GCSE Examiners' Report

Geography A

GCSE

Summer 2026

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Introduction

Our Principal Examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each component.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.[1]

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and component level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)

[1] ***Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.***

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Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/
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Executive Summary

The examination papers in GCSE Eduqas A Geography were generally of a similar standard to the previous examination series. As is always the case, some questions were seen as more demanding in some topics and less demanding in others. The mean mark on Component 1 is up from 2025, and all papers performed to expectations and in line with Awarded grades.

The Component 1 paper performed better than in 2025, although weaknesses in some skills questions and certain topics were identified. Questions in this component on counter-urbanisation were not answered well this year and interestingly this was mirrored in the legacy WJEC Unit 1 paper, which shares the same content as this Component 1. Skills questions on interquartile range and dispersion graphs were also a weakness in this Component, and it is important to once again emphasise how important it is to cover all skills and techniques from Appendix A in the specification (page 30-31) during the teaching of all the course content.

There was evidence of several misconceptions in the Component 2 paper, highlighting areas of the specification that were not well understood by some candidates. In Theme 5, these included confusion between latitude and altitude, a lack of understanding of the definition of a biome, and difficulty explaining the link between habitat destruction and soil erosion. In Theme 6, misconceptions were evident in responses relating to the definition of water security, the relationship between growing consumerism and increased demand for water, and the impacts of over-abstraction of groundwater. These misconceptions should be addressed through careful revision and understanding of key geographical terminology, so they do not become wrongly embedded in students understanding. Also, as within previous papers, candidates would be advised to have further practice of AO3 evaluation questions, especially using evidence, considering alternative viewpoints and reaching supported judgements.

The Component 3 paper was well answered overall and students scored well on many of the AO4 skills questions for example. There are still weaknesses in the fieldwork questions, however, and as outlined in previous years, candidates must refer specifically to their own fieldwork when answering these questions. Linked specifically to this paper, misconceptions over qualitative and quantitative data and sampling techniques and data collection methods are still being seen and are areas for candidates to focus on in future.

After their successful introduction last Autumn, Eduqas will again be publishing a booklet of annotated exemplars for each of the Eduqas A GCSE Geography Components, showing a range of example questions with strong and weak points and where marks were gained and lost clearly highlighted on each one. This will complement the online exam feedback CPD session in October 2026 and are a much easier and more user-friendly way of finding and using good quality exam questions for classroom practice and revision than the previous Online Exam Review (OER) system that has now been discontinued. Centres are also referred to the Eduqas Geography A website (GCSE A Geography | Eduqas) where fieldwork topics and guidance documents are now available for all topics up to 2030, Geog Shot revision documents aimed at each AO can be found and past papers & mark schemes, blended learning resources, previous examiners reports and more are all available to download.

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EDUQAS A GCSE GEOGRAPHY

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COMPONENT 1: CHANGING PHYSICAL AND HUMAN LANDSCAPES

Overview of the Component

As in previous years it was encouraging to see that most questions were accessible to candidates across the whole ability range. There were, however, three questions which proved to be very challenging. These were 1di, 1dii and 1diii (see later comments). Nevertheless, the range of marks indicates that differentiation was achieved within individual questions and in both the Core and Optional parts of the paper. The time for completion was also appropriate, and evidence was seen of high quality scripts from several different centres.

This year Core Theme 1 assessed river processes and landforms, conflicting views over floodplain management, coastal processes and their relative importance in the formation of landforms along the UK coastline. Core Theme 2 assessed informal employment in LIC/NIC cities, issues related to counter-urbanisation, the urban-rural continuum and the costs and benefits of out of town shopping. Option Theme 3 had questions on the impacts of volcanic hazards and the effectiveness of strategies used to reduce the risks associated with tsunamis. Option Theme 4 focused on the concept of cost-benefit analysis and the effectiveness of strategies used to reduce the risks associated with sea level rise in Small Island States.

Within these themes there were also questions which assessed numerical/statistical skills and mapping/graphical interpretation. Once again, the last question in Theme 2 was used to assess spelling, punctuation and the accurate use of grammar and specialist terms (SPaG). Most of the candidates achieved at least the Intermediate Band with a mean mark of 2.6. In addition, parity was achieved in the Options questions with similar mean marks for both questions.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Core Theme 1: Landscapes and Physical Processes

Q.1 (a) (i) Most candidates were able to name at least one of the two transport processes correctly.

(ii) The process of suspension was described fully by many of the candidates. However, not all candidates referred to the fact that the particles carried by the water were small or light.

(b) (i) Most candidates correctly identified the river landforms as meanders.

(ii) In this OS Map skills question many candidates were able to score at least 1 mark by recognising either that the river flows in-between the two villages or noting that the built-up area results in impermeable surfaces. The better answers referred to the above and to the flat, low-lying land and gained full marks.

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(c) (i) As in question 1ai, most candidates were able to name at least one of the two terms required.

(ii) Some excellent answers were seen in this 6 mark question reflecting thorough and elaborated understanding of the reasons why there are different points of view about building on floodplains in the UK. Arguments for included reference to cheaper land and the current housing crisis in the UK whist arguments against focused on environmental issues and the risk of flooding. However, there were some answers that were unbalanced and certain candidates were under the impression that future residents of new housing developments would use the land to raise livestock and grow crops!

