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Report on the Examination

Geography
Specification B

- GCSE 3032
- GCSE 3037 (Short Course)

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General

It is encouraging to report that a large number of centres obviously made use of the advice given in last year's feedback forms and Standardisation Meetings. The quality produced and the accuracy of the application of the marking criteria suggests that the information they received and the materials they were given were put to great effect. Moderators were impressed with the variety of coursework and the breadth of knowledge displayed by many of the candidates. The vast majority of work was appropriate, in that, it related to the taught Specification and allowed differentiation between candidates. Some excellent geography and an increasingly high standard of ICT made the process of moderation, in most cases, a pleasurable experience.

Teacher-led enquiries continue to be by far the most common format. Indeed, the individual enquiry is becoming an endangered species. The range of topics submitted was varied, the most popular theme being urban studies, with CBD investigations, shopping hierarchies, tourism, and traffic being dominant. This is not surprising, as in most cases, the urban environment provides a range of topics that are very accessible for most candidates and gives easier opportunities to re-visit the sites. This year an increasing number of centres opted for a purely physical study, with rivers and coastlines by far the most popular.

There were a few examples where teacher direction was not only apparent in the planning stage but also in the writing-up process. In extreme cases, the work was so directed that the enquiries became almost identical, each candidate using the same section from the textbook as the basis for their introduction and teachers selecting the data presentation techniques to be used with little input from the candidate. As a result, only in the data interpretation and evaluation sections could the candidate's true ability be assessed.

Some centres allowed their candidates to consider a large number of sub-hypotheses that, in some cases, were nothing more than predictions. This type of enquiry tends to become rather repetitive and fails to provide candidates with an opportunity to give an overview or summative statement. As a result, links to achieve Level 3 in the interpretation section are never fully developed or identified, with centres 'cherry picking' isolated phrases to justify the awarding of Level 3. Furthermore, this approach tends to develop into extremely long enquiries which some centres assume justifies high marks. Teachers have a clear responsibility to guide their students appropriately in title and task selection, as well as encouraging wherever possible, quality not quantity.

Finally, although most centres remained within the marking tolerance set by AQA, there was evidence this year that centres were assuming that if a candidate fulfilled the criteria for a particular level, then automatically they would be awarded the top mark in that level; this is not the case. There is room for differentiation and progression within each level, allowance has to be made for the quality of application by the candidates to the marking criteria. Whatever the reason for centres adopting such a strategy, if used across all the marking criteria, then it will inevitably lead to a discrepancy between centre marks and the standard required by AQA.

Administration

The quality of administration was much improved on last year with centres justifiably deserving credit for the professional way they approached this aspect of the moderation process. There was a small minority, however, who failed to meet even the basic requirements and, thus, delayed the whole process.

The new sampling procedure continued to work well and made sure that the number and composition of the sample sent from the centre was correct in the majority of cases. Improvements were seen in the speed of response from centres, in particular with regard to Centre Mark Sheets, which were being posted to the moderator much closer to the deadline than last year. However, the time taken for centres to respond to requests by moderators for work or information did vary enormously.

It is clear that there is a strong correlation between the effectiveness of internal lines of communication within the centre, in particular, between the Examinations Officer and the Head of Department, and the efficient way in which the whole moderation process is negotiated.

The following points need to be stressed.

- Centres, with 20 or fewer candidates, should ensure that all their candidates work together with the second and third copies of the Centre Mark Sheets (or an EDI print out) should arrive with the moderator by the deadline indicated, allowing time for postal delivery. If a centre has more than 20 candidates, they should ensure that, the second and third copies of the Centre Mark Sheets (or two copies of the DI printouts) should arrive with the moderator by the deadline indicated, allowing time for postal delivery. (Some centres only sent one copy of the CMS, which meant a photocopy or note, had to be made by the moderator of the sample requested as well as asking the centre to return a copy of the CMS). The moderator will return the third copy of the CMS (or one of the EDI printouts) indicating which candidates work needs to be forwarded as the sample. The work must be dispatched within five working days of notification from the moderator. If any centre anticipates that they are not going to meet the coursework submission deadline, then they will need to inform the Board and apply for an extension.

- The Candidate Record Form should be attached to the relevant pieces of work. They should be filled in correctly, making sure that the candidate numbers are placed in the relevant boxes and that both the teacher and the candidate have signed the document. Sometimes it is not always possible from the teacher's signature at the bottom of the CRF to clearly identify the name of the teacher involved in the marking of a particular piece of work. To save any confusion it would help if the teacher also printed their name next to their signature. In a number of cases, centres used out of date CRF forms and, as a result, did not provide all the information required, such as summative statements and teacher signatures. The incorrect addition of marks on the CRF forms and the inaccurate transfer of the total mark to the Centre Mark Sheet also caused problems for the moderator. An increasing number of centres also failed to supply the Centre Declaration Sheet with the sample.

- Some coursework was sent with each page inside a plastic sleeve and this caused problems especially if the work is not secured properly. It would be appreciated if individual sheets could be removed from any plastic envelope; this would save time. Also, if the pages were numbered this would facilitate cross-referencing particularly when it came to the summative comments on the CRF.

- The work should be securely packaged using AQA sacks. If the work could be placed in the sacks in rank order, resisting the temptation to cram far too many enquiries into one sack so that it splits in the post, it would be appreciated. Equally, there is no need to send the work by Registered Post as this requires the moderator to sign for the package, and inevitably, this leads to delays, particularly if the moderator has to visit their local sorting office.

- The work should be submitted in simple plastic or manilla folders and not in hardback files or ring binders and so reduce the cost of postage. In addition, if centres could ensure that if candidates are submitting large maps within their enquiry that they are not folded in such an intricate manner they prove impossible to open, this would be most helpful. It would also save moderators time if the candidate's name and total mark were placed on the outside of the folder.

- A number of candidates were given zero marks for the enquiry. If the candidate has submitted some work but it has been found to be worthless then 0 (zero marks) should be encoded in the 'Total Mark' box on the CMS. If the candidate has produced some evidence relating to the enquiry, no matter how basic, it would be extremely unlikely to be completely worthless. Centres need to examine the work of their lowest ability candidates carefully before giving zero, as experience has shown that, in a number of these cases, the work of the lower ability candidates is under-marked and that there is, within the work, elements that are indeed creditworthy. If a candidate has submitted no work or has withdrawn then 'X' should be encoded.

- The quality and quantity of teacher comments/annotation varied enormously. It was often excellent on the CRFs but less impressive in the body of the work as teachers did not always related comments to levels. There was ample evidence that comments were obviously provided by experienced specialist Geography teachers being detailed, informative and showing evidence of a clear understanding of the application of the marking criteria. However, a minority of centres provided only limited evidence that internal assessment had taken place.

- It is the responsibility of the centre to make sure that the sample of work and accompanying paperwork is correct. It is vital that time and resources are allocated to this part of the moderation process. In a few centres, this had not been given priority and moderators spent more time dealing with the problems associated with administration than on assessing the quality of the Geography. It is also important that the internal standardisation process is carried out by the centre is rigorous. If there are problems with the marking, it is sometimes a result of one teacher's marking not being in line with the rest of the department.

Marking Criteria

In the majority of cases, the centre's marks were within tolerance with centres identifying the 'triggers' required to access the different levels and applying the marking criteria in a uniform manner across the whole department. Where centres were outside the tolerance, a common trend was for centres to either over-mark at the top end of the mark range or under-mark at the bottom. There were, however, a number of centres who had insufficient understanding of what was required and no appreciation of the 'triggers' necessary to move a candidate from one level to another.

Applied Understanding

In most cases, enquiries were well organised, based on a single, clear, manageable hypothesis, underpinned by sound geographical concepts that related to the taught Specification and were approached in an investigative mode. In the initial part of the investigation, the candidate through the use of a series of maps and written description located the study area in detail. Candidates then went on, through description and explanation to clearly identify the key concepts that were then constantly referred to throughout the work.

In an effort to ensure a wide range of geographical terminology is used in the enquiry, a number of centres suggested that candidates include, within their introductions, a glossary of terms. This is a useful idea but it must be remembered that the terms chosen must be appropriate to the enquiry. It is not the comprehensive nature of this glossary or the detail of the definitions that determines the mark in this section. It is the application of these terms that provides evidence of the candidate's level of understand and, therefore, ultimately the mark in this section.

In the weaker enquiries, many of the hypotheses were inappropriate, poorly structured or over-ambitious and, as a result, failed to set an effective agenda for an enquiry. Locating the study area involved basic statements and simplified maps that were badly drawn and lacked the normal conventions. Understanding was delivered through background information, scene setting or a series of chapters headed 'theory', with little cross-referencing or application to the data collected.

