GCSE

Geography A

Report on the Components

June 2006

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Entry Level Certificate Geography A (3986)

General Certificate of Secondary Education

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REPORT ON THE COMPONENTS

Report to Centres

Entry Level Geography A 3986 May 2006
3986/01 Oral Test

This test seemed to work better than ones in previous years. The topic of housing, while still geographical, touched more obviously upon candidates' everyday experiences than most topics used in earlier oral tests. Although the guide time is ten minutes, a few interviews this year were noticeably longer, in many instances because the interviewer continued to receive positive and worthwhile comment from the candidate. Some Centre staff have been conducting these interviews for several years now, and have become quite expert at creating a welcoming atmosphere in which candidates can perform to the best of their geographical abilities. The most successful orals were the ones in which candidates were not rushed into answering and were given adequate time to look at the resources.

Although the majority of candidates found the questions on housing quite straightforward, a surprising number confused the different types of houses shown in Photos A-D and could identify only the flats. Quite a few stated that they lived in a detached house, but answers to subsequent questions revealed that they lived in a semi-detached. Many candidates needed some judicious prompting over their initial choice of houses for the various people; candidates often seemed to state a first choice without really taking into account the person's likes and dislikes, only to change it once they were led into reconsidering the reasons by the teacher. Typically the choice made for the housing type suitable for the next person was better and easier for them to justify. Most candidates coped well with the shanty town photo and cross section, even if they had been unable to answer the direct question about what a shanty town is. Those teachers who were communicating well with candidates reminded them of the work previously done on shanty towns and familiarity began to come back during their study of Photo E. Most candidates selected the area to the east of the factories as the most likely location for shanty towns; this was usually justified on the basis of empty spaces and closeness to jobs. Few candidates referred to possible negative elements that allowed location here, such as steeper slopes and higher levels of pollution. For the final question about ways to improve shanty towns, many of the alternative questions listed in the test were needed by candidates as a trigger for answering more open questions.

Case study answers were generally better this year. Many had studied shanty towns in Brazil or India, and were able to add something beyond the answers already given in response to the stimulus in Photo E. An equally popular choice of case study was housing and services in the area around their Centre. This choice was highly suitable to the oral medium for candidates of this ability level because the teacher was able to ask direct questions, focused on what candidates could be expected to know and to have observed. This case study part of the oral was not reached in some Centres, which was not the ideal situation. Case study answers always reveal much about the level of a candidate's geographical knowledge and understanding. Without some answers in this part of the test, it is not easy to support with confidence an assessment within the Level 3 band. Candidates' responses give many clues to their levels of geographical knowledge and understanding. Awarding marks high up within Level 3 without any significant contribution from answers based on the case study was the commonest cause of Centre over-assessment of the Oral Test.

As in previous years, most assessments were realistic having taken into account candidates' responses and amount of help given. In only a handful of Centres was there a recommended change to a Centre's marks. The approach to interviewing varied from the workmanlike, with a determination to finish the test within the suggested ten minutes, to the highly conversational, often characterised by a willingness to explore around the questions set in order to discover fully what the candidate knew. Level 1 candidates struggled whatever the approach; for the teacher, the oral test was hard work. Some of these candidates were shy to speak into the machine and gave slow, short and hesitant responses, almost irrespective of their real level of understanding.

This frequently resulted in what appeared to be long pauses between answers. Level 2 assessments were characterised by uneven responses; at times candidates developed their answers, but then had little to offer to other questions. Some of them had nothing worthwhile to add for the case study. It was a pleasure to listen to the tapes from many Level 3 candidates; some appeared to enjoy the opportunity to talk and show off what their geographical knowledge and understanding. They kept on adding new points and more details in a genuinely enthusiastic manner. Many must have finished the test feeling better for the experience.

Moderators encountered few administrative problems with the Oral Test. From time to time external intrusions from bells and corridor noise were heard, but Moderators well appreciate the difficulty of finding a quiet place within a working Centre. However, candidates must be strongly advised and encouraged to speak into the recording machine; the teacher's voice was almost always louder, bolder and easier to hear than that of the candidate. It is the latter that the Moderators really want to hear. There was one example this year of a totally blank tape being sent much to the frustration of the Moderator who spent (and wasted) time trying to find two tests on the tape, which were not there. This should not have happened. The summary check list of administrative good practice, given in earlier years, is repeated below.

- Play back parts of the tape to check audibility of candidate responses
- Wind back the tape to the starting point before despatching to the Moderator
- Label tapes clearly with candidate names and numbers in the order of answering
- Ensure that the oral marks are included on the coursework assessment sheet

All four are important. It is particularly important that candidate names and numbers are listed on the tapes in those Centres with more than six candidates. The Moderator is required to listen to a sample of six candidates; without names and numbers, making a choice so for coverage of the full range of responses was difficult, bordering on impossible.

3986/02 Coursework

The administrative problems this year were worse than ever. More than one out of every four Centres had to be contacted by the Moderator as a result of inadequate or incorrect documentation. In some cases it was only because of the non-inclusion of Form CCS160, the Centre Authentication form. At least the Moderator was able to continue the process of moderating the Centre's work while the form was being chased up. Much more serious was the continued inability of staff in some Centres to enter the correct marks on the MS1 form for 3986/02. It was an administrative nightmare trying to disentangle what were the real marks out of 50 was for the Coursework component if the coursework assessment sheet was also not included. This problem first arose in 2003 with the introduction of the new specification and it has still not gone away. Some Centres entered the raw mark out of 200 on the MS1 form. Others entered the written coursework mark out of 50 plus the mark for the oral test, even after they had entered the mark for the oral on the separate MS1 for 3986/01. The top of the MS1 form for 3986/02 clearly states Maximum Mark 50, yet marks above this were still being entered, in some cases into three figures if the separate marks for each of the four coursework units were not divided by four to give an average mark out of 50. This showed a total lack of attention to detail. Wrong entries on MS1s sent to OCR lead to the filling in of a CW/Amend, which causes extra work for Moderators and the Centre and delays at OCR.

In contrast, the assessments of the worth of candidates' work as reliable as ever with less than one out of every ten Centres having their marks adjusted. An upward adjustment was usually a sign of under-assessment for work based on fieldwork; the more rigorous GCSE criteria do not apply to Entry Level for which the amount of analysis and interpretation that can be expected is much less. Sometimes it was due to the volume and variety of types of work undertaken. A downward adjustment was usually applied either to completion of the coursework units which seems to be too flimsy for the levels of marks awarded, or to Centre devised work which lacked the necessary structure for candidates to show that they had met all areas of assessment. Centres are to be encouraged to design and use their own work – some very good ones were seen again this year, which elicited work of an impressive standard for Entry Level. However, they achieved most when a strong framework was provided so that the candidates did not just write or draw diagrams and maps in a manner that was too open for candidates of this level of ability.

A majority of Centres continued to base the work they submitted around one of the two sets of OCR coursework tasks, or a mixture of the two. As before, the structured nature of these tasks made assessment of the relative worth between candidates easier to judge for both Centre staff and Moderators. What was really helpful to moderation was when Centre staff added comments and marks either on the work or cover sheet; this gave an insider view of the circumstances and worth of each candidate's work. An interesting and commendable variety of other materials were included, often to support work in one or two of the more popular units (mainly physical and settlement). These were the two units for which it was easiest to include fieldwork as well. Variety is important for Entry Level candidates; their levels of achievement rely more heavily on application and willingness to work than on great understanding. The key to a high overall mark for this component was consistency of performance across all four units. Weak coursework submissions, worth less than 10 out of 50, were almost invariably characterised by an unbalanced performance. Typically work was submitted for only one of the four units, which had a devastating effect upon the total mark for coursework when it was divided by four. It was clear that the sensible policy, adopted by some Centres, was to store work as completed by candidates were present, so that some work was available for assessment in every topic area. Since this component accounts for 50% of total marks for the Entry Level examination, it is bound to have a big effect on the final grade. It is the largest and most important component.

Reports on the Units

Below is a checklist for what should be sent to the Moderator –

- The MS1 form (or its electronic equivalent) for 3986/02 with a maximum mark of 50
- The Coursework Assessment Form containing a breakdown of marks for the four coursework units and the total out of 50 (plus the mark for the oral).
- CCS160 for Centre Authentication
- Work from a maximum of six candidates placed within a (non-plastic) wallet folder, with each folder clearly labelled with candidate name and number
- Any additional information about the assessment which could be helpful in moderation

3986/03 Written Test

General comments

Most candidates finished the paper. Questions 1 and 6 (about earthquakes and air pollution) were best answered; question 4 (about shopping) was this year's least well answered question. It came as no surprise that full or almost full marks were regularly gained on the question about earthquakes – the tectonics question is invariably well answered. However, it was pleasing to see how well this year's environmental question was answered, especially as it was the last question on the paper. The most challenging individual questions on this year's paper were all within question 4. Many candidates were unable to identify the symbols used for shops on the map in part (a), and from among those who identified them, quite a number failed to use the same style of shading as used on the map. Only a tiny proportion of candidates were able to appreciate the importance of the nearby motorway for the location of the out-of-town shopping centre in part (d). As usual, part questions involving the practical use of geographical skills were well answered; few marks were dropped for drawing the bar graph in 1(d), the majority of candidates attempted to show the shape of the meanders on Photo B in 2(b) emphasising the major curves, while the majority of plots in 5(a)(i) were all-correct. Answers from those candidates who produced level three performances on this paper were characterised by high levels of consistency within and between the six questions; they did not lose too many of the marks in questions 3 and 4, the two questions with the lowest average mark. In contrast, level one candidates tended to answer two or three questions significantly better than the rest and were less reliable in recognising exact question needs.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

This earthquake question was a popular starter question. The great majority gained the first three marks. A few itemised the nature of the damage done in part (c) instead of stating Bam or Iran. If an error crept into the plotting in part (d) it was more likely to be for the value for B than the others. Although bar heights were almost invariably correct, bar widths were not always kept the same, which led to some graphs with strange appearances. A few very good answers to part (e) included details of how buildings can be made earthquake-proof; they often contained references to California being richer and better prepared. Some missed the opportunity to claim the marks for this part by merely repeating the nature of the damage done from the table without any comment about its significance for numbers killed, which could have rescued one mark for them.

Question 2

Although not as free scoring as the previous question, few answers failed to achieve at least half marks. Only a minority were able to name meander in part (a); 'curve' was a more common answer. Usually a genuine attempt was made to copy the sharp nature of some of the bends on the sketch in (b)(i). Certainly the majority of candidates understood what they were expected to do, although, having said this, a few drew general meander curves that bore no relationship to the size and position of those on Photo A. Part (b)(ii) was more demanding; the main weakness was shading in too small an area. What was noticeable was how many shaded in the small cut in the centre of the meander on this side of the valley and nothing else. Part (c) demanded some knowledge of river erosion, which resulted in wide variations in standards of answers between Centres. It was good to see that candidates from some Centres managed to mention cut-off or ox-bow lake in their answers to (c)(i) and to lateral erosion on the outside bend in (c)(ii). The typical mark for both parts of (c) was one out of two, reflecting the fact that partial rather than complete understanding was demonstrated by most candidates. Answers to part (d)(i) were expressed in a multitude of different ways, although most candidates were trying to convey the correct message. Some candidates made very clear identifications of the steeper and higher ground in the foreground when answering the final part (d)(ii).

Question 3

Few candidates managed to answer both parts (a) and (b) well; frequently there was a big difference in quality of answers between the two parts. From some answers to part (a) it was obvious that candidates were using guesswork alone; physical and human factors were impossibly mixed up, and factors already included were repeated, but in different boxes. Lack of jobs was the one factor likely to be inserted correctly. Other candidates clearly understood, selected correctly and collected all four marks. A few answers to part (b)(i) were ruined by candidates trying to give reasons why no one lived in the area shown in Photo B; sometimes they failed to repeat the reasons where they were needed in (b)(ii). In this final part some candidates relied too heavily upon negative statements about what was not there, such as no farms, industries and roads. Better answers were given by those who gave answers based upon what could be observed, such as the existence of cold snow covered mountains in the background and large areas of bare ground in the desert-like landscape in the foreground.

Question 4

This was the least well answered question. In part (a) the city centre or CBD was named for zone A by about half the candidates. How the shop symbols were drawn for zones B and C was something of a lottery. The solid squares for the corner shops in zone B were sometimes reversed with the shaded oblongs for the suburban shopping centres in zone C. Those with little understanding regularly gave the unacceptable answer of 'outer suburbs' as the label for zone D. Knowledge and understanding were sometimes superior to the candidates' powers of expression in (b); a wide variety of ideas were considered to be acceptable answers including the idea of convenience, however expressed. In part (c), about the types of shops in out-of-town shopping centres, large size and more space were the two reasons used most by candidates; references to advantages for shopping by car, such as easy access and free parking, were fewer than had been expected. The standard answer to part (d) was 'further away' which was allowed for one mark; for a two mark answer, however, the significance of the position of the motorway was needed. This turned out to be too demanding a requirement for most Entry Level candidates who looked at the area of the map around site Z and nowhere else. Those who included 'no car park' in their answers clearly failed to appreciate that that an out-of-town shopping and a car park are built together and go together as one.

