Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In Geography (4GE0) Paper 01

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General Information

There was a small entry for this exam series as it was made available to allow candidates to sit an examination this year following on from the teacher assessed grades that were used to award grades in the summer of 2021.

Recognising that not all candidates will have had the opportunity to undertake fieldwork, Section B of the paper only included fieldwork questions that referred to an unfamiliar fieldwork context. Therefore, the paper had a total of 62 marks. The exam included a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, data response and extended response questions. Each of the questions was mapped to one or more of the Assessment Objectives (AOs). Comments on the overall quality of responses and particular issues related to questions across the exam paper are considered in this report.

The paper has been provided to be accessible to a range of candidates. The paper provides question choice in each section, allowing candidates to select which areas of the specification they wish to respond to. In section A candidates selected 2 out of the 3 questions to respond to. Questions on river environments (Q1) and hazardous environments (Q3) were more the most popular combination of selected questions compare with selections including coastal environments (Q2). In the fieldwork question (section B) candidates selected one question out of the three that were available. There was an even spread of candidates attempting each question.

Examiners noted a few issues related to how candidates responded to different types of questions:

- There was a wide variation in the breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding demonstrated by candidates particularly when trying to draw on key theoretical concepts.

- As in previous series the material in the resource booklet was not always used effectively by candidates. Many candidates still have problems in using evidence directly from the resource (an AO3 skill) to be able to generate a successful answer. Where questions refer to more than one resource sometimes candidates still just draw from one. The most successful candidates would use the resources as a starting point to develop their arguments and then link to other concepts and examples from their own knowledge and understanding.

- In some cases, for low tariff questions where a resource is available candidates look beyond what the question is asking for and gave an incorrect response.

- Many candidates did not provide strong answers in the fieldwork section of the paper, but given the varied experiences of fieldwork, this is not surprising. Candidates need to be familiar with the different stages of the enquiry process and potential data collection methods as well as data presentation and analysis techniques which could be used.

- In questions where candidates are asked to develop a single reason, it is important to ensure that the appropriate number of links in the explanatory chain are developed. The number of marks should be used as a guide to this. These questions usually have the command word, 'suggest' or 'explain', but may differ in depth depending on the expectation of the question. For example, a 4-mark, 'explain one reason why...' question requires greater depth than a 4-mark, 'explain two reasons for...'question.

- For the longer extended response questions there was often a lack of fluency and structure in the longer answers, many candidates just describing and explaining, rather than a focus on analysis or discussion (depending on the question). It was felt that candidates were not always recognising how to tailor their answer to the command word in the question (for assess, evaluate, or discuss questions). Where candidates are directed to more than one resource it is important that they refer to both to support their answer.

Recommendations for centres based on this exam performance:

- Centres should review the specification content alongside the sample assessment materials and previous papers to ensure they are familiar with the range of key vocabulary that candidates need to recognise and understand, and how they can be used in different types of questions. There is now a range of papers from previous series available which should provide examples of the range of question types which can be included in this paper, as well as the different potential formats of the fieldwork section.

- Ensure that candidates are familiar with the different command words used in this specification. For example, the difference between what is

expected for 'analyse' and 'discuss', and what the key components of an answer for this type of question should include.

- Candidates should continue to be supported to develop their 'integrated skills' incorporated in their delivery. These can be found below the subject content in each section of the specification. Being able to interpret different resources from graphs to maps is an important aspect of this paper. Candidate should ensure they can interpret material from graphs and correctly recognise different axis to be able to read the data on the graphs.

- In questions that refer to a resource, either in the paper or resource booklet, it is important that evidence from the resource is used to answer the question in some way. There will be specific marks available for the interpretation of these resources. Candidates may find it useful to refer to the resources clearly in some of the extended response questions, making clear reference to the resource in their responses.

- Some questions ask for a particular number of responses e.g., one way, or two strategies, it is important to ensure candidates develop their responses accordingly and provide sufficient development of their responses to achieve the marks in the question. These will differ depending on the command word, and how many marks relate to the question. The space for candidates to response will indicated where there are multiple responses required to try and support candidates structure their response.

- Candidates should be encouraged to spend time reviewing the geographical enquiry process to ensure that the stages are understood and how they relate to each other. This will help candidates prepare for the level response question in section B.

Individual Question Feedback

There was some mixed performance in this Section, with some excellent responses but equally those that were quite weak. Questions that incorporated the use of resources and application tended to discriminate the most.

Question 1

1 (a) (i) (ii) The multiple-choice questions provided an accessible introduction to the paper. Candidates were usually able to successfully identify the water transfer and the statement that best defined evapotranspiration.

1 (b) (i) Most candidates were able to identify a physical factor that influences the rates of river erosion. Some candidates confused physical and human factors.

1(b) (ii) Generally done well by candidates, with many being able to develop their initially point. Some candidates failed to get the second mark as the simply repeated some of the words in the question i.e., "the force of the water gets into cracks in the riverbank and erodes away sediment".

1 (c) Candidates demonstrated some good, well-developed answers here; reference to rock type / permeability / vegetation were common resulting in some good responses. Less successful responses referred to rainfall levels – something that was not a clear factor affecting lag times on the resource.