In the very weakest work, it was difficult to identify the purpose of the enquiry or the link to the taught Specification, there being no clearly stated question, issue or hypothesis. (Evidence would suggest that there was some misunderstanding by candidates and centres regarding the meaning of the term 'hypothesis'). In a few extreme cases, it was also impossible to even locate the study area. Some candidates packed their work with irrelevant and unnecessary information, taken from popular core textbooks or even downloaded from the Internet. Throughout the enquiry, no links were made to this material and generally, it was never referred to.

Some misunderstood the notion of 'application' and, as a result, this section was inaccurately assessed. Candidates were being awarded Level 3 applied understanding marks, sometimes as early as the first paragraph for very generalised and descriptive work. The key concepts were not clearly identified and were certainly not being applied. In extreme cases, this policy was adopted across the group and all candidates from the centre were given high applied understanding marks for explanations of theory that were almost identical, having been plagiarised from the textbook.

It was pleasing to see an increase in the use of annotated maps in the majority of enquiries. Maps of varying scales both hand drawn and ICT produced were used effectively by candidates to accurately locate study areas. It must be remembered, however, that the critical factor in determining the mark level in this section is how well candidates have applied their understanding throughout the investigation and not the quality or detail of the location statements. In one or two instances, candidates failed to find the right balance, spending most of their time and energy describing the location whilst neglecting the concepts underpinning the work.

Applied understanding is relevant in all sections, but is particularly important when it comes to data interpretation where the theory needs to be used to explain the patterns of data collected. It follows, therefore, that this section can only be accurately assessed when the whole of the enquiry is taken into account.

Methodology

This section was generally tackled well by candidates with the majority reaching the top of Level 2 without much difficulty. These candidates were able to identify a question or issue, state how the investigation was to be carried out, and provide a detailed description of two primary data collection methods that were to be used in the investigation. Access to Level 3 marks, however, proved to be a little more difficult even for the higher ability candidates.

Originality in data collection and justification of techniques are the major 'triggers' to accessing Level 3 marks in this section. The amount of teacher involvement in the organisation and direction of the enquiry is the critical issue. Heavily teacher-directed work and group activities prohibit Level 3 methodology marks, as the candidate is not being given the opportunity to show originality and initiative. In some cases, Level 3 marks were awarded to candidates whose definition of originality was questionable: little more than a minute difference in data collection technique. 'Originality' in this context must reflect initiative on the part of the candidate to produce a significant element of uniqueness in their enquiry. Centres need to find ways of giving fieldwork extension so able candidates can demonstrate a clearly defined element of uniqueness in their data collection.

It must be stressed that this is the only section of the marking criteria where originality and initiative is credited. A number of centres assume evidence of originality in other sections notably data presentation is sufficient to justify the awarding of Level 3 in this section. Equally, it is important to remember that originality and initiative are not the only criteria required for Level 3 Methodology marks. For example, a number of potential Level 3 candidates often relied too heavily on a narrow range of data usually only collected by means of a questionnaire. Some failed to justify their techniques or the merits of different sampling procedures.

A limited range of techniques, an inadequate sample size, failure to explain the rationale behind the hypothesis or, more likely, a detailed description of how the techniques were carried out without any explanation of why those particular techniques were used, would all prohibit progression into the higher lever, event if the candidate had produced an individual piece of work.

From the moderator's point of view, the element of originality is by far the most difficult area to assess in this section - a situation not helped by the failure, in some cases, to clearly identify this in the designated section on the CRF or within the body of the work.

One successful method used by some centres to make sure that their candidates covered all the criteria in this section, was to produce a methodology table. The table covered the what, when, how and why of the methods used. There was also a section for each candidate to describe their own individual contribution. This approach tends to work well for the lower ability candidates, but, for the higher ability, the table, in most cases, does not provide enough detailed information for access to Level 3.

It must also be stressed that marks are not awarded in this section for a list of data collection methods per se. Methods described by the candidate can only be classed as valid, and therefore, creditworthy, if they are actually used in the investigation to collect a significant amount of primary or secondary data. Centres continue to award marks, particularly to weaker candidates, for describing the full range of data collection techniques that they intended to use in their teacher-directed investigation. In reality, these candidates used few, if any of the techniques described and this should have been reflected in the marking. If no data is forthcoming from a particular technique, for example, a candidate writing to a company for information and receiving no reply, there may be a justification in exploring the circumstances for a failed response in the evaluation section but there is no value or credit to be gained in the methodology section. Even some high ability candidates produce a disappointing amount of data from what appears to be a comprehensive and robust methodology section.

Data Presentation

Centres continued to impress with the quality of work produced in this section and the wide range of techniques and skills exhibited by their candidates. In many cases, the presentation techniques showed flair and imagination, as well as fulfilling the criteria, allowing access to Level 3 marks.

It was common, however, for this section to be over-marked. Some centres confusing 'attractive' with 'more complex' so Level 3 was frequently being awarded for a limited range of what were basic techniques. Even when three different techniques were used, a great number of candidates failed to achieve Level 3 as the techniques chosen lacked complexity.

The marking levels in this section reflect a balance between the number of techniques used and level of complexity displayed by those techniques. In the best enquiries, candidates used a variety of appropriate, high order techniques accurately, such as, choropleths, scattergraphs, proportional flow lines, located pie charts and so on. In the weaker studies, candidates used only one type of low order technique, for example bar graphs or pictograms repeatedly to represent the data. Graphs, if used, were not very accurately drawn, either with no labelling of the 'x' and 'y' axes, or an inappropriate vertical scale. Any maps used were usually photocopies; if simple maps were hand drawn, they usually lacked the normal conventions.

It is not possible to provide a definitive list of more complex techniques because with care, accuracy and a little elaboration, the majority of techniques have the potential to access the highest levels. The annotation of photographs, for example, is a presentation skill that is seen at all levels. A low level of labelling might see the candidate only giving the photograph a title; at an intermediate level, the candidate might indicate relevant features, and at the highest level, the candidate will interpret those features. The same progression can be identified for most presentation techniques, hence no list.

To access Level 2 and Level 3 marks in this section, all candidates have to provide evidence of at least two different types of ICT outcome in their enquiry. Candidates with no ICT had their marks in this section limited to Level 1, provided all other Level 1 criteria had been met. This compulsory element of ICT continues not to present many problems to centres. Most candidates satisfied the basic ICT requirement and so had the opportunity to progress beyond Level 1. A significant number of candidates submitted entirely ICT generated enquiries. A number of these particular enquiries were outstanding, in terms of data presentation, but the majority were disappointing, containing as they did, a large number of basic bar and pie graphs. To access Level 3 marks, there has to be evidence of 'more complex' techniques being used. It is not essential that the element of complexity indicated within the Level 3 statement is delivered by means of ICT, but if it is not, then it has to be shown by other means.

The type and quality of data collected determines the range of presentation techniques that can be used. There was clear evidence that candidates of all abilities used forms of data that were inappropriate in some techniques. The most common misused techniques included the humble line graph and the more sophisticated Spearman's rank correlation. Centres and candidates should ensure, at the planning stage, that the data collected is appropriate for the data presentation techniques being consider by the candidate.

The quality of written communication was generally quite pleasing, with the majority of candidates being able to express themselves with reasonable accuracy. The use of Spellchecker in the word-processed enquiries clearly benefited some candidates.

Data Interpretation

This section proved to be a useful discriminator. The majority of candidates described, as well as analysed, their results. In other words, they 'ordered' the data by calculating percentages, proportions and highlighted patterns or anomalies. Explanations were then provided that took full advantage of the opportunity to apply the theory underpinning the enquiry to the results. Candidates then went on to demonstrate links and draw valid conclusions that related to the original hypothesis.

It is worth stressing that the Level 3 statement requires the candidate to demonstrate within the context of their analysis links between the sets of data collected. Some teachers awarded Level 3 on the basis that the candidate simply linked the data to the hypothesis. Such statements do not fulfil the criteria in that they tend to lead directly to the formulation of a conclusion and in doing so by-pass the analysis process.

In some instances, candidates divided their analysis into sections, each section based on an individual data collection technique with no attempt to produce an overview or summative statement. As a result, a number of candidates reached the top of Level 2 easily, but simply repeated that level over and over again, failing to identify links either between the data sets or links back to the original hypothesis and thus failed to progress to the next level.

The amount and type of data collected obviously impacts upon the quality of the data interpretation section. For example, 'in-depth' interviews with farmers, supermarket managers and letters requesting information from various companies, although valid techniques, they were very rarely used effectively by candidates. No attempt was made to edit, interpret or analyse the information, the vast majority simply repeated the interview verbatim or inserted the information in an appendix.