Question 5

The first four marks were easily claimed; candidates needed to work harder to gain the last four marks. It was rare for the actual number of tourists to be plotted incorrectly on the graph in (a)(i), even though a few candidates missed the vertical lines for dates with their plots. This meant that they finished their graphs early with an over-steep line. Virtually all candidates attempted to draw a line through the points they had added and rarely missed the points. No matter how easy the question is, there are always some who get it wrong; this is what happened in (a)(ii) when a few circled a date other than 1995-2000. Making references to money earned and jobs created was the fast track to two marks in (b)(i). Some, however, misinterpreted question need and wrote down reasons why tourists were attracted to certain places – advantages for tourism instead of advantages of tourism. Too many candidates lost sight of the environmental theme in (b)(ii); even if pollution was mentioned, it was often for noise or a more general problem like traffic fumes rather than tourism-specific environmental damage, such as footpath erosion, or habitat loss associated with new hotel and tourist developments. Dropping litter or rubbish was accepted, which rescued one mark for many candidates.

Question 6

Candidates seemed comfortable answering this question, despite it being the last one. Generally accurate selections of emissions and gases from the diagram were made in parts (a) and (b). Obviously (a)(ii) was the most demanding to the three parts because the answer could not be taken directly from the graph. Among the many ways to reduce air pollution from traffic that were accepted in part (c) were those related to alternatives to the private car, such as walking, biking and using public transport. These three were the ones quoted most by candidates. Some, however, clearly possessed good knowledge of the new and cleaner fuels now under trial use in some urban areas. Although power station was considered to be the best answer to (d)(i), mention of factory was credited. Reference to wind direction was the key to correct answers to both (d)(ii) and (d)(iv); this was rarely a problem. Although the trees in Sweden are shown on the map to be diseased and dying, they had not fallen down, or been cut down, as a few suggested. Otherwise, there were no real hurdles for candidates in answering all these short questions and this is why many accumulated totals of seven marks or more.

1086 Geography A Short Course

Chief Examiner's Report

General Comments

The fourth examination of the specification with its three different components proved to be a genuine test of candidates' geographical knowledge, understanding and skills application. The successful candidates had learned a comprehensive body of knowledge that they could use to support their understanding of key geographical concepts. They had also acquired the ability to apply their geographical skills both in practical situations and through map and data interpretation.

The comprehensive nature of the examining system allowed all candidates to demonstrate their strengths and there were many excellent examples of high calibre geography. Many centres have obviously put a great amount of time and effort into preparing their candidates and they are to be commended on this.

This report on the examination is based upon comments from the many examiners and moderators who were responsible for judging the work of candidates. Hopefully its use to teachers will be the advice it contains which they can pass on to future candidates, so that they can also maximise their examination performance.

Candidates, particularly in the higher tier paper, coped well with the questions which were marked by using levels criteria. Centres are reminded that all case study sections and extended answers are marked in this way. The work done at INSET meetings to illustrate how the marking criteria are applied has proved very valuable. Many candidates included place-specific information in their case study examples and therefore accessed the highest level. Where candidates are still writing vague, general answers they need to be taught how such answers can be improved. The use of case study templates is illustrated in the revision guide which has been published to support the specification.

Although the examination system is perpetual it must be remembered that in each year the examination is a unique experience for that group of candidates. Consequently the following advice may be useful to candidates about to embark on their final preparation for the 2007 examination.

- obey the rubric instructions in paper 2;
- read each question carefully;
- pay particular attention to key words which are often emboldened, also 'command' words and words which set the context or scale of the answer;
- recognise any change of emphasis within the question focus;
- recognise that questions are usually based around a theme which will provide a link between sections;
- do not repeat the same answer in different sections - such answers do not gain double credit;
- be precise when using information from maps, graphs and diagrams;
- relate questions to examples and identify appropriate case studies which have been learned;
- learn the details of case studies to give them authenticity;
- use the number of marks available for a section as a guide to the number of points needed;
- develop ideas and extend answers in order to increase the marks which can be awarded;
- re-read and check the answers if there is time at the end of the examination;
- ensure that the correct equipment is brought to the examination including pen, pencil, ruler, rubber and calculator.

The following books have been published by Hodder Murray to accompany the specification:

A New Introduction to Geography for OCR Specification A
ISBN 0-340-74707-2
A New Introduction to Geography for OCR Specification A Revision Guide
ISBN 0-340-87643-3
A New Introduction to Geography for OCR Specification A Foundation edition
ISBN 0-340-88674-9

Some centres continue to ignore instructions concerning the examination. These are a great cause for concern from examiners as it makes their task more difficult. Two requests from examiners of paper 2 in particular to speed up their marking process are:

Insist that candidates record the number of the questions that they have answered on the front page of the answer booklet.

Attach any extension sheets to the main answer booklet with a treasury tag. Do not merely insert loose papers inside the answer booklet.

1086/01 – Foundation Tier

The paper was considered to be of an appropriate level of difficulty for candidates likely to achieve between grades C and G, with plenty of opportunities for the C and D grade candidates to demonstrate their abilities, and sufficient tasks at a basic level for all candidates to feel that they had at least achieved some success. However there were relatively few candidates who performed consistently well across the paper, or indeed make any sustained effort across it, and overall performance was relatively weak compared with recent years. Whilst there was a wide spread of marks, many candidates seemed poorly prepared and there were many centres where candidates had been entered who appeared very weak, with exceptionally poor linguistic skills and geographical knowledge. Far too many appeared to lack the motivation to make a meaningful attempt at the paper, with a series of rushed and superficial answers, or simply left blank spaces throughout, in some cases even on the simple skills questions which used the photographs, maps and other resources provided. This was especially so where responses required extended writing, particularly case-studies. Candidates need to be trained to at least make general points even where they have not revised or retained the name of an example.

In general, there was little to choose between the quality of answers from candidates on industry and tourism (question 1) and those on environmental issues (question 2), though this was not always the case. Whilst question 3, designed to test application of skills and understanding, was a question which some candidates approached with confidence and scored high marks, many others experienced difficulties or just did not bother to think through a series of answers.

It was evident that many candidates were not prepared for answering questions which either demanded specific knowledge or understanding, or required mapwork skills. These are identified in the comments on individual questions which follow, and need to be addressed in order to enhance future performance.

1   **(a)**   Most of those candidates who read the question carefully, focused on the buildings, and stated differences, were able to observe that C was older and that it had a chimney, which C did not. There was also a small number of references to the colour or building materials, and other design features of the buildings.

           In contrast there were many irrelevant responses which referred to the surroundings, rather than the buildings themselves (eg C is next to a river and D is next to a road), and too many candidates either just described one of the buildings (eg C is old) or made general statements, without identifying to which building they were referring (eg one building is older than the other).

   (b)   **(i)**   Most candidates could identify an input to the factory in Photograph C from the left of the first flow diagram, and refer to either `small light products` or an example for an output of the factory shown in Photograph D. However some were obviously not familiar with the terms `input` and `output` whilst others thought the factory in Photograph D produced cars as opposed to car parts or copied the phrase 'markets for finished products' which was not appropriate.

          (ii)   Whilst well prepared candidates demonstrated an understanding of the factors affecting industrial location here, typically by referring to the different raw materials and their relative transport costs, or by giving reasons for the footloose nature of the factory in Photograph D, far too many restricted their answers to things they had observed in the photographs. Thus `factory C has no roads so they have to be near its raw materials` was seen far more frequently than the correct answer.

(c) Disappointingly few candidates attempted this question. Where a response was given it was frequently all too obvious that the candidates had little or no concept of a distribution industry despite the requirements of the specification to study a named example. The most popular correct choice of case study was the Argos distribution centre at Stafford, though where candidates did write about Argos it was more often from their knowledge of Argos stores in cities, with references to their central location/accessibility for customers. Answers with place-specific details worth full marks were unusual, though some candidates who attempted extended responses were able to make valid points about either the benefits of a location along a motorway for transporting goods, or of flat, rural sites where there is plenty of space for storage/lorries to park, or a location close to a town or city for easy access to a workforce.

(d) **(i)** Where candidates restricted their answers to what they could see in the photographs they scored quite well. Too many, however, only gave one word or simplistic answers such as `beach`, `sea`, `coast`, `nice weather`, `good scenery` or `tourist attractions` which are too vague in view of the varied attractions which can be observed in the three photographs. Answers which scored high marks were those where candidates put a suitable adjective with the nouns (eg `clean/sandy beach` or `clear/blue sea` or `cliff coastline`) although adjectives such as `nice` or `good` were not sufficient. Alternatively they could have identified an activity which matches the feature they had observed such as `boats for fishing`.

(ii) Where candidates read the question carefully and recognised the need to restrict their answers to the natural environment, relevant points were made. There were a significant number who identified impacts which would be on the human/built environment only such as congestion, and as always many vague responses about `pollution` which will never be credited without a type and/or source.

(iii) Many candidates did not attempt this or struggled with it despite the clear specification requirement to study sustainability. Candidates needed to be able to extend their definition beyond the simple idea of conservation, ideally referring to something being `used now in such a way as to not destroy it for future generations`.

(iv) Those candidates who attempted this and tried to expand beyond simplistic or vague ideas like 'banning or stopping' tourists or 'putting up signs' were able to make significant points by, for example, referring to limiting the numbers of tourists/hotels, putting more litter bins in, or fencing off sensitive areas. Well prepared candidates who had used Menorca as their case study were able to make some references to specific measures taken in Menorca, such as restricting building heights or the use of the eco-tax, however such precise answers were unusual.

2 **(a)** Candidates from many centres were able to identify the correct answer, although from some centres it appears candidates were merely guessing and others gave no response, perhaps they may have simply missed it through lack of careful reading. Whilst it could be argued that this was not simple without a label on fig. 2a for acid rain, the requirements of the specification to study this topic would suggest that it is expected that candidates should be aware that acids have a low pH. Given that natural rain is slightly acidic anyway, there was only one possible answer.

(b) **(i)** There were far more incorrect responses than correct ones. Many answers referred to carbon and carbon dioxide despite fig. 2b clearly relating to the formation of acid rain not global warming, whilst others gave vague answers such as `pollution` and `gases`. Only a few candidates knew that sulphur and nitrogen compounds were the cause of acid rain and some who did spoiled their answers by suggesting that the cars and power stations were directly emitting sulphuric acid.

(ii) Where candidates had a clear understanding of the processes involved in the formation of acid rain their answers referred effectively to burning of fossil fuels, the chemicals rising into the air and mixing with water in the clouds, before falling as acid rain. Whilst candidates from some Centres could clearly distinguish between acid rain formation and other global environmental issues which they had studied, many others gave confused and vague responses, or simply did not attempt the question. Candidates needed to explain how gases from power stations or vehicles could acidify rain. Few referred to what produced the gases, (ie combustion) and the subsequent description of the emission of these gases into the atmosphere and the absorption/mixing with water already condensed in the clouds were often confused and poorly expressed.

(c) **(i)** Most candidates scored on this simple task, although some did not make an attempt and a few drew the divisions perfectly but shaded the smaller segment.

(ii) Virtually all candidates who attempted the question identified Norway correctly.

(iii) Many candidates understood the significance of the prevailing wind blowing towards Sweden, and some were able to go beyond this and explain that either Sweden must produce very little sulphur or other countries produce more, or suggest a reason such Sweden being less industrialised than many of the other countries of Western Europe. Once again, however, there were candidates from many centres who simply did not attempt the question or wrote answers which suggested that they had little or no knowledge or understanding of how and why one country`s atmospheric pollution can become another country`s problem.

(iv) Again there were some very good answers, however these were unusual and, from many centres, answers were either vague or overstated, the question left unanswered or candidates gave an irrelevant explanation for Sweden's acid rain levels rather than the effects. Valid responses tended to revolve around the idea of deaths or damage to fish, trees or crops, and some candidates had obviously learnt the impacts on limestone buildings or statues.

(v) Some candidates understood that reducing the use of fossil fuels would be appropriate but struggled to suggest practical ways in which this could be achieved. It is hardly possibly to 'stop using cars' or `stop generating electricity`, however relatively small numbers of well prepared candidates were able to suggest ideas such as fitting catalytic converters, encouraging the use of more public transport or using alternative forms of energy such as nuclear power of HEP to generate energy. There were almost no references to energy conservation, which would have been an acceptable approach, however significant numbers of candidates looked at a variety of impractical schemes to alleviate the problems, especially in relation to covering up crops, rivers and lakes `so they would not be burnt by the acidic rain`.

(d) Whilst again there were many examples of candidates not attempting the question, from well prepared candidates there were some impressive answers scoring full marks. Typically such candidates understood that ice-caps, often with named examples, would melt, and they were able to link that to sea level rise and appropriate references to flooding of lowland coasts, again often exemplified with references to whole countries such as Bangladesh or islands such as the Maldives.

Significant numbers of candidates were aware of rising sea levels, however their statements about the subsequent flooding were often too extreme (eg the whole UK will be flooded). Alternatively there were references, of varying quality, to climatic changes and their impacts in terms of drought or extreme weather events. Given sufficient development of these ideas, along with named examples candidates could score full marks, however many such answers were quite simplistic and tended to reach no higher than Level 1. As usual on questions about global warming, there were many examples of confusion between this and ozone depletion, with inappropriate references to problems such as the increasing incidence of skin cancer. Other candidates did not read the question carefully and outlined the causes of global warming rather than the effects, particularly the destruction of areas of rain forests.

3 **(a)** **(i)** Most candidates scored on this simple task requiring the use of a four figure grid reference, however some named farms in adjacent squares or even gave village names such as Langham Bridge.

(ii) Most candidates who attempted this question could identify the three villages by using the map evidence, however there were those who made no attempt, and significant numbers who put one of the villages in for two of the answers or transposed their positions.

(iii) Most candidates correctly identified 581261 as the 6 figure grid reference for the railway station at Chapelton.