1 (d) Many responses were able to get to 2 marks by mentioning 'waste from industry being dumped in rivers, which causes pollution'; some excellent answers were evident through developing the idea about fertiliser run-off from agriculture leading to eutrophication.

1 (e) Candidates were generally successful in their response identifying that the landform was a waterfall.

1 (f) Many candidates failed to demonstrate a clear understanding about the formation of a levee. It was evident that there was a lack of knowledge and understand regarding the starting point of the development of the levee which impacted candidates' ability to gain marks on this item.

1 (g) A large proportion of candidates failed to make use full use of this resource, limiting the quality of AO4 in their response; some good knowledge and understanding was demonstrated relating to factors affecting flood risk (AO3) – but sometimes this lacked depth and additional explanation beyond what appeared in the resource.

Question 2

2 (a)/ 2 (b)(i) The multiple-choice questions provided an accessible introduction to this question. Most candidates were able to identify a biotic factor and the best definition of biological weathering successfully.

2 (b) (ii) Most candidates were able to state one type of coastal mass movement, some candidates however confused mass movement with coastal landforms.

2 (b) (iii) Most candidates were able to name a type of hard engineering for one mark; a small minority were unable to explain why this technique was used or became a little confused as to the purpose a particular strategy.

2 (c) The majority of candidates provided a successful response to this item with all the examples provided in the mark scheme appearing with high frequency.

2 (d) Many candidates appeared to still be in the 'coral reef' mindset, and talked about tourism damaging coral reefs via snorkelling / breaking bits off etc. Few candidates seemed to offer a 'double-development' of their initial idea for full marks.

2 (e) Some candidates were not able to clearly identify the landform as a spit, there were a wide variety of incorrect answers including bar and lagoon.

2 (f) There was a wide variety of responses to this item ranging from some very good answers through to responses where candidates misunderstood the question and just talked about preventative measure / ways hard engineering could be used to reduce coastal flooding, rather than saying how predictive techniques could be used to inform where these defences should be placed.

2 (g) Some candidates made effective use of the textboxes in the resource to support answers, however the map was less well used. Some weaker candidates simply copied out information without adding very much additional information / analysis resulting in candidates only being able to access level 1 marks.

Question 3

3 (a)/ 3 (b)(i) The multiple-choice questions provided an accessible introduction to this question. Most candidates were able to identify the factor that produces the occurrence of an earthquake and identify a way to help plan for a tropical cyclone.

3 (b) (ii) Most candidates were able to state one reason why people continue to live in areas of risk.

3 (b) (iii) Candidates responded well to this item with some good answers referring to job loss, cost of rebuilding, damage to infrastructure (and how this can affect businesses / the economy).

3 (c) Candidates generally found it challenging to extract sufficient information from the resource to be awarded full marks. Many talked about proximity to coastlines, but a large proportion mentioned ideas like levels of development (which is not shown on Figure 3a).

3 (d) This item was generally, well answered by candidates, most had the idea of plate boundaries / movement at pate margins, and many were able to talk about friction and the release of pressure.

3 (e) Candidates were generally successful in their response identifying a hazard associated with a volcanic eruption.

3 (f) Many candidates were able to identify hotspots (with accompanying magma plume under a thin crust) – but often fell short of full marks. Some candidates misunderstood the question and talked about why sometimes volcanoes didn't happen at plate boundaries e.g., if it was a conservative plate margin.

3 (g) Many candidates provided good answers to this item. More successful candidates were able to draw upon all aspects of the resource (AO4) and their own knowledge and understanding (AO3). Weaker responses either ignored the resource completely, or simply copied out sections of the resource without any additional analysis.

Section B

Questions 4, 5 and 6

In this section, candidates were required to answer one out of three fieldwork questions available. The questions mirrored each other across the three options, and the strengths and weaknesses of response followed similar patterns across each of these. As previously mentioned, the fieldwork section had been reduced to only include questions which referred to an unfamiliar context. There were no extended response questions in this section.

Candidates were provided with information about a student's methodology including the details of the methods, data collected, presentation and conclusions.

In 4/5/6 (a)(i) Candidates had to identify one type of equipment that could be used in the investigation in the enquiry. This was generally well answered across each of the three questions.

4/5/6 (a)(ii) Candidates were usually able to identify a relevant sampling method that was used in the enquiry. It is clear that the vast majority of candidate now understand what is meant by sampling strategy.

4/5/6 (a)(iii) This question required candidates to describe one way GIS might be used for fieldwork. Candidates did not perform well on this item overall. Some candidates scored one mark by identifying a simple way GIS could be used but were not able to expand their response.

4/5/6 (b) Candidates struggled with their responses to this item across the questions, with the majority only reaching level 1. Candidates were unable to understand what the question was asking for in many cases and simply re-wrote the resource, described the resource, or provided an evaluation of data collection methods without any reference to the conclusions. Candidates who were able to access Level 2 were able to centre the response around the conclusions – and evaluate the extent to which these might be considered valid by drawing upon further evidence from the resource.