The techniques used to present the data can also have repercussions in terms of data interpretation. For example, candidates of all abilities commonly used Spearman's Rank Correlation. Not all candidates, however, were capable of interpreting or even understanding the significance of the results produced by such an advanced mathematical calculation.

In a few cases, candidates were overwhelmed by the vast amount of data they had collected. They were unable, or failed to recognise or identify any common theme or overview and resorted to ordering the data into different sections that they saw as unrelated or unconnected. The weaker candidates simply answered questions or confirmed predictions without any reference to their actual results.

The main weakness among candidates was that they gave a description without reference to the results that they had collected. The description, therefore, lacked an element of analysis. In addition, centres over-credited descriptive essays at too high a level on the mark scheme, and as a result, inflated marks were awarded for basic description of data. This was particularly true of physical studies that were quite often heavily descriptive especially where the main form of data collection is 'look, see'. Large amounts of description could often be discarded if more careful analysis of the actual data had taken place.

Comments and annotation within the body of the work suggested that there was some confusion with regard to the crediting of conclusions. The awarding of marks for conclusions reached by the candidate, after examination and analysis of the data, should be considered in this section, rather than in the evaluation.

Evaluation

The majority of centres appeared to have an understanding of the need to cover all three components. Of the centres that appreciated the demands of this section, limitations of methods were usually covered comprehensively, allowing easy access to the top of Level 2, with more general comment being made about the effect of these limitations on the accuracy of the results. A number of candidates focused their evaluation on the accuracy of the results and then went on to identify problems in the methods that could have caused such discrepancies. Similarly, these candidates achieved Level 2 marks quite easily. It was the evaluation of the conclusions, however, that proved to be the weakest element. For example, candidates often failed to suggest why their conclusions, however valid, might be a reflection of the particular location and time when the enquiry was undertaken and so cannot be considered applicable in the wider content.

Evaluation presented a problem for some centre with candidates having a tendency to write in congratulatory terms rather than highlighting limitations. Any evaluation statements tended to be vague and general, rather than detailed and specific. In the weaker enquires, the emphasis was placed solely upon what could have been done to improve the enquiry process. This approach frequently resulted in a 'wish list', without any attempt being made to state how these improvements would influence the methods, the results or the conclusions.

In the most effective enquiries, candidates, rather than just discussing in detail the three components of the criteria separately, identified the fact that poorly/faulty methodology led to inaccurate results and that conclusions based upon such results had, therefore, questionable validity.

The two important points to remember about this section are firstly, it carries the same marks as the other criteria. Secondly, it is not about making judgements regarding the quality of the Geography, but is an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the enquiry process. Centres need to spend more time getting the message across to students that a more critical and reflective approach is required.

Paper 1 – Foundation Tier (3032/1F)

General

The paper worked effectively in that it produced results across the full range of marks. There was enough opportunities for the least able candidate to earn some marks and feel positive about the experience. At the other end of the scale there were some challenging questions for the more able candidates, where they had the scope and opportunity to clearly demonstrate knowledge and understanding. Few however scored more than 60 marks because they had insufficient knowledge to answer questions such as 6(c) on farming in East Anglia and the Lake District, 6(d)(ii) on the formation of a corrie and 7(c)(ii) on Hi-tech industry along the M4 corridor. There was widespread misunderstanding of physical processes, especially in the formation of corries and river erosion. Most candidates at this level struggles with 7(a) and 2(d) but a pleasing proportion produced good responses to 5(b), 5(c) and 6(c). Less able candidates scored well in questions that provided stimulus material such as 3(a) (b) and (c) where they were able to extract information from text, a diagram or a map.

Question 1

A large number of candidates gave 7098 as their answer, which was where the symbol for junction 44 is and not the junction itself, which is clearly in 7097. It was encouraging to see that the majority of candidates could use a map key and have an attempt to interpret the impact of relief on communications. It was felt that the map skills displayed were better than in previous years. In 1(b) a large majority scored all three marks.

Question 2

This question produced the two extreme of answers, with those candidates who had a good understanding of the geography of rural urban fringe scoring highly. At the other end of the scale there were many candidates who struggled with this question. There was still some evidence that questions based on the use of photographs were not as well answered as those based on a map. A number of candidates felt that all rural urban fringes contained out-of-town retail parks and produced answers on this form of retailing, despite the fact that the photograph did not show this form of activity. Many missed part (c) altogether and part (d) provided many vague answers on unqualified pollution.

Question 3

Most candidates could extract appropriate information from the stimulus material on the wind farm and virtually all candidates were able to use the information on the map to reach Level 1. Far fewer applied their own knowledge to reach Level 2.

Question 4

The diagram was used well with the only labels causing difficulty were ‘retreat’ and to a lesser extent ‘gorge’. There were large gaps in the understanding or river processes. Many wrote vaguely about erosion rather than hydraulic erosion, while abrasion and attrition were frequently confused.

Question 5

A surprisingly large number of candidates missed out part (a) completely and if the two bars were drawn, they were quite often wrong. Many thought that one small square equated to one kilometre of hedgerows. Parts (b) and (c) were reasonably well done. One non-agricultural reason was often given in part (b) along with ‘create more space to grow crops’. Many candidates failed to establish a ‘modern farming practice’ as required in 5(c)

Question 6

A large number of candidates were unable to tick the two correct boxes to identify the physical factors influencing farming on a Lake District farm. The long growing season was frequently considered to be important. Parts (ii) and (iii) were both well answered. In part (c) very few candidates displayed any case study knowledge of the two farming areas. Answers, at best, often did no more that state 'flat land', 'drier', 'warmer' with no attempt at linked statements. Very few candidates answered the question properly in terms of the difficulties faced. Part (d) was one of the weakest parts of the whole paper. There was a huge lack of understanding about glaciers and glaciation. Features could not be recognised from the map and the formation of the corrie was way beyond the majority of the candidates. There was a definite lack of sequence even from the better candidates. Some described a corrie quite well but could not explain its formation. There were very few diagrams drawn.

Question 7

Part (a) was poorly answered with some candidates unsuccessfully relating the system diagram to farming. There was no evidence of the use of a heavy industry case study. Candidates were unable to define key terms such as raw materials in (a)(ii), processes in (a)(iii) heavy industries in (a)(v) and footloose industries in (c)(i). Candidates need to refer to the list of geographical terms on page 77 of the specification. Detailed understanding of all these terms would benefit all candidates. The labelling in 7(b) did not prove to be difficult but the knowledge of the reasons for the development of the Hi-tech industry along the M4 was limited. Candidates at this level were obsessed with the usefulness of the M4 for transporting raw materials and labour to the factories. Bristol's port once again was considered an important locating factor for these industries. Part (v) was poorly answered; the role of government in respect of industrial location would appear to be an unpopular part of the specification.

Paper 1 – Higher Tier (3032/1H)

This paper gave all candidates plenty of opportunity to show their ability. It was felt that the majority of candidates had been entered for the correct tier. There were some candidates who failed to finish the paper but this tended to be the result of long answers to questions with only a small allocation of marks. An example being 5(c) when details on many environmental efforts could have earned far beyond the four marks available.

Question 1

Part (a) was a good lead into the question with most candidates scoring 2 or 3 marks. 7391 was the most frequent error. In part (b) the concept of a pattern was hard for candidates to handle even though it is fundamental to the study of geography. Many resorted to negative statements about no roads with little recognition of valleys etc and gave a four figure grid reference which was a poor substitute for a statement. Not many went beyond the basic level. There were many comments such as 'follows the river', 'goes around the highland' with few making good use of the OS map. Many were convinced that the distribution of the forests was important in determining the pattern of the communications.

Question 2

The majority scored highly on this question although there were a sizeable number who dealt with farming. Part (c) proved a good discriminator with the best candidates making good references to spatial planning.

Question 3

In this question it was not always easy to distinguish between the specific and the general. It was disappointing that despite the wording of the question many candidates dealt with wind farms in general in part (a) and it was decided that there should be a maximum of one mark for non-specific information. Part (b) worked well to differentiate between those candidates who could just take information from the figure and those who could elaborate and so move up to Level 2.

Question 4

This question proved problematical to many candidates, as their answers dealt exclusively with the retreat of a waterfall and gave no consideration to the formation of the feature in the first place. They were therefore denied reaching Level 3. There were plenty of sound Level 2 answers but candidates entering this specification still do not give sufficient consideration to detailed explanations of process. Some candidates tried explaining the formation of the waterfall with the use of a diagram. Unfortunately such diagrams often indicated a most improbable rock sequence which was conveniently changed later to include the development diagram.