(iv) The requirement here was to use map evidence to describe how people would get from Herner to the railway station, and it was by making specific reference to this evidence that candidates could gain their marks. Journeys on foot or by car/bus were both acceptable however the simple mention of either of these was insufficient for credit unless they made it obvious that map evidence had been used. Those candidates who were successful tended to refer to using the footpath across the field and if they identified the need to cross the river via the footbridge (listed in abbreviations) they scored both marks. Where candidates chose the longer route by road they often left their answers vague, leaving out any reference to map evidence such as the type of road or road number, or the direction in which they would travel.

(b) **(i)** Whilst there were a few fully accurate answers from candidates who had obviously been taught how to draw and interpret simple cross-sections, there were relatively few. Given the relative simplicity of such a task it has to be assumed that candidates from many centres were unfamiliar with cross sections, indeed the labelling of features either under the ground or up in the sky confirmed that many candidates could not visualise how a cross section represents reality. Some candidates placed their labels in mid-air without arrows to indicate their ground position and there were also some slanting lines from the ground angled down to the right for the railway line as if it was a map rather than a section.

(ii) This seemed to pose difficulties for the majority of candidates as the railway is away from any contours. There were of course many gaps and wild guesses, however many candidates could see that the nearest contour was the 10 metre one but failed to understand that the railway must therefore be at a lower height than that.

(c) **(i)** Many candidates could see that the camera was pointing along the river but too few looked with sufficient care to observe the railway line to the right of the river and then make the correct deduction using the map that it was pointing to the north. South was the most common wrong answer.

(ii) Many candidates who attempted this question could see that the railway was on the flat land by the river and may therefore suffer flooding, and a few had studied the map sufficiently carefully to impressively observe that the outside of the meander was right up to the railway, which might then be eroded and undermined.

(iii) Whilst there were many poor attempts at answering this question it did differentiate well, with impressive answers scoring full marks being produced by some of candidates. In order to do so they focussed on natural features, often using terminology such as meander and flood plain, and not only based their answers on evidence from the map and photo but referred to it in their answers. In contrast there were many candidates who ignored the requirement to describe natural features, making irrelevant references to housing, farmland and transport. Others were able to score marks, either in level 1 or 2, depending on the extent to which they developed any simple statements which they made or attempted to use terminology, however too few seemed to have studied the map in any depth, therefore made no use of map evidence in terms of measurements of the width of the valley floor for example or the steepness of the valley sides. There were a large number of vague value judgements about how fast or slow the whole river was flowing or how clean and nice it looked which scored zero.

1086/02 – Higher Tier

General Comments

The paper was related to the Paper 2 of specification 1986 and contained four common questions. It cannot be assumed however that all questions will be common in future examinations. It would be useful if this report were read in conjunction with the report on Paper 2 of specification 1986.

One key difference from 1986 is that candidates are allowed to choose two questions from four that cover each unit of the specification. It is therefore vital that candidates obey the rubric regulations and do not waste valuable time answering too many questions. There was a tendency in some centres for candidates to answer too many questions. Of the four optional questions question 4 was the most popular with question 1 the least popular.

The examination is shorter than 1986 paper 2 and candidates must guard against spending too much time on their choice questions so that they do may leave sufficient time to answer the compulsory question 5.

Comments on Individual Questions

1   **(a)**   **(i)**   Some candidates had problems identifying the processes. The most common error was to juxtapose the two processes.

           (ii)   Most candidates identified that groundwater flow would be greater in the woodland covered basin but they failed to support this statement with percentage data from Fig 1b. Candidates did not appear to understand the significance of the flow lines being of different widths. Many candidates wasted time by giving reasons for the difference. This was not asked for in the question.

           (iii)   This was the challenging section of the question. Weaker candidates did not give valid reasons but suggested confused ideas such as 'plants take up the water'. Most candidates focused on the processes of interception and absorption, although not usually by name. Better answers also included reference to farming practices and their effects on the soil.

                 This question was answered much better than the previous one. Candidates seemed to be more familiar with drainage in an urban area than a natural wooded basin. Generally candidates did obey the instruction to relate description and explanation.

       (b)   Again case studies had been well learned. The Rivers Lyn, Rhine and Mississippi were again the most popular choices and these gave candidates the opportunity to reach level 2 with ease as specific causes linked to particular floods were quoted in well-developed statements. The flooding of the River Valency at Boscastle has now joined the list of widely studied case studies. Candidates also did not concentrate their answers only on climatic causes but showed breadth of knowledge by including the impacts of urbanisation and the characteristics of the catchment area. Many answers were place specific and so reached level 3. Weaker candidates made the mistake of concentrating on effects rather than causes of flooding.

Reports on the Units

2 **(a)** **(i)** Most candidates correctly interpreted the graph and quoted accurate figures from the graph.

(ii) Unfortunately many candidates showed a lack of understanding of the diagram. Often they did not identify a feature of the hierarchy such as ' All settlements, except hamlets, contain a least one service'. The most common response that gained credit was the observation that more services are found in larger settlements.

(b) This question was generally well answered, although it did differentiate well. The idea most referred to was that there would be more people therefore more customers in a city and therefore profits would be greater. More sophisticated answers correctly used terms such as threshold, sphere of influence and identified the shops as selling specialist goods. Some ill-informed candidates drew conclusions such as ' people in villages are not as well educated and so cannot write' and 'people in villages are too poor to buy books'.

(c) This question also proved to be difficult for many candidates. The question was commonly misinterpreted as asking why people liked to shop in out of town centres. There was insufficient reference to the hierarchy shown in Fig 2b, which was referred to in the question. Where candidates did respond correctly they usually referred to closure of shops in the C.B.D. and their relocation to shopping centres established in rural areas.

(d) The case study produced a varied level of response. Some candidates showed good knowledge of counter-urbanisation in general, but there were too few place specific details. Candidates need to know details of a specific rural area which has been affected by new people moving in. However, examiners did not accept the following 'rural' areas - Dudley, Basildon and Barnsley. Generally consequences proved a more successful focus than causes. In many answers causes were vaguely referred to in terms of noise or unspecified pollution. Where candidates included specific consequences such as the impact of new house building on the local area, they were usually writing level 2 answers. Similarly level 2 responses were common in describing the conflicts that arise between villagers and 'incomers'. A few candidates yet again made the mistake of focusing on rural to urban migration.

3 **(a)** **(i)** Most candidates identified one difference between the buildings, usually referring to age.

(ii) Generally candidates understood the key word 'location' and most made good use of Fig 3a to identify differences. One mistake made by weaker candidates was that they did not identify the location by letter; rather they wrote 'one factory is in the built up area'.

(b) **(i)** Candidates were generally able to explain the terms inputs and outputs, often relating the meanings to the manufacturing process or sale of the products. Weaker candidates made the mistake of giving examples of inputs and outputs, which the question did not ask them to do.

(ii) Often candidates did not make enough use of Fig 3b but relied only on the photographs. There was information in the diagram which could trigger responses and many candidates failed to refer to this information. Many candidates recognised that bulky items would be difficult and costly to transport, but only more able candidates used the information about the factory in location D in order to make conclusions such as pipelines would make the movement of energy sources easier, or that components would come from a variety of sources in different locations.

(iii) Many candidates did not appear to be familiar with the concept of industrial inertia, although it is a key location factor. Candidates who did understand the focus of the question commonly gave tradition of manufacturing and prohibitive costs of re-location as reasons for remaining in an area.

(c) Answers to this case study were generally weaker than the other case study sections. The candidates who chose a distribution industry did not know details of its location and there were many factual errors. For example, the Argos distribution warehouse was frequently located alongside the M1 in a wide variety of counties and near Salisbury, Stamford, Saffron Waldon and even Stirling. Case studies frequently lacked development of ideas, for example why motorway links are important. The best answers about Argos did refer to a variety of factors as well as motorway links, including workforce and land availability. One other company that was used by a significant number of centres was Amazon e-commerce. Unfortunately too many candidates chose a manufacturing industry, most commonly car assembly. This suggests that they did not know what a distribution industry is.

(4) **(a)** Many candidates showed detailed knowledge of the causes of acid rain. Some failed to explain what it is and did not refer to the ph scale.

(b) **(i)** Most candidates made the contrast between the two countries, even if in some cases examiners had to find the information in two paragraphs where candidates wrote first about Norway and then about Italy. Some candidates did not use accurate percentage figures from Fig 4 to support their answer.

(ii) The most common reason given for the difference in the acid rain figures was the direction of the prevailing wind. The best answers also suggested that different levels of acid rain emission would affect the figures.

(c) A range of ideas was suggested but generally answers were not comprehensive and many candidates were unable to include specific detail. Consequently there were lot of vague answers about fish dying and trees being destroyed, and people becoming unwell. More able candidates wrote in detail about effects in The Black Forest of Germany and Swedish lakes. Similarly there were specific references to named buildings and statues being weathered and destroyed. Some weaker candidates wrongly focused on eutrophication as a result of acid rain.

(d) Solutions were generally known in more detail. Whilst weaker candidates wrote 'Cut out the use of cars', better answers went on to suggest alternative methods of transport. Similarly 'Stop burning fossil fuels' was a typical weak response which could be developed into 'and use alternative sources of energy such as wind power'. Overall many different attempts were described as candidates become increasingly aware of environmental issues.

Reports on the Units

5 **(a)** Candidates were generally able to calculate the distance and most answers fell within the range of tolerance.

(b) **(i)** There were very mixed responses as some candidates were unable to, or did not have the knowledge of, how to complete a cross section. This was a fairly simple slope to be completed; yet a considerable proportion of candidates merely drew the section as a straight line, showing no evidence of interpreting the contour pattern. Commonly candidates scored one mark for an approximation of the slope but with insufficient accuracy or detail. A significant proportion of candidates did not even attempt the question. In centres where the skill had been taught the cross section was plotted very accurately.

(ii) Similarly there was a large range of competency shown. Some candidates, including those who showed the width of the flood plain, accurately plotted the features. At the other extreme the flood plain was labelled on land above 80 metres in height. It should be pointed out to candidates that the instruction to 'mark with an arrow and label on the cross section' should be carried out. Too many candidates wrote 'R' or 'F' on the diagram but failed to score the marks because it was impossible to tell exactly where the label referred.

(c) **(i)** Generally candidates correctly aligned the map and photograph. A minority misinterpreted the question and answered south.

(ii) Many candidates showed excellent understanding in their interpretation of how the river could affect the railway line. Frequently flooding and erosion were described in detail.

(iii) Similarly many candidates were able to see from the map that the boundary used to follow a meander in the river. They realised that the boundary has not changed but the course of the river has. The best answers then revealed understanding of the process whereby an ox-bow lake had been formed and subsequently dried up.

(iv) The final question allowed candidates to write at length about the features shown on the river and in its valley. Many candidates used this opportunity well and described features of the river and valley in detail. Weaker candidates gained some credit for identifying the features. Some candidates failed to gain marks in the following ways. They went into detailed explanation of how the features were formed. This was not asked for in the question. Some candidates did not follow the instruction to use map and photograph evidence, therefore they could not gain credit at the top level.

Geography Short Course 1086/03

Report on coursework

Samples of excellent work were evident with the most able candidates demonstrating excellent use of initiative either following their own line of enquiry, using ICT to integrate graphs and tables into written work or providing detailed annotation of photographs and maps. Although candidates entered for this examination continue to represent the whole ability range, there were fewer gaining marks in the top quartile or obtaining full marks this year. About 50% of the Centres entered less than 10 candidates.

The majority of the coursework units prepared by the Centres were appropriate, allowing a range of both primary and secondary data to be collected. Most coursework units provided either a clear hypothesis or an investigation title; both options allowing candidates to test a structured set of tasks. In a small minority of Centres, candidates were encouraged to devise their own hypothesis on different topics. Whilst this is commendable and encourages the use of initiative, it is necessary for Centres to provide some guidance regarding the suitability of the title(s). If this approach is taken, it is recommended that the Centre contacts the Coursework Consultant for advice. There were a few Centres however, who provided no title or it was very unclear what the title actually was. Several units still tend to be teacher led, and Centres should avoid giving candidates a series of questions to answer which do not encourage them to develop their own line of enquiry. Some units provided extension exercises, allowing candidates to reach the top levels by either collecting additional data or completing a similar survey of another area. Where this was evident, clear guidance given and coursework was well structured, candidates were reaching the top levels in all marking criteria. The lack of an extension option limits candidates, who tend to produce similar, standardised work. To reach top levels, candidates should be encouraged to use their initiative by carrying out a mini enquiry demonstrating independent research. Some Centres cater for this by giving a choice of hypothesis/investigations or a question specifically requiring them to undertake an individual investigation. When applied, these methods usually work quite successfully allowing candidates to achieve well at their ability level. This provides the more able candidates with the opportunity to reach the top levels of the marking criteria. The majority of Centres demonstrated a clear link between coursework set and the teaching programmes outlined in the specification. Centres requiring assistance to link their units more closely to the teaching themes as outlined in the syllabus (page 29, section 6.1, para. 1).are able to consult/take the advice of the Coursework Consultant.

