international agencies are. A number of candidates simply used the resource with no real development. This gave a useful starting point but did not allow responses to fully address the question.
- (b)(i) There were some very impressive answers to this question with a number of candidates having quite a sophisticated discussion about the relative importance of farmers, food companies and consumers of the production of food. Some candidates developed this theme further by expressing the observation that the relative importance varies globally and that in some places political decisions also play an important part.
- At the lower end candidates tended to focus on one aspect of the debate, often the influence of supermarkets. This approach gave an insight into the question but did not allow candidates to have a full discussion of the issues.
- (ii) Candidates showed a good general understanding of the question and in many cases offered considerable detail about specific health problems associated with nutritional issues. The general thrust of responses tended to focus around the idea of malnutrition or obesity, but within that range there were often precise and accurate observations made. Locational detail tended to be quite vague, the exception being in the U.S.A. which was widely used as an example of overnutrition.

Question 6

Very few candidates attempted this question.

- (a) The use of the Ordnance Survey extract was variable and often quite extreme. A small number used it on great detail, identifying both major and minor changes by using well developed map reading skills. Other candidates simply made general points about 'more buildings' or 'more roads' with only vague reference to the map and no real use of map reading skills. Those candidates who had identified changes in some detail were generally able to use the information to make thoughtful points about the impact of change.
- (b)(i) It was clear that not all candidates understood what was meant by 'self-help scheme' and this tended to limit the focus of responses. Those candidates who did have detailed case studies at their command were able to put together very effective essays.
- (ii) The concept of the sustainable urban areas was not always fully understood. Candidates tended to focus on individual urban challenges such as traffic congestion or poor housing and then use examples to express the idea that these challenges are not easily managed. This approach allowed candidates to show an awareness of the question but did not always fully address the key idea. A small number of candidates focused on one city, often a rapidly growing Asian city. This approach was generally very successful and when fully developed with evaluative comment scored highly.

Question 7

- (a) The majority of candidates used the resource effectively to identify the problems of falling visitor numbers. A significant proportion then developed this theme further by making observations about the impact on jobs and incomes. At the highest levels candidates brought in discussion about the multiplier (both positive and negative) and also the effect of falling tourism revenues on national incomes and trade balances. A number of candidates used well located and documented examples of places where tourism had grown or declined making thoughtful evaluative observations which were clearly related to the question.
- (b)(i) A significant number of candidates drifted into historical observations about the development of railways and links to the growth of seaside resorts. While this provided an interesting starting point for a discussion in a number of cases the response failed to move on significantly into more recent times. Those candidates who took a broader approach to 'transport' in relation to regional airports and developments in long haul flights often developed a broader debate. At the highest level candidates examined a range of transport infrastructural and economic developments and made sound judgements in terms of their relative importance on the growth of tourism.
- (ii) Candidates showed a reasonable understanding of the concept of sustainability and many used well located and detailed case studies to develop their ideas. Responses varied from largely descriptive accounts of ecotourism areas of National Parks to broader discussion about the pressure brought about by increasing visitor numbers and the consequent need for management strategies. A small number of candidates focused on small scale environmental pressures such as the use of motor boats on Lake Windermere. While this approach gave an opportunity to show some awareness of the question it tended to be self limiting. The more successful responses showed a broader understanding of the concept of sustainability and did not simply see it as just environmental pressures.

Question 8

Very few candidates attempted this question.

- (a) Candidates used the resource effectively to identify the different business activities highlighted and made clear observations about the potential benefits of transnational corporations. There was not always a great deal of development beyond the resource and this tended to limit the depth of responses.
- (b)(i) Focus was frequently quite historical and responses based on a narrow range of locational exemplification. The concept of 'economic decline' was often seen in quite simple terms and did not always consider socio-economic ideas. The descriptive nature of responses were at times rather self-limiting.
- (ii) A number of candidates showed a good general understanding and were able to develop links between manufacturing shift/outsourcing and the growth international trade. This often provided a useful avenue for the development of a thoughtful response. At the highest level this approach was enhanced by the use of detailed locational exemplification.

Grade Thresholds

Advanced GCE Geography B 7833 3833
January 2009 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
2687	Raw	90	58	50	42	34	27	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2688	Raw	90	63	56	50	44	38	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2689	Raw	60	46	42	38	35	32	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2690	Raw	90	72	63	54	46	38	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2691	Raw	90	67	61	55	49	43	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2692	Raw	120	-	-	-	-	-	-
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
3833	300	240	210	180	150	120	0
7833	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
3833	2.6	43.6	79.5	97.4	100.0	100.0	39
7833	0.0	25.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	4

43 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:

http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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