Question 5

This was the best-answered question on the paper with many candidates scoring full marks. Eutrophication, with all its ramifications, was very well understood but some candidates only used this as their example of the effect of modern farming practices on the environment. Candidates must read the question sufficiently carefully in order to recognise when there is a need for more than one reference when the question is in the plural.

Question 6

Many scored well in part (a) but a large number did not distinguish between diversification and farming changes in answering this question. Part (b) was not well done with few candidates reaching

Level 3 due to a failure to use precise information from a case study of a farm at a local scale. Many were able to name a farm but few used precise information about it. More alarmingly there were whole centres where the candidates could not name a farm, despite the requirement in the specification. A lack of precise detail on climatic figures or soil types was very much in evidence here. As in last year's report it must be stressed that this specification is 'place specific' and there is a need for detailed place information, especially on the areas listed in the specification. A significant minority seemed to think that East Anglia had similar temperatures all through the year. Most candidates scored well in part (b)(i) and there was a full range of answers to part (b)(ii), although some candidates made no attempt to answer the question at all. There were great variations within a centre, with only a minority reaching Level 3 by virtue of a good understanding of both the sequence and processes involved in the formation of a corrie. In this answer the processes were better understood than the equivalent fluvial processes, although there was some confusion between freeze-thaw and plucking. Many candidates struggled with the sequence since they did not start with a pre-glacial hollow or indentation. There were some instances with some superb descriptions of the processes, without any reference to the sequence at all or even reference to the eventual armchair-shaped bowl.

Question 7

Parts (a) and (b) usually scored highly for a good start to a question which scored moderately well. A minority of candidates dealt with agriculture in this question. A minority also did not attempt part (c), while others attached superficial labels such as 'flat land' or 'railway links', with no indication of their importance to the chemical industry. A disappointingly large number of candidates saw one advantage of the coastal location as an ideal opportunity for the industry to dump its waste – a scenario and idea which should be strongly dismissed in centres. There were some very good answers to part (d) with many reaching Level 3, which suggests that the M4 corridor section of the specification was much better known this year compared with last. There were, however, still a large number of candidates who wrote answers which were lacking in precise detail, with examples such as 'there are airports near London' and 'there are universities nearby'. The quality of the answers to part (e) varied considerably. There were some where the candidates gained 2 or 3 marks usually by some elaboration of the grants available for industrial relocation, but on the other hand there were candidates who made no attempt to answer the question or whose answers showed no knowledge or understanding of this topic.

Paper 2 – Foundation Tier (3032/2F)

General

The general presentation of the scripts on this component showed a marked improvement over previous years but the difficulties with literacy still meant that candidates' geographical knowledge and understanding did not always come through. There is still a need for candidates to gain a more thorough understanding of what is required to raise an answer to Level 2. The generic description of a Level 2 is a need for clarity in which the information is accurate and some understanding is shown. The important aspect is the need for linkage. This is easily obtained by means of a linked or elaborated statement. Candidates would benefit by applying the 'so what' idea; if they have written a basic statement and it leaves a question in the mind of the reader 'so what' or 'why is that important', it cannot be considered to have reached Level 2. Regional knowledge of case studies, which should be a feature of this specification, are still lacking even in those areas required in the specification. This year's paper had more support material in the form of visual stimulus but it was felt that candidates did not make as much use of them as they could. It should be remembered that there is a fairly high proportion of the marks on this paper which have to be allocated to skills, among which are the use of maps, diagrams, sketches, photographs and other visual material. This is an area where the candidates did not perform well. Those questions requiring completion either on a diagram or map, or demanding a true/false decision, were all understood by the majority of candidates and completed to a satisfactory standard. The exception was the completion of Figure 7a, the Mallorca map, which was missed completely by far too many candidates. It was felt that the majority of candidates were entered for the correct tier. There was no evidence of candidates failing to complete the paper due to lack of time.

Question 1

The names of the main islands of Japan were not well known. Hokkaido and Honshu were frequently labelled on the same island. The answers to part (a)(ii) were varied in quality. Quite a number of candidates tried to answer the question by stating the advantages of the coast but there were equally those who appreciated the difficulty of settling in an upland area with an inhospitable climate. The mechanics of the monsoon caused difficulty and many candidates related the rainfall pattern to tropical storms rather than reversal of the wind direction. Part (c) caused no difficulty. The regional knowledge of Brazil was poor with very few candidates able to recognise Manaos and many not realising it was in South America, with answers ranging from Madrid, through Southern Italy to the Ganges delta. Part (c) was poorly answered, despite the fact that questions on the Mezzogiorno of this type have been very common in recent years. Part 1(f) was well answered. In question 1(g) too many candidates still insisted on writing 'better' or 'more' in response to pull factors and 'less' for push factors and therefore penalise themselves in doing so. Some very bizarre labels were seen in part (h), but generally the correct responses were given. There was a tendency for single word answers to this question when some form of annotation would have been better. The answers to part (i) varied from the very good answers, to those where the candidates had no real idea.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to access part 2(a) and full marks were common. Part (b) proved to be the most poorly answered question on the whole paper. Often the whole section was left completely blank. Of those who attempted an answer no one conurbation seemed more popular than others or was answered any better than the others. Candidates have had no experience in the drawing of sketch maps for many years at GCSE and this was obvious from their attempts. It should be recognised that the geographic skills section of the specification is of equal importance to the subject content details. Candidates' idea of a function was very confused and few could develop any sound reasons for the growth of the conurbation of their choice. In 2(c) many candidates just repeated the information

given in the maps without making any attempt to show how the different attractions could be used to explain the difference in visitor numbers. A number made no reference to areas and could be writing about any tourist destination. Despite the fact that part (d) was an old favourite, there were still too many not showing any development of the problems discussed.

Question 3

3(a) was generally well answered. The most common error was candidates thinking that there were no clouds in the Amazon. Part (b) was disappointing. Great confusion existed in the minds of many candidates as to the sequence of processes, which lead to the formation of convectional rainfall. Only the most able were able to give the sequence correctly and make reference to the processes of evaporation and condensation. Part (c) was well answered, although greater care was needed at times in locating the labels. Many labels for the drip tips were drawn in the general direction of the leaves and not to the specific point at the end of the leaf. While there were some good answers on shifting agriculture, in general these were poorer than in previous years. Many candidates concentrated on the site and features of the tribal settlement rather than the development of the cultivation system. The economic activity in Figure 13 was not universally recognised as mining or quarrying. Many of the answers showed that candidates had not previously seen such a photograph and could not appreciate that a huge amount of material had been removed from the ground. Sustainable development proved a difficult concept for most candidates in part (f).

Question 4

Parts a(i) and (ii) scored well but there was a frequent confusion between urbanisation and urban growth in (a)(iii). Most candidates had a good understanding of global warming but there was still a fixation with holes in the ozone layer. In part c(i) there was a need for candidates to tailor their information more closely to the needs of the question and too few recognised that the question dealt with the effect on the people and spent most of their answer dealing with the general effects of flooding. Similarly in part (d) many candidates failed to confine their answers to different ways of producing energy and spent time discussing the need for public transport and fixing filters on factories. Too many candidates believed dams are an effective barrier against the rise of sea levels. In the same question an equal number wrote about river flooding and therefore penalised themselves. Many just dealt generally with the prevention of flooding without showing how the chosen sea defence would achieve this.

Paper 2 – Higher Tier (3032/2H)

General

It was felt that the standard on the higher tier this year was not as good as last year. This may be the result of fewer short-answer sections apart from those in question 1. There was still a weakness shown in the use of case studies, with insufficient detailed factual knowledge. This is of concern as this particular specification has an emphasis on place, as opposed to the themes or issues in the other specifications offered by AQA. The content of Specification B is very specific on what areas should be covered and, equally importantly, the scale at which they can be examined. There are many requirements for candidates to show evidence of having studied a place at a local or small scale. The generic requirements for a Level 3 answer are that the answer should be detailed, showing knowledge of accurate information, accurately contextualised and at the correct scale. In a specification such as this, the trigger for a candidate to be considered for Level 3 is likely to be knowledge and understanding of place.