As in previous years the majority of investigations were linked to urban studies. Others included environmental investigations (several being based on microclimates), and river studies. Examples of good quality work continue to be most evident in urban studies. It is apparent that the more able candidates extend their enquiry by either carrying out their own additional investigation or by collecting additional/different data.   Many coursework units suggested extension tasks designed to allow candidates reach the top levels. Although the majority of these studies did provide this opportunity for the collection of primary data, some candidates did not take advantage of this and their research was limited (e.g. simplistic questionnaires, downloaded unannotated maps, unannotated photographs etc). Popular investigations within this urban theme remain unchanged with the application of urban models, CBD functions and shopping surveys topping the list! Others were related to urban growth, environmental quality and traffic surveys. Those Centres who base their coursework on urban models should advise the candidates to apply the theory to the urban area they are studying, rather than give a description of the model. Many working on urban models used those, such as Burgess, that refer to the American city, rather than Mann's model of the British city. Careful thought should be given to the choice and application of models. When applied correctly candidates scored high marks.

Environmental investigations tended to be more teacher led than the urban studies and candidates tended to struggle more with the topics. Despite this there were some good examples of successful attempts at representing and analysing the data for both environmental and river studies.

Most Centres encourage candidates to collect primary as well as secondary data. Candidates should be encouraged not to copy or download information and submit it instead of their original work. Those Centres that do not encourage the collection of primary data deny candidates the opportunity to use their initiative and to reach the top levels. Centres producing the most accessible coursework units for candidates were those which had contacted and taken the advice of the Coursework Consultant. There are coursework support materials available in addition to the services of the Coursework Consultant. Centres which experience difficulties in planning coursework should seek advice from the Consultant. Candidates could improve their work by placing more emphasis on methodology. A chart or matrix including limitations/problems/solutions for primary and secondary data collection would enhance work. This is recommended as an excellent way to depict the range and type of data collected and not only reduces the word count, but enhances the evaluation of data collected.

Coursework submitted represented the whole ability range, but there is still, however, an imbalance in the entry insofar as there are more candidates in the middle to lower ability range than at the top end. The continued improvement in preparation and support for students of all abilities was evident from Centres. For example there is a clear structure to many of the units, which at the same time provide opportunities for extension work. There was pleasing evidence demonstrating candidates' initiative in the preparation of individual questionnaires, data collection and processing. Although data was processed in graphical and cartographical formats (e.g. choropleth maps and overlays); there still remains less evidence of the use of statistics (e.g. Rs). There were some good examples of well annotated, integrated and referenced field sketches and photographs, there remains scope for improvement in this area. Providing numerous pages of photographs and/or field sketches without annotation or reference to the text does not earn extra marks. Some Candidates 'overdose' on the inclusion of photographs and also provide numerous pages of graphs, often all of the same type. Credit should be given for well selected and analysed sketches/photos/graphs integrated into the written work appropriately. They should be carefully annotated.

Among some candidates there remains a strong reliance on the use of questionnaires for collecting primary data. The sample size must be appropriate, at least 25 and processed using a variety of different techniques such as tables, graphs, pictograms etc. integrated into the written analysis. The results should also be not only analysed, but evaluated. It was common to find work where numerous copies of completed questionnaires were included in the analysis or data collection sections. Candidates would benefit from the appropriate use of an appendix. Some weaker candidates rely heavily or totally on the inclusion of downloaded material (e.g. maps, photos, text) from the Internet and in some cases this was inappropriately credited with several marks. Such materials must be carefully selected, annotated and referred to in the written text in order to gain marks.

It was encouraging to see the continued and excellent use in ICT, including reference to websites and inclusion of scanned photographs and maps. The majority of work from a wide variety of Centres is now word processed and the use of ICT is good in the majority of centres. There was evidence of some excellent pieces of coursework where candidates integrated photos, maps and graphs into their text. Although many candidates are making good use of graphic packages, Centres should monitor the appropriate use of these. There is a tendency to either produce just one type of graph or to use nearly every graphics package available whether or not it is applicable. The misuse of line graphs was also common again this year, even amongst those reaching the top levels. This year several candidates provided evidence of additional research.

There is still room for improvement in the use of appendices and bibliographies. It was common to find maps scanned in from the Internet, however only the minority were annotated and had titles and figure numbers. Centres should monitor the use of ICT closely and ensure that candidates do add appropriate annotations. Other examples of good practice were evident from Centres who encouraged the candidates to include results tables, associated graphs (reduced in size) and written analysis all on one page.

In some cases candidates produced good research, good evidence of data collection, good data representation and analysis, yet provided brief conclusions and evaluations. Candidates should be reminded that these provide the basis for a substantial number of marks. It is useful if a model and mini hypotheses are included in the introduction for candidates to refer back to in the conclusion and evaluation.

Coursework that allowed positive achievement was well structured, tasks were appropriate and concise hypothesis(es) were investigated. Good fieldwork techniques were practised, allowing candidates to collect, collate and process data. There were a considerable number of Centres where candidates had been given clear guidance to set their work out clearly, using appropriate headings, such as 'aims, methodology, analysis, conclusions and evaluation'. This strategy has proved effective in providing the potential for candidates of all abilities to reach their potential. It is essential that a fine line does have to be drawn to ensure there is a balance between providing guidance and being too teacher led.

Centres are reminded of the suggested 1500 word limit for coursework (page 13, section 4.6 and page 29, section 6.1 in the specification). Many candidates are writing more than is necessary, especially those who are more able or have to answer several hypotheses. The use of annotated diagrams, charts and tables can prove to be an effective alternative to lengthy prose, and enables candidates to use a greater variety of skills in recording and representing data. Candidates should be warned not to include every piece of research they find, but to be more selective and include only that which is relevant, using an appendix appropriately.

This year the application of marking criteria by 44% (compared to 36% in 2005) of Centres was inaccurate and adjustments had to be made. Those Centres whose marks were adjusted tended to be too generous in awarding marks at all levels against the criteria stated in the specification. Centres should be thoroughly familiar with the guidelines set out on pages 33 - 36 of the specification. Application of assessment criteria caused problems for some centres. The assessment objectives are highlighted on page 31 in the specification. Centres should read these sections carefully, together with the grade descriptions (pages 15 & 16) before marking commences. There was evidence of over marking for each of the three criteria. With respect to understanding, candidates often merely listed what they intended to do in their study, but did not explain why.

Collection and selection of primary and secondary data did not pose as many problems for marking, although candidates should be encouraged to extend their research independently in order to reach a high level. Most candidates of all abilities are now clearly stating the aims of their investigation.

Some Centres were too generous with their marking for representation of data. Level 2 or 3 marks were awarded when only a limited range of techniques had been used. As in previous years evidence suggests that many candidates do, however, need to include more annotation and add keys and titles to their maps, field sketches, photos and models. Many items such as these were included, but reference was not always made to them in the written text by the weaker candidates. It is essential that candidates use a greater range of techniques to represent data and include integration of maps, graphs etc. into written work. This is essential in order to gain the marks awarded at the top levels. It should be made clear that greater use could be made of mapping techniques. Collected data could be mapped (e.g. flow lines as a result of traffic counts, land use/shop classification). Merely including maps downloaded from the Internet with no titles etc. is not going to gain top marks.

Marks were sometimes generously awarded for analysis, interpretation and conclusions. Among weaker candidates, answers tended to be descriptive and they did not analyse their findings in enough detail. More reasoned conclusions and evaluation would provide a higher level response. In order to access the highest levels candidates should acknowledge the limitations of their research and suggest improvements in their final analysis and conclusion. It may help differentiation if some tasks were broken down for weaker candidates. Clear guidance and monitoring whilst coursework is being carried out would also help these candidates.

Centres are reminded that they should carry out internal standardisation of coursework and ensure that this is indicated on the work or cover sheet. There are still many Centres where there is no evidence of either marking or moderation. Despite this, other Centres have demonstrated care and accuracy in their marking, providing excellent annotation on the work and helpful comments on the cover sheet. It is always appreciated when individual comments are made either on the cover sheets or candidates' work as they are very helpful during the moderation process, providing relevant background information or details of special circumstances. This is particularly helpful when there is an indication as to the degree of help or the amount of initiative a candidate has used.

Centres are reminded that candidates' work should be clearly labelled and securely fastened, as most were this year. Each piece of work should have a completed cover sheet. It is not necessary to complete a copy of form CCS160 for each candidate. Only one per Centre is required. All staff teaching the coursework should sign form CCS160. Candidates should not enclose each sheet of their work in plastic wallets or submit work in hardback clip folders. This year most of the sample coursework was sent by return (within the three day deadline), arriving before half term; this was appreciated. Many more Centres are adopting the practice of providing detailed background notes about the nature of the coursework undertaken. This is both informative and useful in the moderation process. Moderators would appreciate all Centres adopting this practice as it helps to determine how marks have been awarded. Copies of the coursework units and guidelines are also useful when moderating. The moderation process would be enhanced if Centres could send MS1 and coursework assessment forms together. There are still a few Centres who record 0 instead of A when a candidate has withdrawn from the exam.

If candidates are to achieve the highest level, Centres should set tasks and provide a coursework structure which allows candidates to reach level 3 for all marking criteria. It is not possible for copied source materials or highly structured work, with little opportunity for candidates to show independence or initiative, to merit high marks.

At the end of the tenth year of the course (in its original and present format) it is evident that the use of ICT is now being used by the majority of candidates. Appropriate guidance is being developed in many Centres, encouraging candidates to extend their individual research. Candidates of all abilities are improving the organisation of their work to include clear, well defined sections. The whole mark range was used even though fewer candidates this year achieved 100%. There was again evidence of good quality Geography in the work produced.

GCSE Geography A 1986

Chief Examiner's Report

General Comments

The fourth examination of the specification with its three different components proved to be a genuine test of candidates' geographical knowledge, understanding and skills application. The successful candidates had learned a comprehensive body of knowledge that they could use to support their understanding of key geographical concepts. They had also acquired the ability to apply their geographical skills both in practical situations and through map and data interpretation.

The comprehensive nature of the examining system allowed all candidates to demonstrate their strengths and there were many excellent examples of high calibre geography. Many centres have obviously put a great amount of time and effort into preparing their candidates and they are to be commended on this.

This report on the examination is based upon comments from the many examiners and moderators who were responsible for judging the work of candidates. Hopefully its use to teachers will be the advice it contains which they can pass on to future candidates, so that they can also maximise their examination performance.

Candidates, particularly in the higher tier papers, coped well with the questions which were marked by using levels criteria. Centres are reminded that all case study sections in papers 1 and 2 and extended answers in papers 3 and 4 are marked in this way. The work done at INSET meetings to illustrate how the marking criteria are applied has proved very valuable. Many candidates included place-specific information in their case study examples and therefore accessed the highest level. Where candidates are still writing vague, general answers they need to be taught how such answers can be improved. The use of case study templates is illustrated in the revision guide which has been published to support the specification (see below for details).

Although the examination system is perpetual it must be remembered that in each year the examination is a unique experience for that group of candidates. Consequently the following advice may be useful to candidates about to embark on their final preparation for the 2007 examination.

- obey the rubric instructions in paper 2;
- read each question carefully;
- pay particular attention to key words which are often emboldened, also 'command' words and words which set the context or scale of the answer;
- recognise any change of emphasis within the question focus;
- recognise that questions are usually based around a theme which will provide a link between sections;
- do not repeat the same answer in different sections - such answers do not gain double credit;
- be precise when using information from maps, graphs and diagrams;
- relate questions to examples and identify appropriate case studies which have been learned;
- learn the details of case studies to give them authenticity;
- use the number of marks available for a section as a guide to the number of points needed;
- develop ideas and extend answers in order to increase the marks which can be awarded;
- re-read and check the answers if there is time at the end of the examination;
- ensure that the correct equipment is brought to the examination including pen, pencil, ruler, rubber and calculator.

The following books have been published by Hodder Murray to accompany the specification:
A New Introduction to Geography for OCR Specification A
ISBN 0-340-74707-2
A New Introduction to Geography for OCR Specification A Revision Guide
ISBN 0-340-87643-3
A New Introduction to Geography for OCR Specification A (Foundation edition)
ISBN 0-340-88674-9

Some centres continue to ignore instructions concerning the examination. These are a great cause for concern from examiners as it makes their task more difficult. Two requests from examiners of paper 2 in particular to speed up their marking process are:

Insist that candidates record the number of the questions that they have answered on the front page of the answer booklet.

Attach any extension sheets to the main answer booklet with a treasury tag. Do not merely insert loose papers inside the answer booklet.

1986/01 – Foundation Tier

Paper 1 was considered to be appropriate for the ability range of foundation candidates and, given the wide range of marks achieved, it produced a high degree of differentiation. There were plenty of opportunities for the C and D grade candidates to demonstrate their abilities, and the resources and structured tasks provided all candidates with the opportunity to achieve positively to some extent, as candidates were able to access information from the diagrams, maps, photos and tables provided. There were many centres from which scripts were seen which demonstrated examples of good practice. Pleasingly, such candidates are moving away from one-word answers and writing in sentences. Brief points, adopting the notion of one mark for each point, are less evident than in the past. Levels of response marking seems to have reduced the use of bullet points now as more centres grasp that quality not quantity is rewarded in the questions requiring extended writing. It prevents basic statements from gaining full marks and rewards detailed and place-specific answers.

From some centres there were some good quality, detailed, case studies this year. There are centres where candidates are getting better at giving a named example but still need to focus on making their answers 'place-specific' in order to score at level 3.