Question 1

This question gave the opportunity for candidates to show the breadth of their knowledge and understanding across the whole specification content. The nature of these short answers did not give the opportunity to answer in any great depth so most candidates scored well. Most candidates could name the islands of Japan. Level 2 was available in part (a)(ii) provided that the candidate's answer showed clarity, which was best achieved by means of linked statements. Single words such as high, mountainous and snow needed to be elaborated if the answer was to reach 3-4 marks. There was considerable confusion on the mechanics of the Indian Monsoon as shown by the answers to 1(b). Parts (c)(i) and (ii) did not cause any difficulty. In (d) it is regrettable that the letter B was left out on Figure 3. It did not seem to cause any problems for the candidates, provided they recognised the map as being part of South America. There were some who saw it as part of the Indian Subcontinent or even Mediterranean Spain. If the candidates correctly identified the city and country in part (d)(i) and (iii) but left part (ii) out, they were given credit. Many candidates failed to appreciate that part (e) restricted them to the effects of land reform in the Mezzogiorno. Most candidates were able to compare the two pyramids in Figure 4 but there was either widespread misinterpretation of 'push' factors in part (g) or the question was not read closely enough. The graphical skills in part (h) proved very straightforward. The answers to part (j) varied however. The majority scored well on this question.

Question 2

The idea of a pattern is fundamental to the study of geography but it a concept that even very good candidates find difficult. Far too many merely listed the GNP of different countries without recognising an overview in part (a). Even when they tried to describe a pattern it tended to concentrate on the differences between the west and east of the continent rather than showing an appreciation of the core-periphery model, which is what this particular section of the specification is concerned with. The cartographic skills of many candidates left much to be desired. Has the skill of good sketch map drawing disappeared from Geography classrooms? There were large numbers of candidates who made little or no attempt or a best produced a meaningless scribble in attempting to answer question 2(b). This question however proved to be a good discriminator. There were some excellent sketches. This question is covered very well in the teachers' guide and the examiner in writing this question uses that publication to indicate the level of detail and regional knowledge that should be expected. Question (b)(ii) was very badly answered. It is perhaps to be expected that many candidates would not know the meaning of the term 'function' Even those who knew what 'function' meant sometimes only described more than one function and made no attempt to explain how the function was responsible for the conurbation's growth. They did not seem to understand what was

meant by the word 'issue', or even 'planning'. Part 2(c) was very disappointing. Many gave long descriptive lists directly extracted from the map without making an attempt to explain the spatial variations in visitor numbers. There was considerable evidence on this paper of candidates not reading questions sufficiently carefully or not really appreciating the significance of the command words. In this question those who did answer the point of the question were almost always lacking in detail. They gave some comparative reasons but only in very general terms. Question 2(d) has been set regularly over the years but this year's cohort did not answer it well. There were few answers meriting Level 3, partly because they failed to relate the tourist benefits and problems to the local people, as required by the question. The main reason however for the failure to reach Level 3 was the accounts written could have applied to any tourist area. There was no attempt to consider the specific impact of tourism on Mediterranean Spain. This was not a generic question on the effect of tourism, it was a question testing the candidates' appreciation of how the development of tourism had affected this particular part of Europe. There needed at least to be some reference to a named resort on this coast of Spain.

Question 3

Once again the failure to recognise a pattern was a major problem in part 3(a)(ii). Candidates could not reach Level 3 unless they answered all parts of the question. They were asked to do four distinct things in this question. When asked to describe and explain both the rainfall and temperature patterns shown on the graph, many failed to attempt any explanation and their description often consisted of a month-by-month account. Any explanation often did not go beyond the basic idea of 'convection'. Question (c) was straightforward but produced generally a very poor level of response. This in particular did not compare well with the last time it was the subject of a question. There were some good answers to part (d)(ii) but a considerable number failed to recognise that they were restricted to considering the immediate effects of the mining activity on the local area and saw this as an opportunity to expand their answer into a consideration of acid rain and global warming. Few candidates recognised the sustainable aspect of question 3(e).

Question 4

The 'pattern' problem came to the fore again in question 4(a). Of equal concern in this question was the use of non-geographical vocabulary to describe the distribution. Words such as 'up', 'above' and 'below' were regularly used in preference to north and south when referring to the differences on either side of the Equator. The northern and southern hemispheres were used to describe the LEDC/MEDC division. The rise in sea level as a result of global warming was widely understood and it was pleasing to see the effect of temperature rise on the expansion of water in addition to the extra water produced as a result of polar melting. Very few candidates could name Dhaka (Dacca) – another concern considering that the Ganges delta is a specified region for study. Many candidates merely named the country. Part (c)(ii) was often poorly answered with far too many candidates explaining why flooding occurred rather than describing the effects of the disaster on the people. Here again last year's answers were much better. Candidates could explain how a reduction in the use of fossil fuels, deforestation and the excessive use of cars could have an impact on reducing global warming. There was poor knowledge of how the consequences of global warming could be managed in (d). Often this part of the question was completely ignored. There were few examples of the use of sea defences which is the aspect of management specified and listed in the subject content.

Geography B – Short Course

Centre Assessed Work (3037/C)

General

It is encouraging to report that a large number of centres obviously made use of the advice given in last year's feedback forms and Standardisation Meetings. The quality produced and the accuracy of the application of the marking criteria suggests that the information they received and the materials they were given were put to great effect. Moderators were impressed with the variety of coursework and the breadth of knowledge displayed by many of the candidates. The vast majority of work was appropriate, in that, it related to the taught Specification and allowed differentiation between candidates. Some excellent geography and an increasingly high standard of ICT made the process of moderation, in most cases, a pleasurable experience.

In many cases, there was no obvious difference between the coursework submitted for the Short Course and that produced for the Full Course. This was highlighted in centres that had candidates entered for both courses; it was impossible to distinguish between the two sets of enquiries. In the vast majority of cases, the work was identical, and therefore, interchangeable. Generally, no allowance was being made for the reduced word limit or the more detailed and specific marking criteria that was designed to lessen the demands made on candidates in completing Short Course enquiries. Centres were generally asking too much of their Short Course candidates.

It is also worth noting that, where centres did enter candidates for both courses and used identical coursework, the Short Course marking, in most cases, was more accurate than the Full Course. It would seem that teachers carry through the notion of one concept, three methods of data capture and three 'more complex' data presentation techniques to the Full Course and thus, over-mark their scripts. It is important to remember that the Short Course coursework and the Full Course coursework have discrete sets of marking criteria. Centres assume that they are interchangeable and that the number of data collection techniques, for example, identified for Level 3 Methodology in the Short Course automatically fulfils the definition of 'a comprehensive range' in the Full Course and, therefore, qualifies the candidate for the equivalent level in the Full Course.

Teacher-led enquiries continue to be by far the most common format. Indeed, the individual enquiry is becoming an endangered species. The range of topics submitted was varied, the most popular theme being urban studies, with CBD investigations, shopping hierarchies, tourism, and traffic being dominant. This is not surprising, as in most cases, the urban environment provides a range of topics that are very accessible for most candidates and gives easier opportunities to re-visit the sites. This year an increasing number of centres opted for a purely physical study, with rivers and coastlines by far the most popular.

There were a few examples where teacher direction was not only apparent in the planning stage but also in the writing-up process. In extreme cases, the work was so directed that the enquiries became almost identical, each candidate using the same section from the textbook as the basis for their introduction and teachers selecting the data presentation techniques to be used with little input from the candidate. As a result, only in the data interpretation and evaluation sections could the candidate's true ability be assessed.

Although the majority of centres remained within the marking tolerance set by AQA, there was evidence this year that centres were assuming that if a candidate was fulfilling the criteria for a particular level, then automatically they would be awarded the top mark in that level. This is not the case; there is room for differentiation and progression within each level and so allowance has to be made for the quality of the application by the candidate to the marking criteria. Whatever the reason behind such an approach, if adopted across all the marking criteria, then it will inevitably lead to a discrepancy between centre's marks and the standard required by AQA.

Finally, the profile of the typical Short Course centre and the function the Short Course performs within the school curriculum would appear to be changing. There are now an increasing variety of small institutions involved, a significant number of which could not be classed as mainstream schools. Centres are no longer entering candidates in large numbers and entry is no longer limited to Key Stage 4. This is having an impact on the quality of work produced, as a number of these candidates would appear to be frequently less motivated or have yet to fully develop their geographical skills. Centres expect, nevertheless, to achieve a full mark range, and in some cases, end up marking candidates and not work, giving marks for effort in exceptional circumstances.

Administration

The quality of administration was much improved on last year with centres justifiably deserving credit for the professional way they approached this aspect of the moderation process. There was a small minority, however, who failed to meet even the basic requirements and, thus, delayed the whole process.

The new sampling procedure continued to work well and made sure that the number and composition of the sample sent from the centre was correct in the majority of cases. Improvements were seen in the speed of response from centres, in particular with regard to Centre Mark Sheets, which were being posted to the moderator much closer to the deadline than last year. However, the time taken for centres to respond to requests by moderators for work or information did vary enormously.

It is clear that there is a strong correlation between the effectiveness of internal lines of communication within the centre, in particular, between the Examinations Officer and the Head of Department, and the efficient way in which the whole moderation process is negotiated.

The following points need to be stressed:

- Centres, with 20 or fewer candidates, should ensure that all their candidates work together with the second and third copies of the Centre Mark Sheets (or an EDI print out) should arrive with the moderator by the deadline indicated, allowing time for postal delivery. If a centre has more than 20 candidates, they should ensure that, the second and third copies of the Centre Mark Sheets (or two copies of the DI printouts) should arrive with the moderator by the deadline indicated, allowing time for postal delivery. (Some centres only sent one copy of the CMS, which meant a photocopy or note, had to be made by the moderator of the sample requested as well as asking the centre to return a copy of the CMS). The moderator will return the third copy of the CMS (or one of the EDI printouts) indicating which candidates work needs to be forwarded as the sample. The work must be dispatched within five working days of notification from the moderator. If any centre anticipates that they are not going to meet the coursework submission deadline, then they will need to inform AQA and apply for an extension.

- The Candidate Record Form should be attached to the relevant pieces of work. They should be filled in correctly, making sure that the candidate numbers are placed in the relevant boxes and that both the teacher and the candidate have signed the document. Sometimes it is not always possible from the teacher's signature at the bottom of the CRF to clearly identify the name of the teacher involved in the marking of a particular piece of work. To save any confusion it would help if the teacher also printed their name next to their signature. In a number of cases, centres were using out of date CRF forms and, as a result, did not provide all the information required, such as summative statements and teacher signatures. The incorrect addition of marks on the CRF forms and the inaccurate transfer of the total mark to the Centre Mark Sheet also caused problems for the moderator. An increasing number of centres also failed to supply the Centre Declaration Sheet with the sample.

- Some coursework was sent with each page inside a plastic sleeve and this causes problems especially if the work is not secured properly. It would be appreciated if individual sheets could be removed from any plastic envelope; this would save time. Also, if the pages were numbered this would facilitate cross-referencing particularly when it came to the summative comments on the CRF.

- The work should be securely packaged using AQA sacks. If the work could be placed in the sacks in rank order, resisting the temptation to cram far too many enquiries into one sack so that it splits in the post, it would be appreciated. Equally, there is no need to send the work by Registered Post as this requires the moderator to sign for the package, and inevitably, this leads to delays, particularly if the moderator has to visit their local sorting office.

- The work should be submitted in simple plastic or manilla folders and not in hardback files or ring binders and so reduce the cost of postage. In addition, if centres could ensure that if candidates are submitting large maps within their enquiry that they are not folded in such an intricate manner, they prove impossible to open; this would be most helpful. It would also save moderators time if the candidate's name and total mark were placed on the outside of the folder.

- A number of candidates were given zero marks for the enquiry. If the candidate has submitted some work but it has been found to be worthless then 0 (zero marks) should be encoded in the 'Total Mark' box on the CMS. If the candidate has produced some evidence relating to the enquiry, no matter how basic, it would be extremely unlikely to be completely worthless. Centres need to examine the work of their lowest ability candidates carefully before giving zero, as experience has shown that, in a number of these cases, the work of the lower ability candidates is under-marked and that there is, within the work, elements that are indeed creditworthy. If a candidate has submitted no work or has withdrawn then 'X' should be encoded.

- The quality and quantity of teacher comments/annotation varied enormously. It was often excellent on the CRFs but less impressive in the body of the work as teachers did not always related comments to levels. There was ample evidence that comments were obviously provided by experienced specialist Geography teachers being detailed, informative and showing evidence of a clear understanding of the application of the marking criteria. However, a minority of centres provided only limited evidence that internal assessment had taken place.

- It is the responsibility of the centre to make sure that the sample of work and accompanying paperwork is correct. It is vital that time and resources are allocated to this part of the moderation process. In a few centres, this had not been given priority and moderators spent more time dealing with the problems associated with administration than on assessing the quality of the Geography. It is also important that the internal standardisation process is carried out by the centre is rigorous. If there are problems with the marking, it is sometimes a result of one teacher's marking not being in line with the rest of the department.

Marking Criteria

In the majority of cases, the centre's marks were within tolerance with centres identifying the 'triggers' required to access the different levels and applying the marking criteria in a uniform manner across the whole department. Where centres were outside the tolerance, a common trend was for centres to either over-mark at the top end of the mark range or under-mark at the bottom. There were, however, a number of centres who had insufficient understanding of what was required and no appreciation of the 'triggers' necessary to move a candidate from one level to another.

Applied Understanding

In most cases, enquiries were well organised, based on a single, clear, manageable hypothesis, underpinned by sound geographical concepts that related to the taught Specification and were approached in an investigative mode. In the initial part of the investigation, the candidate through the use of a series of maps and written description located the study area in detail. Candidates then went on, through description and explanation to clearly identify the key concepts that were then constantly referred to throughout the work.

In an effort to ensure a wide range of geographical terminology is used in the enquiry, a number of centres suggested that candidates include, within their introductions, a glossary of terms. This is a useful idea but it must be remembered that the terms chosen must be appropriate to the enquiry. It is not the comprehensive nature of this glossary or the detail of the definitions that determines the mark in this section. It is the application of these terms that provides evidence of the candidate's level of understand and, therefore, ultimately the mark in this section.

In the weaker enquiries, many of the hypotheses were inappropriate, poorly structured or over-ambitious and, as a result, failed to set an effective agenda for an enquiry. Locating the study area involved basic statements and simplified maps that were badly drawn and lack the normal conventions. Understanding was delivered through background information, scene setting or a series of chapters headed 'theory', with little cross-referencing or application to the data collected.

In the very weakest work, it was difficult to identify the purpose of the enquiry or the link to the taught Specification, there being no clearly stated question, issue or hypothesis. (Evidence would suggest that there was some misunderstanding by candidates and centres regarding the meaning of the term 'hypothesis'). In a few extreme cases, it was also impossible to even locate the study area. Some candidates packed their work with irrelevant and unnecessary information, taken from popular core textbooks or even downloaded from the Internet. Throughout the enquiry, no links were made to this material and generally, it was never referred to.

Some misunderstood the notion of 'application' and, as a result, this section was inaccurately assessed. Candidates were being awarded Level 3 applied understanding marks, sometimes as early as the first paragraph for very generalised and descriptive work. The key concepts were not clearly identified and were certainly not being applied. In extreme cases, this policy was adopted across the group and all candidates from the centre were given high applied understanding marks for explanations of theory that were almost identical, having been plagiarised from the textbook.

It was pleasing to see an increase in the use of annotated maps in the majority of enquiries. Maps of varying scales both hand drawn and ICT produced were used effectively by candidates to accurately locate study areas. It must be remembered, however, that the critical factor in determining the mark level in this section is how well candidates have applied their understanding throughout the investigation and not the quality or detail of the location statements. In one or two instances, candidates failed to find the right balance, spending most of their time and energy describing the location whilst neglecting the concepts underpinning the work.

Applied understanding is relevant in all sections, but is particularly important when it comes to data interpretation where the theory needs to be used to explain the patterns of data collected. It follows, therefore, that this section can only be accurately assessed when the whole of the enquiry is taken into account.

Methodology

This section was generally tackled well by candidates with the majority reaching the top of Level 2 without much difficulty. These candidates were able to identify a question or issue, state how the investigation was to be carried out, and provide a detailed description of two primary data collection methods that were to be used in the investigation. Access to Level 3 marks, however, proved to be a little more difficult even for the higher ability candidates.

Originality in data collection and justification of techniques are the major 'triggers' to accessing Level 3 marks in this section. The amount of teacher involvement in the organisation and direction of the enquiry is the critical issue. Heavily teacher-directed work and group activities prohibit Level 3 methodology marks, as the candidate is not being given the opportunity to show originality and initiative. In some cases, Level 3 marks were awarded to candidates whose definition of originality was questionable: little more than a minute difference in data collection technique. 'Originality' in this context must reflect initiative on the part of the candidate to produce a significant element of uniqueness in their enquiry. Centres need to find ways of giving fieldwork extension so able candidates can demonstrate a clearly defined element of uniqueness in their data collection.

It must be stressed that this is the only section of the marking criteria where originality and initiative is credited. A number of centres assume evidence of originality in other sections notably data presentation is sufficient to justify the awarding of Level 3 in this section. Equally, it is important to remember that originality and initiative are not the only criteria required for Level 3 Methodology marks. For example, a number of potential Level 3 candidates often relied too heavily on a narrow range of data usually only collected by means of a questionnaire. Some failed to justify their techniques or the merits of different sampling procedures.