Whilst there were a number of centres which produce high scoring candidates, few were able to score consistently across all four questions, and those who appeared to lack motivation and failed to make any sustained effort across it were more conspicuous this year than in previous years. Indeed the overall quality of work was inferior to that of 2005, which is disappointing. Great extremes of performance were evident, with those candidates achieving high marks being outnumbered by those submitting very weak scripts. Whilst there was a wide spread of marks, significant numbers of candidates seemed poorly prepared and there were many centres where candidates had been entered who appeared very weak, with exceptionally poor linguistic skills and very limited geographical knowledge and understanding. Far too many candidates from such Centres failed to make a meaningful attempt at the paper overall, with a series of rushed and superficial answers, or simply left blank spaces throughout, except for the simple skills questions and those which directly used the photographs, maps and other resources provided. This was especially so where responses required extended writing, particularly case studies. Candidates need to be trained to at least make general points even where they have not revised or retained the name of an example.

There was little evidence this year of strong candidates being entered for this tier who would have been better entered for the higher tier. Indeed those who scored consistently appeared to be those whose performance was enhanced by the greater structure and security which the foundation tier provides. A reducing percentage of entries for foundation tier over the last few years, in combination with evidence of a reduction in the overall quality of work at foundation level, suggests that there is an increasing tendency for centres to mainly enter those candidates who they expect to gain Grade E or below for this tier, using the higher tier for most candidates who they expect to gain Grade D or above.

In general, answers from candidates on volcanoes (Question 1), migration of people (Question 2) and environmental issues (Question 4) were of better quality than those on industry (Question 3), though this was not always the case as there were a significant number or disappointing answers to Question 4. In all questions some very good to case studies were seen, with well prepared candidates attempting to write precise answers with place specific detail. However it has to be said that there is still a marked difference between centres, some clearly need to rethink their strategies so that they can improve their candidates access to marks on the case studies. There are many centres where foundation candidates under achieve by failing to attempt an answer for one or more case studies, or by writing brief and simplistic, generalised responses, or by failing to give an appropriate example.

Those centres where the bulk of candidates made meaningful attempts at case studies tended to be those using local examples, rather than textbook materials which clearly had little impact on candidates.

Comments follow on specific questions:

1   **(a)**   **(i)**   Overall, a well-answered question with many candidates displaying a good knowledge of plate tectonics and many examples of detailed volcano case studies.

       (i)   Madeira was correctly identified by many candidates, but a large proportion of candidates gave the answer as Tristan da Cuhna based on the information in the key, and the error in thinking that the Mid-Atlantic Ridge was just the section to the north of Iceland. In addition a significant number failed to name the island but gave 'C' as their answer.

       (ii)   Generally this was well answered, many candidates being able to state the distribution of the volcanic islands along the plate boundary Mid-Atlantic Ridge, however vague answers (eg in a line, in the sea) were also common.

       (iii)   Similarly most candidates understood the UK to be in the middle of a plate, though there were the usual inappropriate references to climate and those who stated that 'the UK was not on a plate' omitting the crucial word edge or boundary. Some candidates answered very simplistically "because they are all extinct" which needed further explanation.

   (b)   This question produced the whole range of responses, from those who understood plate tectonics well and could describe in detail why there are major volcanoes in Iceland, to those who really had no idea at all, despite the diagram. The excellent answers used the diagram to spot that Iceland was on a plate boundary, that the plates were diverging, that this created a gap, through which the magma would then rise to the surface. Weaker candidates identified fewer of these steps or just copied labels from or even the whole diagram without linking this to the volcanic activity. Few diagrams were drawn and generally they added little or nothing to the written response. The role of convection currents was not well understood and rarely commented on in the correct context.

   (c)   This question differentiated well, most candidates could successfully identify at least one factor which might have led to a greater exodus, such as the density of population living in the affected area, the size of the eruption or the quality of the housing. Some drifted away from the question and gave lengthy explanations of why many people lived near volcanoes and gave three reasons for differences in population density close to the volcanoes. Others made reference to one country being an LEDC and the other being an LEDC with the further elaboration required to provide an answer to the question set, and a significant number focussed on irrelevant details such as the ability to rebuild after the eruptions.

(d) Some very good full mark answers were seen, notably case studies about Mt St Helens which identified how many people died and linked specific effects to Spirit Lake or Toutle River and so were place specific, and gained full marks. A number undermined their answers with the wrong date or fabricated or grossly inaccurate casualty figures. Case studies of Pinatubo and Soufriere were also used to good effect. A few candidates gave lengthy but inappropriate descriptions of the build-up to and the products of an eruption without identifying any effects. Candidates who chose Etna or even Nyiragongo, almost certainly from the table in c), often gave simple statements at Level 1 about people dying, and houses being destroyed with little development. Candidates must understand that there is no substitute for a well-revised detailed case study.

(e) Whilst some candidates ignored the word 'benefits' and merely wrote about why people live near volcanoes, there were some good quality answers. Many referred to fertile soils and tourism, often in fairly simple terms, though others developed their answers adding details about people being able to produce higher yields of crops or gave examples of specific tourist related employment opportunities. Well prepared candidates also referred to benefits such as hot springs, geothermal energy and the existence of valuable minerals to mine. In contrast there were many ill-informed candidates making references to "cheaper houses or land".

2 Many parts of this question were well answered by candidates, however high quality case studies were few in number.

(a) **(i)** Many candidates managed to put Mexico, China and Vietnam in the correct order, to gain both the marks available for this question. Others scored at least one by placing Vietnam at the bottom but it was surprising that significant numbers of candidates switched Mexico with China, especially as its flow line was over twice the width of any other on the map.

(ii) A disappointing number of candidates could not accurately identify an LEDC or a MEDC from Fig. 2a. There will always be a debate over what is an MEDC/LEDC but candidates should be aware of the North-South divide and when asked to give an example of an MEDC it is wiser to quote obvious European and North American examples, rather than countries like China and Mexico. Such candidates may have not read the question properly and mistakenly thought their response had to be drawn from the list given in (a) (i).

(iii) There was a lack of understanding of what is meant by "pattern". Many referred to specific countries or made weak statements such as "from the west", or "far away". A disappointing number stated that most people had migrated from the "southern hemisphere" which is clearly incorrect. Nor is it true that more migrants are from nearby countries than those which are more distant, with the obvious exception of Mexico. Where marks were gained it was often from the recognition that most migrants were from the LEDCs but then these candidates often wrote out the reverse idea as the second point and did not score further by referring to the fact that many migrants are from Asia or Central America and the Caribbean.

(iv)   Generally this was well answered with many references to lack of qualifications and its subsequent effect on the migrant's chances in the job market and chances of being able to afford housing and other basic needs. A few did not read the question carefully enough to notice the word 'still' and wrote about people arriving with no money which was not relevant, and many candidates wrote simple statements which they failed to develop (e.g. 'because they are poor') which was insufficient to gain credit.

(b)   This question differentiated well with comments which at worst bordered on being racist, and at best answers which clearly identified and thoughtfully elaborated on a series of benefits and problems. Thus the ill-informed diatribes about 'them' taking 'our' jobs/houses or how 'they' all sponge off the dole' were more than compensated for by candidates who were able to give balanced ideas with some even reflecting on the need for workers, not only those who would do the `dirty` jobs for low pay but also those with skills such as doctors, nurses and teachers, and that working legal migrants, who are in the majority, have to pay tax too.

(c)   **(i)**   Where candidates understood that the same words they were defining could not be used in their definitions they were able to define rural to urban migration well, using the stimulus provided by Fig. 2b to refer to `movement of people from the countryside to the city`.

(ii)   Many candidates found it difficult to explain what is meant by pull and push factors without using the words ` push` and `pull` or `factors` in their answers or simply listing examples of each. Those who were successful tended to use phrases such as `the attractions of the destination` and `the bad things which migrants want to escape from`.

(d)   Far too many candidates named a country or even a city in an MEDC and almost as many answered in relation to international migration (eg Mexicans to the USA) which restricted their mark, and many gave lengthy descriptions of the problems of living in a squatter settlement. Even where candidates had grasped the requirements of the question and given an appropriate example many just made simplistic statements, frequently consisting of a basic list stating `better jobs, better education, better houses etc` rather than explaining the reasons for rural to urban migration, and there was little development or expansion. Candidates need regular drilling in how easily a level 1statement can be upgraded to level 2. For example a statement like 'more jobs' can be upgraded to 'more well-paid/formal/cleaner jobs' for level 2, automatically getting into a higher mark band for that one statement. If they could give the name of a manufacturer located in that city (eg 'well-paid jobs at the Ford car plant in Sao Paulo`) and make another pertinent developed point this could enable access to level 3 and full marks.

3   This proved to be the weakest answer from many candidates. Many candidates seemed to have little knowledge and understanding of employment and in particular the distribution industry.

Specific detail had either not been learnt or understood.

(a)   **(i)**   Most candidates correctly completed the bar for Mexico but some forgot to shade or label the graph and others missed the question completely.

(ii)   Whilst the vast majority of candidates correctly identified Kenya a significant number were unable to correctly identify Egypt.

(iii)   For a two mark question this differentiated well. Whilst some candidates scored both marks there were weak and simplistic answers from others (eg `because there are lots of tertiary jobs`). It was obvious that large numbers of candidates were not familiar with the term `tertiary sector` and many referred to the reasons why an MEDC such as Japan has a high percentage in manufacturing which meant their answer was irrelevant to the question. Some made the reasonable assumption that tertiary jobs are well-paid (though there are many which are not) and that the people of MEDCs would be well-educated and therefore qualified for skilled tertiary jobs. Few could explain that a significant percentage of tertiary jobs would be in the public sector and therefore dependent on the country having a high income from taxation, or that private sector tertiary jobs arise from high levels of disposable income to spend in shops/bars/travel etc. A minority of candidates reversed the question effectively and explained that MEDCs must have a high percentage in tertiary employment as there is little demand for secondary and primary employment, as they either import many of these products from low-wage LEDCs, or any remaining factories and agricultural enterprises are highly mechanised.

(b)   **(i)**   Most of those candidates who read the question carefully, focused on the buildings, and stated differences, were able to observe that C was older and that it had a chimney, which C did not. There was also a small number of references to the colour or building materials, and other design features of the buildings.

In contrast there were many irrelevant responses which referred to the surroundings, rather than the buildings themselves (eg C is next to a river and D is next to a road), and too many candidates either just described one of the buildings (eg C is old) or made general statements, without identifying to which building they were referring (eg one building is older than the other).

(ii)   There were many candidates who did not achieve both marks here for showing that they knew the meanings of these basic terms, some relying entirely on guesswork and getting all three examples wrong. Perhaps some associated 'driver of lorries' as less well paid/less professional therefore not tertiary, however there were clearly many who simply had not learnt what the terms mean.

(c)   **(i)**   Most candidates could identify an input to the factory in Photograph C from the left of the first flow diagram, and refer to either `small light products` or an example for an output of the factory shown in Photograph D. However some were obviously not familiar with the terms `input` and `output` whilst others thought the factory in Photograph D produced cars as opposed to car parts or copied the phrase 'markets for finished products' which was not appropriate.

(ii) Whilst well prepared candidates demonstrated an understanding of the factors affecting industrial location here, typically by referring to the different raw materials and their relative transport costs, or by giving reasons for the footloose nature of the factory in Photograph D, far too many restricted their answers to things they had observed in the photographs. Thus `factory C has no roads so they have to be near its raw materials` was seen far more frequently than the correct answer and speed of access or the vague `ease of access` were common answers.

(d) Disappointingly many candidates from some centres did not attempt this question. Where a response was given it was frequently all too obvious that the candidates had little or no concept of a distribution industry despite the requirements of the specification to study a named example, many giving examples of industries from the primary sector or manufacturing industries. The most popular correct choice of case study was the Argos distribution centre at Stafford, though where candidates did write about Argos it was more often from their knowledge of Argos stores in cities, with references to their central location/accessibility for customers. Answers with place specific details worth full marks were unusual, though some candidates who attempted extended responses were able to make valid points about either the benefits of a location along a motorway for transporting goods, or of flat, rural sites where there is plenty of space for storage/lorries to park, or a location close to a town or city for easy access to a workforce.

4 Some candidates produced good answers showing knowledge of acid rain and global warming, however from candidates in many centres there was still some confusion between acid rain, ozone depletion and global warming, and many superficial or simplistic answers.

(a) This was generally well answered, though some who left it blank may have simply missed it through lack of careful reading.

(b) (i) There were more incorrect responses than correct ones. Many answers referred to carbon and carbon dioxide despite fig. 2b clearly relating to the formation of acid rain not global warming, whilst others gave vague answers such as `pollution` and `gases`. Only a few candidates knew that sulphur and nitrogen compounds were the cause of acid rain, and some who did spoiled their answers by suggesting that the cars and power stations were directly emitting sulphuric or nitric acid.

(ii) This question differentiated well. Where candidates had a clear understanding of the processes involved in the formation of acid rain their answers referred effectively to burning of fossil fuels, the chemicals rising into the air and mixing with water in the clouds, before falling as acid rain. Whilst candidates from some centres could clearly distinguish between acid rain formation and other global environmental issues which they had studied, many others gave confused and vague responses. Candidates needed to explain how gases from power stations or vehicles could acidify rain. Few referred to what produced the gases, (ie combustion) and the subsequent description of the emission of these gases into the atmosphere and the absorption/mixing with water already condensed in the clouds were often confused and poorly expressed. There was much general reference to pollution and some candidates included irrelevant detail about the water cycle, whilst others even suggested that there were pools of acid on the ground, which were being evaporated, then rising and condensing.

(c) **(i)** Most candidates scored on this simple task, although some did not make an attempt and a few drew the divisions perfectly but shaded the smaller segment.

(ii) Virtually all candidates identified Norway correctly.