A limited range of techniques, an inadequate sample size, failure to explain the rationale behind the hypothesis or, more likely, a detailed description of how the techniques were carried out without any explanation of why those particular techniques were used, would all prohibit progression into the higher lever, event if the candidate had produced an individual piece of work.

From the moderator's point of view, the element of originality is by far the most difficult area to assess in this section - a situation not helped by the failure, in some cases, to clearly identify this in the designated section on the CRF or within the body of the work.

One successful method used by some centres to make sure that their candidates covered all the criteria in this section, was to produce a methodology table. The table covered the what, when, how and why of the methods used. There was also a section for each candidate to describe their own individual contribution. This approach tends to work well for the lower ability candidates, but, for the higher ability, the table, in most cases, does not provide enough detailed information for access to Level 3.

It must also be stressed that marks are not awarded in this section for a list of data collection methods per se. Methods described by the candidate can only be classed as valid, and therefore, creditworthy, if they are actually used in the investigation to collect a significant amount of primary or secondary data. Centres continue to award marks, particularly to weaker candidates, for describing the full range of data collection techniques that they intended to use in their teacher-directed investigation. In reality, these candidates used few, if any of the techniques described and this should have been reflected in the marking. If no data is forthcoming from a particular technique, for example, a candidate writing to a company for information and receiving no reply, there may be a justification in exploring the circumstances for a failed response in the evaluation section but there is no value or credit to be gained in the methodology section. Even some high ability candidates produce a disappointing amount of data from what appears to be a comprehensive and robust methodology section.

Data Presentation

Centres continued o impress with the quality of work produced in this section and the wide range of techniques and skills exhibited by their candidates. In many cases, the presentation techniques showed flair and imagination, as well as fulfilling the criteria, allowing access to Level 3 marks.

It was common, however, for this section to be over-marked. Some centres confusing 'attractive' with 'more complex' so Level 3 was frequently being awarded for a limited range of what were basic techniques. Even when three different techniques were used, a great number of candidates failed to achieve Level 3 as the techniques chosen lacked complexity.

The marking levels in this section reflect a balance between the number of techniques used and level of complexity displayed by those techniques. In the best enquiries, candidates used a variety of appropriate, high order techniques accurately, such as, choropleths, scattergraphs, proportional flow lines, located pie charts and so on. In the weaker studies, candidates used only one type of low order technique, for example bar graphs or pictograms repeatedly to represent the data. Graphs, if used, were not very accurately drawn, either with no labelling of the 'x' and 'y' axes, or an inappropriate vertical scale. Any maps used were usually photocopies; if simple maps were hand drawn, they usually lacked the normal conventions.

It is not possible to provide a definitive list of more complex techniques because with care, accuracy and a little elaboration, the majority of techniques have the potential to access the highest levels. The annotation of photographs, for example, is a presentation skill that is seen at all levels. A low level of labelling might see the candidate only giving the photograph a title; at an intermediate level, the candidate might indicate relevant features, and at the highest level, the candidate will interpret those features. The same progression can be identified for most presentation techniques, hence no list.

To access Level 2 and Level 3 marks in this section, all candidates have to provide evidence of at least two different types of ICT outcome in their enquiry. Candidates with no ICT had their marks in this section limited to Level 1, provided all other Level 1 criteria had been met. This compulsory element of ICT continues not to present many problems to centres. Most candidates satisfied the basic ICT requirement and so had the opportunity to progress beyond Level 1. A significant number of candidates submitted entirely ICT generated enquiries. A number of these particular enquiries were outstanding, in terms of data presentation, but the majority were disappointing, containing as they did, a large number of basic bar and pie graphs. To access Level 3 marks, there has to be evidence of 'more complex' techniques being used. It is not essential that the element of complexity indicated within the Level 3 statement is delivered by means of ICT, but if it is not, then it has to be shown by other means.

The type and quality of data collected determines the range of presentation techniques that can be used. There is clear evidence that candidates of all abilities are using forms of data that are inappropriate in some techniques. The most common misused techniques include the humble line graph and the more sophisticated Spearman's rank correlation. Centres and candidates should ensure, at the planning stage, that the data collected is appropriate for the data presentation techniques being consider by the candidate.

The quality of written communication was generally quite pleasing, with the majority of candidates being able to express themselves with reasonable accuracy. The use of Spellchecker in the word-processed enquiries clearly benefited some candidates.

Data Interpretation

This section proved to be a useful discriminator. The majority of candidates described, as well as analysed, their results. In other words, they 'ordered' the data by calculating percentages, proportions and highlighted patterns or anomalies. Explanations were then provided that took full advantage of the opportunity to apply the theory underpinning the enquiry to the results. Candidates then went on to demonstrate links and draw valid conclusions that related to the original hypothesis.

It is worth stressing that the Level 3 statement requires the candidate to demonstrate within the context of their analysis links between the sets of data collected. Some teachers are awarded Level 3 on the basis that the candidate simply linked the data to the hypothesis. Such statements do not fulfil the criteria in that they tend to lead directly to the formulation of a conclusion and in doing so by-pass the analysis process.

In some instances, candidates divided their analysis into sections, each section based on an individual data collection technique with no attempt to produce an overview or summative statement. As a result, a number of candidates reached the top of Level 2 easily, but simply repeated that level over and over again, failing to identify links between either the data sets or links back to the original hypothesis and thus failed to progress to the next level.

The amount and type of data collected obviously impacts upon the quality of the data interpretation section. For example, 'in-depth' interviews with farmers, supermarket managers and letters requesting information from various companies, although valid techniques, they were very rarely used effectively by candidates. No attempt was made to edit, interpret or analyse the information, the vast majority simply repeated the interview verbatim or inserted the information in an appendix.

The techniques used to present the data can also have repercussions in terms of data interpretation. For example, candidates of all abilities commonly used Spearman's Rank Correlation. Not all candidates, however, were capable of interpreting or even understanding the significance of the results produced by such an advanced mathematical calculation.

In a few cases, candidates were overwhelmed by the vast amount of data they had collected. They were unable, or failed to recognise or identify any common theme or overview and resorted to ordering the data into different sections that they saw as unrelated or unconnected. The weaker candidates simply answered questions or confirmed predictions without any reference to their actual results.

The main weakness among candidates was that they gave a description without reference to the results that they had collected. The description, therefore, lacked an element of analysis. In addition, centres over-credited descriptive essays at too high a level on the mark scheme, and as a result, inflated marks were awarded for basic description of data. This was particularly true of physical studies that were quite often heavily descriptive especially where the main form of data collection is 'look, see'. Large amounts of description could often be discarded if more careful analysis of the actual data had taken place.

Comments and annotation within the body of the work suggested that there was some confusion with regard to the crediting of conclusions. The awarding of marks for conclusions reached by the candidate, after examination and analysis of the data, should be considered in this section, rather than in the evaluation.

Evaluation

The majority of centres appeared to have an understanding of the need to cover all three components. Of the centres that appreciated the demands of this section, limitations of methods were usually covered comprehensively, allowing easy access to the top of Level 2, with more general comment being made about the effect of these limitations on the accuracy of the results. A number of candidates focused their evaluation on the accuracy of the results and then went on to identify problems in the methods that could have caused such discrepancies. Similarly, these candidates achieved Level 2 marks quite easily. It was the evaluation of the conclusions, however, that proved to be the weakest element. For example, candidates often failed to suggest why their conclusions, however valid, might be a reflection of the particular location and time when the enquiry was undertaken and so cannot be considered applicable in the wider content.

Evaluation presented a problem for some centre with candidates having a tendency to write in congratulatory terms rather than highlighting limitations. Any evaluation statements tended to be vague and general, rather than detailed and specific. In the weaker enquires, the emphasis was placed solely upon what could have been done to improve the enquiry process. This approach frequently resulted in a 'wish list', without any attempt being made to state how these improvements would influence the methods, the results or the conclusions.

In the most effective enquiries, candidates, rather than just discussing in detail the three components of the criteria separately, identified the fact that poorly/faulty methodology led to inaccurate results and that conclusions based upon such results had, therefore, questionable validity.

The two important points to remember about this section are firstly, it carries the same marks as the other criteria. Secondly, it is not about making judgements regarding the quality of the Geography, but is an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the enquiry process. Centres need to spend more time getting the message across to students that a more critical and reflective approach is required.

Foundation Tier (3037/F)

General

It is difficult to make any firm conclusions because of the small entry. Furthermore the pattern of entry suggested that centres entered their very weakest candidates for this component.