(iii) Many candidates understood the significance of the prevailing wind blowing towards Sweden, and some were able to go beyond this and explain that either Sweden must produce very little sulphur or other countries produce more, or suggest a reason such as Sweden being less industrialised than many of the other countries of Western Europe. Once again, however, there were candidates from many centres who wrote answers which suggested that they had little or no knowledge or understanding of how and why one country`s atmospheric pollution can become another country`s problem. Some stated "because of the prevailing winds" and failed to develop the idea to answer the question. Frequently candidates guessed, with numerous candidates giving vague ideas such as `Sweden is close to other countries` or `it is near Norway`.

(iv) Again there were some very good answers, however others were either vague or overstated, or candidates gave an irrelevant explanation for Sweden's acid rain levels rather than its effects. Valid responses tended to revolve around the idea of deaths or damage to fish, trees or crops, and some candidates had obviously learnt the impacts on limestone buildings or statues, though vague statements such as `it damages buildings` needed more precision.

(v) Some candidates understood that reducing the use of fossil fuels would be appropriate but struggled to suggest practical ways in which this could be achieved. A simple phrase such as `use less sulphur` or `pollute less` was not worthy of credit. Nor is it practical to suggest that we 'stop using cars' or `stop generating electricity`, however relatively small numbers of well prepared candidates were able to suggest ideas such as fitting filters to power station chimneys, catalytic converters to cars, and encouraging the use of more public transport or using alternative forms of energy such as nuclear power of HEP to generate energy. There were almost no references to energy conservation, which would have been an acceptable approach, however significant numbers of candidates looked at a variety of impractical schemes to alleviate the problems, especially in relation to covering up crops, rivers and lakes `so they would not be burnt by the acidic rain`.

(d) This differentiated well, most candidates made an attempt and, from well prepared candidates, there were some impressive answers scoring full marks. Typically such candidates understood that ice-caps, often with named examples, would melt, and they were able to link that to sea level rise and appropriate references to flooding of lowland coasts, again often exemplified with references to whole countries such as Bangladesh or islands such as the Maldives.

Significant numbers of candidates were aware of rising sea levels, however their statements about the subsequent flooding were often too extreme (eg the whole UK will be flooded). Alternatively there were references, of varying quality, to climatic changes and their impacts in terms of drought or extreme weather events. Given sufficient development of these ideas, along with named examples candidates could score full marks, however some answers were quite simplistic and tended to reach no higher than Level 1. As usual on questions about global warming, there were examples of confusion between this and ozone depletion, with inappropriate references to problems such as the increasing incidence of skin cancer, however these were fewer than in previous years. Some candidates did not read the question carefully and outlined the causes of global warming rather than the effects, particularly the destruction of areas of rain forests.

1986/02 – Higher Tier

General Comments

The paper allowed widespread differentiation. There were many excellent answers in which candidates demonstrated a thorough grasp of geographical principles and a detailed knowledge of place specific case studies to support their argument. The mean mark for the paper was higher than in 2005. However, it was suggested by examiners that some schools might still be entering candidates for the higher tier who may be better suited to the foundation papers. A strong characteristic of weaker candidates is vagueness in many of their answers, especially where case study knowledge is required. If candidates are to reach level 3 in case study sections there is a requirement that their answer is place specific in addition to being comprehensive. A good way to test this requirement is for candidates to read their answer and 'cover up' the name of the case study. A suitable answer will be recognisable about a particular place or event through the detailed references being made.

The following advice may help candidates to improve the general standard of answer on this paper.

- Aim to develop each idea so that their answer does not emerge as a list of similar points.
- Read the entire question carefully before they begin their answer. Decide what is an appropriate case study and fulfils the requirements of the question.
- Take note of the key word, which may be emboldened, so that the answer is relevant to the question.
- Use the mark allocation as a guide to the amount of detail or number of responses required.
- Use resources such as graphs and diagrams carefully in order to make use of the information they include.
- Plan your time carefully as there was some evidence that candidates were rushing to complete their final answer or leaving it incomplete.

Questions 1, 3, 5 and 7 were most popular in each section. It is inevitable that given choice some topics in the specification will be more appealing to candidates than others. Nearly all candidates answered their four questions in numerical order and progressed through the four sections from A to D. There was little evidence of any attempt to evaluate questions before starting to answer them or to make rough plans for answers. Candidates are again advised to read through the whole paper before they begin their answers in order to pick out their best-known topics to start with. Also they should plan their answer in order to check relevance to the question before it is too late. Generally the answers to questions 5 and 6 testing unit 3 on economic activities were the lowest scoring, a pattern that has emerged in recent years.

Very few candidates infringed the rubric requirement but time management may have been an issue for some candidates who appeared rushed in writing their fourth answer. Some candidates also lost marks by mis-reading or misinterpreting sections and consequently writing irrelevant answers.

Comments on Individual Questions

1 **(a)** **(i)** Good use was made of Fig 1a in answering this question. Most candidates started off well by scoring two marks. The most common answers referred to direction –i.e. south west, and the active zone identified from the key.

(ii) Candidates generally showed a good understanding of volcano formation. The sequence of processes at a constructive boundary was usually well explained.

(b) In contrast to section (a) this question proved to be far more challenging. Weaker candidates focussed on the positive factor of fertile soil attracting farmers and thus providing employment. Better answers developed this idea into a suggestion that the area around Mount Nyiragongo would be more densely populated. More able candidates related the statistics to ideas about prediction and preparation, and a greater awareness of the natural hazard which would mean less people were forced out of their homes, or a lower population density around Mount Etna. Surprisingly few candidates considered the relevance of the magnitude or type of eruption occurring. Some weaker candidates became confused with earthquake prediction and precautions. Also some candidates failed to gain credit because they focussed on the causes of the eruption.

(c) Case studies had been well learned and there were many excellent examples of the use of detailed case study material. Popular case studies included Mount St Helens, Pinatubo and Montserrat and better candidates went into detail about the effects on people and the local environment. As in previous years weaker answers could have referred to volcanoes anywhere. It is important that candidates realise that the naming of a volcano is not sufficient to gain access to level 3. To score high marks the candidate must include specific detail about the named volcano.

2 **(a)** **(i)** Some candidates had problems identifying the processes. The most common error was to juxtapose the two processes.

(ii) Most candidates identified that groundwater flow would be greater in the woodland covered basin but they failed to support this statement with percentage data from Fig 2b. Candidates did not appear to understand the significance of the flow lines being of different widths. Many candidates wasted time by giving reasons for the difference. This was not asked for in the question.

(iii) This was the challenging section of the question. Weaker candidates did not give valid **reasons** but suggested confused ideas such as 'plants take up the water'. Most candidates focussed on the processes of interception and absorption, although not usually by name. Better answers also included reference to farming practices and their effects on the soil.

(b) This question was answered much better than the previous one. Candidates seemed to be more familiar with drainage in an urban area than a natural wooded basin. Generally candidates did obey the instruction to relate description and explanation.

(c) Again case studies had been well learned. The Rivers Lyn, Rhine and Mississippi were again the most popular choices and these gave candidates the opportunity to reach level 2 with ease as specific causes linked to particular floods were quoted in well-developed statements. The flooding of the River Valency at Boscastle has now joined the list of widely studied case studies. Candidates also did not concentrate their answers on climatic causes but showed breadth of knowledge by including the impacts of urbanisation and the characteristics of the catchment area. Many answers were place specific and so reached level 3. Weaker candidates made the mistake of concentrating on effects rather than causes of flooding.

3 **(a)** **(i)** This simple map interpretation question was usually answered correctly.

(ii) Most candidates were familiar with the concept of 'to what extent' and scored well by **referring** to both LEDCs and MEDCs. Weaker candidates were unable to make the comparison and only referred to LEDCs. Relatively few candidates made use of figures to substantiate their conclusion.

(iii) This question was generally well answered. Many reasons were suggested for the continued poor quality of life. Common ideas included lack of education, language difficulties, low paid jobs, discrimination and exploitation of illegal immigrants.

(b) This question discriminated well between candidates. Benefits were well explained in terms of less pressure on resources, but the problems were often confined to the loss of workers. Weaker candidates commonly only wrote about one question focus, either benefits or problems.

(c) The case study was generally not answered as well as the case study in questions 1 and 2. Place specific statements were rare. The answers of weaker candidates consisted of simple level 1 statements about 'better education' and 'more jobs' etc. These candidates tended to give a list of undeveloped 'push' and 'pull' factors. Candidates need to understand how a statement must be developed to score level 2, as shown in the following example of a developed idea: 'People move to get a better education for their children so that in the future they will be able to get a well paid job and escape poverty'. Again candidates need to be told that the name of a city is not sufficient to gain credit at level 3. They need to be taught about the attractions of a specific city. Candidates who referred to 'push' factors frequently scored better. The push factors were often developed in terms of farming problems which forced the family to migrate to the city. Two common, but unacceptable errors were answers on international migration and the consequences of rural to urban migration in terms of shanty towns.

4 **(a)** **(i)** Most candidates correctly interpreted the graph and quoted accurate figures from the graph.

(ii) Unfortunately many candidates showed a lack of understanding of the diagram. Often **they** did not identify a feature of the hierarchy such as ' All settlements, except hamlets, contain at least one service'. The most common response that gained credit was the observation that more services are found in larger settlements.

(b) This question was generally well answered, although it did differentiate well. The idea that most referred to was that there would be more people therefore more customers in a city and therefore profits would be greater. More sophisticated answers correctly used terms such as threshold, sphere of influence and identified the shops as selling specialist goods. Some ill-informed candidates drew conclusions such as ' people in villages are not as well educated and so cannot write' and 'people in villages are too poor to buy books'.

(c) This question also proved to be difficult for many candidates. The question was commonly misinterpreted as asking why people liked to shop in out of town centres. There was insufficient reference to the hierarchy shown in Fig 4b, which was referred to in the question. Where candidates did respond correctly they usually referred to closure of shops in the C.B.D. and their relocation to shopping centres established in rural areas.

(d) The case study produced a varied level of response. Some candidates showed good knowledge of counter-urbanisation in general, but there were too few place specific details. Candidates need to know details of a specific rural area which has been affected by new people moving in. However, examiners did not accept the following 'rural' areas - Dudley, Basildon and Barnsley. Generally consequences proved a more successful focus than causes. In many answers causes were vaguely referred to in terms of noise or unspecified pollution. Where candidates included specific consequences such as the impact of new house building on the local area, they were usually writing level 2 answers. Similarly level 2 responses were common in describing the conflicts that arise between villagers and 'incomers'. A few candidates yet again made the mistake of focussing on rural to urban migration.

5 **(a)** **(i)** Most candidates correctly identified Morocco from the scatter graph.

(ii) In general candidates did recognise the different correlations shown in the scatter graphs. Although in many cases examiners had to search for the difference as it was expressed in different paragraphs as the candidates considered one graph and then the other. This approach led to some repetition of ideas about why the relationships between the two indicators and GDP varied. The most popular reasons suggested were variations in the level of healthcare and living conditions.

(b) This question proved to be quite difficult for many candidates. Although most answers were related to diet, weaker candidates tended to repeat the question by suggesting that when people have a good diet they have a good quality of life and when they have a poor diet they have a poor quality of life. They failed to explain why this relationship exists. When candidates did explain the link it was mainly in relation to health of the individual and capability to buy or obtain food. Relatively few candidates made the link between level of nutrition and infant mortality, obesity or ability to work.

(c) **(i)** Where candidates had learned their case study it resulted in many excellent answers on South Korea, Taiwan and China in particular. The answers included much specific information about companies and their locations and special circumstances for industrial growth. Whilst most candidates suggested cheap labour sources as a reason, more able candidates also made reference to government intervention and protection measures. Weaker candidates sometimes confused industrial growth with population growth in China, and suggested that industrial growth was happening because people needed jobs as the population had grown so much.

(ii) The immediate focus that was suggested by most candidates was that people had jobs and so money to spend on food etc. The focus tended to be on positive consequences rather than negative ones. Weaker candidates failed to link consequences with quality of life, for example, 'There would be more traffic as a consequence of industrial growth'. A better answer linked this consequence to how it affects quality of life, such as air pollution or road congestion in cities. Good answers referred in detail to positive and negative multiplier effects and possible exploitation of workers.

6 **(a)** **(i)** Most candidates identified one difference between the buildings, usually referring to age.

(ii) Generally candidates understood the key word 'location' and most made good use of Fig 6a to identify differences. One mistake made by weaker candidates was that they did not identify the location by letter; rather they wrote 'one factory is in the built up area'.

(b) **(i)** Candidates were generally able to explain the terms inputs and outputs, often relating the meanings to the manufacturing process or sale of the products. Weaker candidates made the mistake of giving examples of inputs and outputs, which the question did not ask them to do.

(ii) Often candidates did not make enough use of Fig 6b but relied only on the photographs. There was information in the diagram which could trigger responses and many candidates failed to refer to this information. Many candidates recognised that bulky items would be difficult and costly to transport, but only more able candidates used the information about the factory in location D in order to make conclusions such as pipelines would make the movement of energy sources easier, or that components would come from a variety of sources in different locations.

(iii) Many candidates did not appear to be familiar with the concept of industrial inertia, although it is a key location factor. Candidates who did understand the focus of the question commonly gave tradition of manufacturing and prohibitive costs of re-location as reasons for remaining in an area.