A significant number did not attempt 1(a) or if they did they put the coordinates the wrong way round. Those who could cope with 4 figure grid references frequently referred to the neighbouring square where the junction number was given rather than the motorway junction itself. Those familiar with 4 figure grid references generally coped well with 1(b). There was reasonable accuracy in completing the table in 2(a) but many candidates did not attempt to explain the formation of the corrie. Those that did failed to reach Level 2, since they made no reference to the glacial processes involved in the corrie's formation. Question 3 was one of the better answered questions on the paper and even if their literacy let them down, the candidates showed some appreciation of an industrial system.

The more able candidates had the necessary knowledge to answer question 4. It was worrying however, that many candidates who have studied this specification with its regional bias and specified topics did not even attempt to answer the names of the Spanish tourist areas. The climatic advantages of Mediterranean Spain were far too simplistically seen as being 'hot' and 'dry' with no appreciation of the hot dry summers and warm wet winters associated with this type of climate. Economic factors completely floored the candidates. The specification clearly indicates that candidates should consider the factors outside Mediterranean Spain, with the economic factors in Northern Europe encouraging people to travel to Spain on holiday. The use of the photograph in 4(d) was spoilt by the failure of many candidates to recognise that the question restricted them to considering the impact of tourism on the environment of Spain. Many merely described the photo and made no attempt to tailor the information to the needs of the question. Part (e) was generally answered reasonably well.

Very few candidates had any knowledge of a European conurbation and were certainly unable to consider a planning issue in their chosen urban area. This was despite the fact that the question was a direct quote from the specification. Completing and extracting information from a climate graph was generally well done but there were too many candidates who were inaccurate or used a blunt pencil to draw an accurate plot on a graph. Part (c) proved a good discriminator, but knowledge of the wind directions over the Indian sub-continent was poor and this was confirmed by the answers to part (e). Some candidates in 7(a) did not appreciate the significance of the word 'rate' in birth rate, being only concerned with the number of babies born, rather than relating this fact to a unit total. Part (b) was either well answered or the candidates were limited to the significance of the use of birth control in whatever of the factors they chose to explain.

A surprising number of candidates could not define 'official aid' and a significant number got part (b) incorrect. Lack of specific case study knowledge was evident in part (c). All candidates, even the least able, found 9(a) very straightforward. Despite the candidates' continued obsession with holes in the ozone layer, part (b) was reasonably well answered by the better candidates.

Higher Tier (3037/H)

General

Despite the entry for this component doubling this year, the total entry of just over 70 meant that any conclusions drawn have to be tenuous. However within this cohort the full range of answers were seen.

Map reading did not prove too much of a challenge in question 1 and most could match up the squares to the appropriate squares in part (b). A few candidates failed to recognise that the descriptions given for the first two squares should have given them an idea of the type of description required for square 7391. At least two physical or human features were required for the mark. In question 2(a) quite a number of candidates confused the glacial trough and the arête. There were some good explanations of the formation of a corrie. Candidates should recognise however, that the detail required to reach the top of Level 3 should include detailed explanation of the processes involved and not depend on getting the sequence correct and merely naming the glacial processes. The few who made use of annotated diagrams in this question scored well. This is a good way of answering any question on land formation.

A surprising number of candidates misread question three and dealt with an agricultural system as opposed to a manufacturing system as was required. Those who answered the question correctly had no difficulty and could effectively explain what a process means in such a system. It was pleasing to see there had been an improvement in the candidates' knowledge of specific climatic statistics related to Mediterranean Spain. Part 4(b) was poorly answered. Many candidates read the question as dealing with the economic benefits of the growth of tourism describing the growth of the economy and of the income and jobs which developed as a result. The question asked for a discussion of the economic factors, which led to the growth of tourism. The poor state of agriculture due to the difficulties of the Mediterranean climate was important here. Many candidates failed to recognise there were two parts to this question, the economic factors within Mediterranean Spain and those in other parts of Europe, such as the greater affluence and the decline in the cost of air travel. There was a need for close reading also of question 4(c). Many candidates failed to recognise that the question required a discussion of the effect of tourism on the environment. They therefore went down the route of dealing with such matters as drunken tourists without relating them to the effect on the environment.

Candidates either had the knowledge to answer question 5 or they did not. There were some excellent answers on Paris but equally there were answers where there was no evidence of the candidates ever having studied this topic. This was despite the fact that the wording of the question was a direct lift from the specification. The graphical skills of plotting and extracting information from a climate graph were well done in questions 6(a) and (b). It was pleasing to see good answers to 6(c) which was a question, which the examiner felt would be quite testing. Far too few candidates were able to show the correct direction of the winds during the northeast and southwest monsoon periods. Only a minority of candidates showed mastery of the changes in atmospheric pressure and the resultant change in wind direction. Most candidates explained the wet season as merely a reflection of the on-shore direction of the winds. Question 7 was generally well answered but there were some candidates who saw the fall in the birth rate as a result of the high death rate. They felt that there would not be any potential parents around to have children!

Despite the continued existence of a hole in the ozone layer, Question 8 was generally well answered. The form of the question seemed to suit these candidates. In Question 9 the responses varied according to whether the candidate knew a case study of a development project as required by the specification. Where they had the knowledge there were some excellent answers, with a wealth of detailed factual information

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Full Course (3032)

Foundation tier

Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
3032C	30	75	32.2	14.6
3032/1F	75	90	44.5	13.3
3032/2F	120	135	59.1	18.9
Foundation tier overall 3032F	--	300	131.7	38.3

		Max. mark	C	D	E	F	G
3032/C boundary mark	raw	30	15	12	9	6	3
	scaled	75	38	30	22	15	8
3032/1F boundary mark	raw	75	48	42	36	30	24
	scaled	90	58	50	43	36	29
3032/2F boundary mark	raw	120	69	59	50	41	32
	scaled	135	78	66	56	46	36
Foundation tier scaled boundary mark		300	167	143	120	97	74

Higher tier

Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
3032C	30	75	55.7	12.7
3032/1H	75	90	53.2	12.1
3032/2H	120	135	78.8	17.6
Higher tier overall 3032H	--	300	191.5	36.5

		Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	allowed E
3032/C boundary mark	raw	30	27	23	19	15	12	-
	scaled	75	68	58	48	38	30	-
3032/1H boundary mark	raw	75	54	49	44	40	34	-
	scaled	90	65	59	53	48	41	-
3032/2H boundary mark	raw	120	89	80	71	63	55	-
	scaled	135	100	90	80	71	62	-
Higher tier scaled boundary mark		300	229	203	179	156	133	121

Provisional statistics for the award

Foundation tier (5134 candidates)

	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	23.0	43.6	62.1	78.3	89.9

Higher tier (4862 candidates)

	A*	A	B	C	D	allowed E
Cumulative %	14.3	35.8	60.0	80.9	93.3	96.5

Overall (9996 candidates)

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	7.0	17.4	29.2	51.2	67.7	78.9	87.2	93.1

Short Course (3037)

Foundation tier

Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
3037/C	30	30	5.9	4.6
3037/F	70	90	23.3	14.1
Foundation tier overall 3037/F	--	120	41.2	14.8

		Max. mark	C	D	E	F	G
3037/C boundary mark	raw	30	15	12	9	7	5
	scaled	30	15	12	9	7	5
3037/F boundary mark	raw	70	37	32	27	23	19
	scaled	90	48	41	35	30	24
Foundation tier scaled boundary mark		120	63	53	44	35	26

Higher tier

Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
3037/C	30	30	20.2	6.2
3037/H	70	90	56.2	14.5
Higher tier overall 3037/H	--	120	64.3	16.1

		Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	allowed E
3037/C boundary mark	raw	30	30	25	20	15	12	-
	scaled	30	30	25	20	15	12	-
3037/H boundary mark	raw	70	57	52	47	42	30	-
	scaled	90	73	67	60	54	39	-
Higher tier scaled boundary mark		120	104	90	79	68	51	42

Provisional statistics for the award

Foundation tier (124 candidates)

	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	4.8	12.1	20.2	32.3	52.4

Higher tier (67 candidates)

	A*	A	B	C	D	allowed E
Cumulative %	7.5	25.4	53.7	67.2	88.1	95.5

Overall (191 candidates)

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	2.6	8.9	18.8	26.7	38.7	46.6	54.5	67.5

Definitions

Boundary Mark: the minimum (scaled) mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade. Although component grade boundaries are provided, these are advisory. Candidates' final grades depend only on their total marks for the subject.

Mean Mark: is the sum of all candidates' marks divided by the number of candidates. In order to compare mean marks for different components, the mean mark (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Standard Deviation: a measure of the spread of candidates' marks. In most components, approximately two-thirds of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus one standard deviation from the mean, and approximately 95% of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus two standard deviations from the mean. In order to compare the standard deviations for different components, the standard deviation (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).