(c) Answers to this case study were generally weaker than the other case study sections. The candidates who chose a distribution industry did not know details of its location and there were many factual errors. For example, the Argos distribution warehouse was frequently located alongside the M1 in a wide variety of counties and near Salisbury, Stamford, Saffron Waldon and even Stirling. Case studies frequently lacked development of ideas, for example why motorway links are important. The best answers about Argos did refer to a variety of factors as well as motorway links, including workforce and land availability. One other company that was used by a significant number of centres was Amazon e-commerce. Unfortunately too many candidates chose a manufacturing industry, most commonly car assembly. This suggests that they did not know what a distribution industry is.

7 **(a)** **(i)** Most candidates correctly identified the state from Fig 7a.

(ii) Similarly most candidates correctly calculated the largest percentage reduction.

(iii) There were many excellent answers that gave a range of reasons for varied levels of deforestation. These usually included different reasons for clearance such as farming or settlement construction, variation in level of access, types of trees found in different states and different conservation laws.

(b) Most candidates appreciated that rainforest soils are infertile once the trees have been removed, but many failed to refer to nutrient cycling to explain why. Soil erosion was another common reason for farming failure. Only more able candidates considered human reasons such as poor farming knowledge and techniques.

(c) It is very pleasing to report that candidates are at last more aware of what is involved in sustainable development and there were many well developed ideas on agro-forestry, re-afforestation, ecotourism and selective logging.

(d) Similarly there were many excellent answers which showed a clear understanding of global warming and its likely consequences. Many answers contained detailed information about a variety of specific locations, making reference to both people and the natural environment. Candidates wrote about the impact of flooding in lowland areas, the consequences for tourism in uplands, the impact of climate change on farming, extreme weather occurrences and widespread drought. Some candidates wasted time by explaining the causes of global warming which was not asked for in the question. Weaker candidates made the mistake of focussing on the effects of deforestation and, occasionally, digressed into acid rain and ozone depletion. Occasionally answers contained extreme statements which amused examiners, such as the following,. 'Global warming will eventually kill everything as it will make the earth too hot for anything to survive' and simply 'Global warming makes people hot'.

8 **(a)** Many candidates showed detailed knowledge of the causes of acid rain. Some failed to explain what it is and did not refer to the ph scale.

(i) Most candidates made the contrast between the two countries, even if in some cases examiners had to find the information in two paragraphs where candidates wrote first about Norway and then about Italy. Some candidates did not use accurate percentage figures from Fig 8 to support their answer.

(ii) The most common reason given for the difference in the acid rain figures was the direction of the prevailing wind. The best answers also suggested that different levels of acid rain emission would affect the figures.

(b) A range of ideas was suggested but, generally, this answer was not as comprehensive as the effects of global warming in the previous question. Many candidates were unable to include specific detail in their answers. Consequently there were lot of vague answers about fish dying and trees being destroyed, and people becoming unwell. More able candidates wrote in detail about effects in The Black Forest of Germany and Swedish lakes. Similarly there were specific references to named buildings and statues being weathered and destroyed. Some weaker candidates wrongly focused on eutrophication as a result of acid rain.

(c) Solutions were generally known in more detail. Whilst weaker candidates wrote 'Cut out the use of cars', better answers went on to suggest alternative methods of transport. Similarly 'Stop burning fossil fuels' was a typical weak response which could be developed into 'and use alternative sources of energy such as wind power'. Overall many different attempts were described as candidates become increasingly aware of environmental issues.

1986/03 – Foundation Tier

It was felt that the examination was wholly appropriate to foundation level. Most candidates used their time well and made an attempt at all questions, were conversant with many of the skills being tested, terms used and, to differing degrees, were able to show their understanding of the issues examined. Question 1 enabled weaker candidates to display their skills of using data effectively, particularly where the questions were highly structured. Whilst there was little to choose between the overall performance of candidates on the two questions, question 2 highlighted continuing difficulties faced by weaker candidates with some basic mapwork skills. These are highlighted in the comments which follow on individual questions.

As always there was a wide range of performance and much variation was seen in quality, both between and within centres. In many Centres the majority of candidates appeared to make a sustained effort, answering all sections, even if their ultimate achievement may not have been of the highest calibre. Only a few candidates made little effort, leaving most of their papers blank, though it was evident that some centres might benefit from building more mapwork skills into their schemes of work, constantly revisiting these in order to make candidates more confident in handling them. This is especially important with foundation candidates who also lose marks due to their lack of familiarity with terms used in questions such as `landscape` and `location`.

It is encouraging to observe how candidates from many centres are now trying to fully develop their answers in those questions which offer an opportunity for extended writing. There were a number of excellent responses to questions 1c and 2d, some of which were extended onto the extra lined paper on Page 7. Where extended writing is required levels of response marking is used and higher levels are achieved when answers are developed and ideas are linked together. In both of these questions the highest level could only be achieved by candidates referring to map evidence, there were some excellent examples where candidates did this, though sadly this was not always the case, despite the clear instruction in the question to do so.

Comments follow on individual questions.

1 (a) (i) Generally this was answered very well.

(ii) Many candidates achieved full marks for the correct identification of all three National Parks, although the third part was occasionally incorrect as candidates seemed to quote one with all land over, rather than under, 100 metres. Another common error was to refer to Liverpool and Norwich rather than Snowdonia and the Broads, and despite the clear requirement to name the National Parks, a few lost marks by giving numbers instead.

(iii) This differentiated well for a two mark question. Common correct responses included the fact that the terrain was hilly or mountainous, difficult to build on, scenically attractive or likely to contain interesting wildlife and habitats. Many candidates who were clearly not familiar with the simple idea of expressing height as `above sea level` focused entirely on the fact that these areas would not be subject to flooding and thus failed to make significant points.

(iv) Most candidates scored at least one mark for identifying that Dartmoor was in the South-West but there were relatively few responses which made use of the scale or compass directions in order to describe its position in relation to other features. The mark scheme allowed candidates credit for a vague 'near to ..' reference, (eg `near Plymouth` rather than the much more accurate `north of Plymouth`) though this type of comment was restricted to a maximum of one mark. Some answers were far too vague for any credit (eg `near a river) or they ignored the instruction to `describe the location` and referred to other features such as the height of the land, whilst others referred only to the OS map despite the requirement of the question to focus on Map A.

(b) **(i)** Those candidates who had worked through logically eliminating the obviously incorrect references tended to gain the mark, others just guessed without trying to relate the evidence from the photograph to the map.

(ii) This and the subsequent part were generally poorly answered. Some candidates did not even identify which road they were writing about, however those who did tended to score at least one mark by referring typically to dual/single carriageway or the fact that one road passed through the town and the other by-passed it. However a significant number failed to score anything at all by not making comparative statements, or making two separate non-comparative observations about totally different aspects of the roads, (eg `the B3260 goes through a town and the A30 is a dual carriageway`). These questions requiring candidates to pick out differences have been a common feature of both foundation papers for some years, however it remains a simple skill which many candidates do not perform well on.

(iii) Many candidates struggled with the key word 'route' and wrote about the types of road, repeating information from their previous answer. Again some of those who did respond correctly to `route` failed to make any comparison. The most common correct observation was about the rural/urban difference, although candidates could not score again for the same point made here if they had already been credited for it in (ii). Some identified the `more direct` nature of the A30 but few could give any other relevant comparisons of the routes.

(c) This differentiated well as the weaker candidates were able to get 1 or 2 marks within level 1 by listing activities or landscape features, while many could go beyond this and link the type of tourist with the feature or activity. The key to success on questions such as this is to respond to all aspects of the question, for example the bold reference to different types of tourists and the requirement to give grid references. By linking the landscape feature with an activity candidates entered level 2, and by adding a grid reference they could get into L3, (eg 'you can FISH in the LAKE at 5691). There were some excellent responses, however it was common to see no reference to the map at all, but only the photographs.

2   **(a)**   **(i)**   Generally this was well answered though a small number of candidates reversed their answers and put NE.

            (ii)   Success on this question varied from centre to centre, clearly those who had practised working out distances using the linear scale of a map were better able to cope with the task than those who had not. As there is no obvious centre to this unusually complex quarry shape, accuracy hinged on a candidate's ability to work from the 6 figure reference given, thus 2 marks were allocated to the task and plenty of tolerance built into the mark scheme. Whilst many candidates did score the full two marks some gave an answer around 2 which suggests they had used the miles units on the scale. They were credited if they had changed the km in the answer space to miles, however few did.

            (iii)   Again much depended on whether Centres had practised this skill with candidates. Overall the most common response was the correct one and the most common wrong response was 1.5 sq km, but all the possible responses were seen. Candidates should be aware that on both 1:25,000 or 1:50,000 maps the area of a grid square is 1 sq km, and the quarry in this example clearly does not fill a whole square which leaves only one possible correct option.

            (iv)   Generally this was well answered, possibly because a generous tolerance of anywhere between 201 and 219 metres was allowed, given that the 210m contour meets and leaves the A30 to either side of the cross-section line. Too many candidates gave 220 m which could have been eliminated by carefully counting down from the 280m contour a little further along the section. There were also a number of wild guesses, suggesting that there are candidates who have no idea whatsoever how to determine the height, either from an OS map or cross section.

      (b)   **(i)**   There were relatively few fully correct answers, one mark was often awarded for the quarry location but the National Park boundary was seldom correctly placed. Given the relative simplicity of such a task it has to be assumed that many candidates were unfamiliar with cross sections, indeed the labelling of features either under the ground or up in the sky confirmed that many candidates could not visualise how the a cross section represents reality.

            (ii)   There were clearly additional difficulties for candidates in that this cross-section was slightly smaller than actual size on the map, so those who had be taught to use a piece of paper or string to mark off the distance along the section to a particular feature may have misplaced the quarry slightly to the left. Nevertheless candidates who looked carefully at the shape of the section would have found it obvious that the quarry must be where there were significant depressions or notches in the land surface. Despite a very generous tolerance being given few candidates could position the National Park boundary accurately. Some placed it higher than, and to the right of, the quarry, others drew horizontal lines at the correct heights but labelled one extreme end of their lines. Others placed labels below the land surface with no arrow to indicate an understanding that the feature must be on the ground.

            (iii)   Many candidates scored this relatively easy mark but some failed to identify which of the West or East Okement Rivers it was or gave the wrong one and dropped the mark. Some referred to rivers shown on Map A such as the Mersey, and others to rivers which they have studied such as the Trent or Ouse, as if it was a Paper 1 case study question.

(c) **(i)** This was extremely well answered, few candidates failed to score any marks. Its value was in getting candidates to look at the photograph carefully before embarking on the questions which followed about the impacts of the quarry.

(ii) Most candidates scored a mark for the idea that the landscape was spoiled or made ugly and correct answers referring to the impact on the changed shape of the landscape were also quite common. Far too many candidates however went well beyond the landscape and referred either vaguely to `pollution` or to noise and smoke, which are neither evident from the photograph or relevant in terms of impacts on the landscape. Alternatively some referred to the impact on creatures which are not a landscape feature, though reference to the loss of vegetation and habitats were acceptable.

(d) As with question 1 (c) this question, requiring an extended written response, differentiated well. Most candidates could at least make a simplistic list of statements to reach level 1, including references to noise, dust, increased traffic and jobs, and those candidates who acted on the instruction to refer to map evidence could gain level 3, providing their answers were developed rather than effects being simply listed. For example the problem caused by noise could be linked to the source (eg the machines/lorries/blasting) or its effect (eg disturbing people trying to relax), and map evidence could be used to identify people living in nearby settlements such as Meldon, or people using tourist attractions such as Meldon Reservoir who might suffer. The availability of local resources was accepted as a benefit, though in reality most quarries would be unlikely to serve a local market, and there were some strange ideas about products which local people could buy directly from the quarry such as toothpaste! Where jobs were mentioned as a benefit the vast majority of candidates made no attempt to develop their answer (eg by referring to the type of job or the multiplier effect) and so, even if they had made a well developed point about a disadvantage of the quarry, they found it hard to gain the full 6 marks as a developed point relating to a benefit and problem were required for full marks.

1986/04 - Higher Tier

General comments

The overall level of performance of candidates was slightly below that of 2005. Over 80% of candidates were able to gain at least half marks. Generally candidates scored better on question one. It is pleasing to report that candidates appeared to have enough time to complete the paper and include extended answers where required. They need to be reminded to check through their answers, if they have time. This may eradicate some of the careless mistakes. One disappointing feature was the lack of familiarity with the cross section. There was some indication that candidates in some centres had not learned the skill of drawing or interpreting them. Some centres may need to give more time to practicing past questions in order to improve map and graph skills.

It is important for teachers to impress upon their candidates that this paper is not just a test of geographical skills. One third of the marks on the paper are allocated to the understanding of geographical issues. This year the topics of tourism in National Parks and raw material extraction tested this objective.

Examiners again expressed concerns about the failure by some candidates to understand key geographical terms such as location, distribution and relief. Also some candidates lost marks by failing to use map evidence when it was required.

Three pieces of advice that may help to raise the standard of candidate responses are:

- read each question carefully and note the specific instructions and command words
- read all questions in a section and plan ahead so that the correct focus is given in each answer
- use the mark allocation as a guide to the amount of time to spend on an answer

Comments on Individual Questions

1 **(a)** **(i)** Generally the first question was well answered with many candidates gaining maximum marks. Candidates obviously understood the key word, distribution, and were able to give plenty of correct information about it. The most common responses made reference to direction and upland areas or heights. Weaker candidates did not appreciate that Scotland was not part of the map.

(ii) Again the key word, location, was generally well understood with most candidates gaining marks through reference to south west England and Plymouth. A common error identified Cornwall rather than Devon. Also some candidates lost one mark through describing the location only in terms of 'near' to specific features. Weaker candidates referred to the site of Dartmoor and wrote about relief and height of the area, which was irrelevant. Only a minority gave measurements or directions from named features.

(b) **(i)** This was usually answered correctly, showing that most of the candidates had mastered this skill.

(ii) Most candidates gained one mark for making the contrast between the B3260 going 'through the built up area' and the A30(T) 'by passing the built up area'. However, many candidates failed to gain maximum marks by not giving a further contrast.

(b) **(iii)** There was a complete range of responses to this question which differentiated well between candidates. To gain maximum marks candidates needed to give two different pieces of map evidence. However, many candidates restricted their evidence to a statement such as 'The A30(T) was built away from Oakhampton to reduce traffic congestion in the town'. To gain maximum marks candidate should have also referred to evidence such as contour lines or heights, or the National Park boundary. Therefore the best answers were able to link the idea of flat land, the road following the contours, and quoting actual heights from the map. There were many irrelevant answers linking the road to the quarry or visitor attractions.

(c) As in the previous question there was a range of responses. Candidates who scored maximum marks wrote very good link sentences connecting the attraction to the body of people and to an appropriate grid reference. However, weaker candidates were unable to do this, simply listing attractions with the appropriate grid reference. Despite the emboldened key word 'types' a common failing was not to relate attractions to a specific group of people. Generally grid references were accurate, and used 6 figures. An error for some candidates is still to give the northing before the easting.

2 **(a)** **(i)** Most candidates correctly interpreted the direction.

(ii) Similarly many candidates gained both marks by using the scale to accurately measure the distance.

(iii) In contrast this task was poorly performed, even by candidates who had scored well in the two preceding questions. Even where candidates accurately worked out the proportion of a grid square occupied by the quarry many then failed to interpret the scale correctly. Therefore their answers were larger than the accepted range by multiples of ten or even one hundred.

(b) **(i)** There were very mixed responses as some candidates were unable to, or did not have the knowledge of how to complete a cross section. This was a fairly simple slope to be completed; yet a considerable proportion of candidates had the slope going in the wrong direction, becoming lower towards the west. Commonly candidates scored one mark for an approximation of the slope but with insufficient accuracy or detail. A significant proportion of candidates did not even attempt the question.

(ii) A considerable proportion of candidates were unable to correctly locate the National Park boundary on the section. There did not appear to be one common inaccuracy, rather a lack of understanding of what the question required. It should be pointed out to candidates that the instruction to 'mark with an arrow and label on the cross section' should be carried out. Too many candidates wrote 'boundary' or 'National Park' on the diagram but failed to score the mark because it was impossible to tell exactly where the label referred.

(iii) Most candidates gained marks for reference to the slope and height. Few referred to aspect of the slope. Weaker candidates did not understanding the term 'relief'.

(c) Most candidates gained a mark for the idea of 'eyesore' or visual pollution. Better answers also referred to the actual shape of the land, either in terms of excavation or spoil heaps. Weaker candidates made the mistakes of writing about the destruction of habitats and effects on people rather than on the landscape.

(d) The final question gave candidates the opportunity to produce some extended writing. The question allowed for good differentiation. The best candidates wrote coherently and were able to use the map to support a balanced argument. They wrote sentences which linked cause and effect supported by map evidence. Common misconceptions of weaker candidates were reflected in their answers that focused on vegetation or animals, and they missed the emphasis on people living in the area. From these candidates there was frequent and detailed reference to the assumed impact of the quarry on tourists in the area. Many answers provided a detailed insight into perceived problems but failed to balance this with reference to benefits. A significant number of answers did not mention benefits at all. Usually candidates highlighted jobs as a benefit but often failed to link such jobs to local people or to define the type of job in order to gain a higher level mark. In weaker answers there was little reference to map evidence, despite the wording of the question.

Report on Coursework 1986 Summer 2006

As expected this year the coursework component represented an island of continuity. It is a known process in which standards are not expected to change significantly from year to year. Excellent rounds of INSET continue to confirm the standards expected by OCR and for the majority of Centres the process is well established and quality work dominates. For those Centres who do not get it quite right - attend INSET and seek help and advice from the Senior Examiners and Moderators.

Moderators always start the process on the basis that a Centre will be a 'no change' and given the tolerance limit that moderators work to this is case for over 90% of the work seen. The tolerance is there to recognise the difficulties of judging the relative worth of the coursework between Centres, given the considerable freedom of choice that Centre staff enjoy – about topic area and between completely individual and totally teacher directed enquiries. The moderator's role is to check, as a detached outsider, that the coursework was conducted according to OCR guidelines, that administrative procedures were carried out effectively and that a Centre's overall levels of assessment for the worth of the work of their candidates is in line with standards used in other Centres for this Specification. The Moderator confirms that the majority of the totals given to the Centre candidates are reasonable, taking into account quality of work produced in relation to levels of teacher guidance, candidate initiative, amount of work undertaken and its complexity. In other words are the marks realistic?

In the majority of instances the recommended change was in a downward direction, principally due to over valuation of closely directed group based enquiries in the top and middle sections of the marks range. In a few Centres there was an upward adjustment most commonly the result of under evaluation of individual candidate enquiries, for which the worth of the initiative demonstrated by the candidate was not fully awarded. This was most noticeable in Centres which operated a policy of individual enquiries throughout the ability range, where their lower ability candidates were judged to have been harshly treated.

Again most moderators reported having seen some outstanding pieces of work reflecting excellent Centre guidance and some talented Geographers in the making. What is disappointing to report is that for a handful of Centres a downward adjustment has been made for the second and in some cases third year in succession. Despite detailed feedback in the previous years little notice had been taken and assessment was once again inappropriate. In some cases it seems as if Centres are 'testing the system'. For example often marks are reduced for lack of variety and complexity of data representation techniques (bars and pies in great number are the favourite) In the report back to the Centre this is highlighted, together with suggestions as to how to improve the situation (often very simply with the inclusion of flow lines, proportional circles, located bars, kites, isoline maps…) yet the following year pies and bars appear again with no other techniques included. With data representation it is quality and variety of technique that count not quantity. For example many candidates submit vast quantities of house price data and then do nothing with it. Why not consider looking at two areas and then drawing a dispersion diagram, working out the mean and median values for each area or zone, looking at quartiles, calculating the index of variability and for the more able looking at standard deviation? Very few Centres encourage the use of statistics but invariably when they do the work is well founded.

Reports on the Units

At least 85% (up 5% on 2005) of all Centres work is a pleasure to moderate. Administration is efficiently and accurately undertaken, requested samples dispatched quickly and background information supplied. However, of the remaining 15% there is still room for considerable improvement. The most common administrative errors were:

- Sending all the MS1 documentation to the Moderator; the top copy should go Cambridge, the middle copy to the Moderator and the bottom copy (yellow) is retained by the Centre. As the Moderator copy is a carbon it is helpful to make sure that the marks can actually be read.
- Entering zero or absent on the MS1; zero equates to work that has been submitted but is of no Geographical worth. Absent is where no work of any description has been submitted.
- Not meeting the deadlines. May 15th is the final date for the submission of coursework marks to OCR and the Moderator. In a small minority of cases there will be a genuine problem and Moderators will be sympathetic to this but increasingly it is the same small minority of Centres that simply fail to meet deadlines.
- Having reported a pleasing decline in arithmetical errors last year, this year they were very much on the increase. One moderator had to contact eight out of twenty five Centres to report errors. The most common problem being that the MS1 mark was different to that shown on the cover sheet of the individual piece of work. Please check transcripts carefully as it is often the candidate (and hence the Centre's results) that will suffer.
- Failure to send the CCS 160 – Centre Authentication Form.

In many cases Moderators and Centres have been working together for several years and it is always rewarding to see that advice given in the previous session has been taken and improvements to the submissions made as a result of Moderator comment back to the Centre. In many cases staff had been able to remedy the causes of earlier problems by amending the nature of the work and the guidance given to the candidates.

One area that has shown significant improvement over the last two or three years is in the writing up of the methodology. Most candidates now include clear details about the data collected – when it was collected, why it was collected and how it was collected. This inevitably gives them a greater understanding of what they aim to achieve and gives the fieldwork a greater sense of purpose. In only the minority of Centres is data collection insufficient both in quantity and variety.

One area that did give rise to a mark reduction was to over credit criterion three (analysis and conclusions). The main reason was that work was primarily descriptive. For level three marks description alone was not considered to be sufficient; at least some explanation, analysis and comment were expected.

Background to the nature of the coursework process is always welcome. The majority of Centres now do this as a matter of course but there are still departments who simply say 'no help given' even when it is clear every candidate has undertaken the same enquiry, used the same base maps and recording sheets and come up with the same conclusion. Help and guidance is all part and parcel of good coursework practice – do not be afraid to tell the moderator. It is particularly helpful if Centre Staff can indicate where individual initiative has been shown especially when marks go beyond 90/100 for teacher directed enquiries.

Yet again it is disappointing to see a further decline in the number of Centres undertaking individual enquiries. Those Centres who continue with the individual route should be proud of their achievements. The range of enquiries is impressive and very interesting and the majority of candidates obviously enjoy undertaking the work. The one time when individual work is not beneficial is when enquiries lack a clear focus and turn out like a typical lower school project. Individual enquiries based purely on secondary data should not be submitted as they do not fulfil the requirements of the specification.

As in previous years the topic areas were many and varied. Urban based investigations remained the most popular, notably CBD investigations, surveys of residential areas, shopping enquiries (often the least successful) and spheres of influence. Also popular were those studying the impacts of tourism and consequent management. Physical enquiries are gaining in popularity with rivers the top choice followed by coasts. The physical enquires tend to work well provided that a clear structure for data collection is in place and that analysis and conclusions go beyond the descriptive.

A small but worrying issue is starting to creep in, and this is the use of 'virtual fieldwork' this must not be used to substitute primary data collection. It can be used to support but not replace conventional fieldwork.

As stated earlier one area where many Centres could easily boost their candidate marks is via data representation. Often a very good range of data is collected but the candidate fails to do anything much with it. As in previous years pies and bars dominate. The prize this year goes to a candidate who managed to produce 120 pies and bars, of which 22 represented yes/no answers to a questionnaire. Spatial awareness is still lacking in many enquiries. Candidates should set the scene with two or three location maps at a variety of scales to give a sense of place. A well executed hand drawn location map is a refreshing attribute but unfortunately 'multimap' has much to answer for. Last year in this report it was suggested that candidates incorporated more geographical terminology into their work...heretical cites, lowerarachy, hierarachy and mediumarchy shops were all identified as were some different fieldwork techniques 'we moved the boulders to give the corks a free run' and 'we had to guess the level of the water in the river as we were in the middle of a dry spell'………

There is much to be proud of with regard to coursework. The majority of Centre staff work hard to encourage and get the best out of their candidates. The positives far outweigh the annual gripes but they still need to be addressed if all Centres are to strive for a continual improvement in the standard of work achieved.

Entry Level Certificate Geography A (3986)
June 2006 Assessment Series

Component Threshold Marks

Component	Max Mark	3	2	1	U
1 – Oral Test	20	14	8	3	0
2 – Coursework	50	34	23	9	0
3 – Written Test	50	32	22	12	0

Option/Overall

	Max Mark	3	2	1	U
Percentage in Grade	100	43.9	30.6	24.2	100
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	100	43.9	74.5	98.7	100

The total entry for the examination was 373.

**General Certificate of Secondary Education Short Course Geography A (1086)
June 2006 Assessment Series**

Component Threshold Marks

Component	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Paper 1	60	-	-	37	31	25	19	13
Paper 2	60	38	31	24	18	-	-	-
Coursework	100	79	67	55	43	32	21	10

Specification Options:

Foundation Tier

	Max Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	100	58	48	38	29	20
Percentage in Grade	-	12.4	20.0	21.7	18.3	16.8
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	-	12.4	32.4	54.1	72.4	89.2

The total entry for the examination was 215.

Higher Tier

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Overall Threshold Marks	100	74	64	54	44	33	27
Percentage in Grade	-	9.5	17.6	27.1	24	15.4	4.7
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	-	9.5	27.1	54.2	78.2	93.6	98.3

The total entry for the examination was 365.

Overall

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Percentage in Grade	6.3	11.6	17.8	20.1	16.9	10.5	6.3	5.7
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	6.3	17.9	35.7	55.8	72.7	83.2	89.5	95.2

The total entry for the examination was 580.

General Certificate of Secondary Education Geography A (1986)
June 2006 Assessment Series

Component Threshold Marks

Component	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Paper 1	80	-	-	52	44	36	28	20
Paper 2	80	53	44	36	25	-	-	-
Paper 3	40	-	-	26	22	18	15	12
Paper 4	40	27	23	19	14	-	-	-
Coursework	100	79	67	55	43	32	21	10

Specification Options:

Foundation Tier

	Max Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	200	120	101	82	64	46
Percentage in Grade	-	23.2	27.1	24.3	14.9	7.8
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	-	23.2	50.3	74.6	89.5	97.3

The total entry for the examination was 8193.

Higher Tier

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Overall Threshold Marks	200	157	137	116	96	70	57
Percentage in Grade	-	14.7	26.1	31.3	19.4	7.6	0.6
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	-	14.7	40.8	72.1	91.5	99.1	99.7

The total entry for the examination was 15275.

Overall

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Percentage in Grade	9.7	17.2	20.7	20.7	14.2	8.7	5.1	2.6
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	9.7	26.9	47.6	68.3	82.5	91.2	96.3	98.9

The total entry for the examination was 23473.