(d) (i) This was the first question that required the use of a statistical/mathematical skill. Unfortunately, the overall understanding of how to work out the inter-quartile range was very weak. Although many candidates understood that they had to put the data in rank order, the next stage of identifying the upper and lower quartiles was missing from many of the answers and therefore the final answer was wrong more often than not.

(ii) Most candidates were unaware that the interquartile range has the advantage of not being influenced by anomalies/outliers/extreme values.

(iii) As a result of parts 1di and 1dii, this question was also very poorly answered and only a minority of candidates were aware that the most suitable type of graph to show the data provided was a dispersion graph.

(iv) This part was well answered with most candidates knowing the name of a coastal erosion process. The most frequent correct answer was hydraulic action.

(v) This question was fairly well answered overall. Many candidates understood that the key reason for high rates of coastal erosion along the UK coastline is the geology or rock type. It was also very encouraging to note that a good number of candidates understood that a long fetch on west/southwest coasts results in high energy waves and therefore more erosion.

(e) This was the first of the 8 mark AO3 questions which required candidates to develop lines of argument about the relative importance of erosion in the development of coastal landforms. Many of the candidates wrote good answers which reflected thorough application of wider geographical understanding. The best answers not only discussed the role of erosional processes but also reflected on the importance of other processes such as deposition and weathering and were aware that geological factors are also significant. Unfortunately, some candidates referenced human activity which was irrelevant to this question.

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Core Theme 2: Rural-Urban Links

Q.2 (a) (i) Many candidates gained full marks in this question by correctly identifying that Bamako is in the south-west part of Mali and on the Niger river.

(ii) This question was also quite well answered with most candidates gaining 1 mark as there were many possible correct responses.

(iii) Most candidates were able to give at least one reason why informal employment creates problems in LIC/NIC cities. The better answers referred to the fact that less taxes were generated so less money was spent on services and infrastructure or focused on child labour issues and the fact that these jobs are poorly regulated.

(b) (i) Transport issues that result from counter-urbanisation were less well understood. However, many candidates did focus on the problems associated with congestion/traffic jams, which can then cause air or noise pollution, and in some cases were able to score up to 3 marks.

(ii) A fair number of candidates were aware that counter-urbanisation usually has positive effects only on rural areas which are relatively close to towns or cities. The very good answers therefore concentrated on population growth in such villages, which means that more housing will be built and local services such as primary schools and shops are more likely to flourish. Overall, many candidates found this question challenging.

(iii) Many candidates were able to attain at least one mark for this question. Answers such as lack of work or poor accessibility needed to be developed fully for a further mark.

(c) (i) Overall, this was a straightforward OS Map skills question. Many candidates identified the progression from a densely built urban area to a more open rural space with different land uses including farms and leisure activities such as golf.

(ii) Having described the changes in land use in the previous question it was pleasing to find that many candidates knew that this progression was known as the urban-rural continuum.

(iii) It was disappointing that a fairly large number of candidates were unable to give the correct direction from Barwick in Elmet to Scholes as they did not follow the route along the long distance path. A common error was to give the direction as west rather than SW or WSW.

(iv) Many candidates calculated the percentage increase in population correctly and clearly showed their working in the box provided.

(v) It was pleasing to see that many candidates were able to define the term greenfield site correctly.

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(d) In this second AO3 8 mark question candidates were given the opportunity to analyse the OS map and the information in the Resource Box to focus on the possible advantages and disadvantages of an out of town retail development. Most candidates responded well to the task and presented logical reasoning within their answers. The best answers (band 3 and 4) also made use of their wider geographical understanding referring to out of town shopping centres in their own local area.

Option Theme 3: Tectonic Landscapes and Hazards

Q.3 (a) (i) Many candidates gained at least 1 mark by stating that the most frequent eruptions are VEI2. Unfortunately, some candidates described the trend on the graph rather than drawing conclusions from it. One example of a conclusion is that Mt Etna is a very active volcano but not highly explosive.

(ii) It was pleasing to see that most candidates could access at least a Band 1 mark on this question. The better answers referred to several different hazards associated with ash clouds such as their effects on infrastructure, flight disruption and human inhalation of volcanic ash. However, a minority of candidates did confuse ash clouds with other hazards such as lahars or pyroclastic flows.

(b) Responses to this question could have focused on either negative or positive economic impacts. This was well answered with many candidates gaining full marks.

(c) In this final question candidates had to consider the advantages and disadvantages of different strategies associated with tsunamis. Most candidates discussed the merits of available monitoring equipment and the potential evacuation warnings given via radio, text messages or sirens. The better answers were balanced and emphasised that tsunami waves can travel quickly and overtop sea defences easily causing massive damage even in HICs. They also used specific examples such as the Japan tsunami of 2011. Unfortunately, some candidates wrongly answered the question in the context of LICs.

Option Theme 4: Coastal Hazards and their Management

Q.4 (a) (i) Many candidates gained at least 1 mark by stating that the year 2014 was an anomaly with lots of closures. Unfortunately, some candidates described the trend on the graph rather than drawing conclusions from it. One example of a conclusion is that as closures are increasing overall it is evidence of rising sea levels.

(ii) It was pleasing to see that most candidates could gain at least a Band 1 mark on this question. The better answers referred to specific factors such as economic value or tourist infrastructure to explain why some coastlines are protected whilst others are not using specific/named locations.

(b) Responses to this question had to focus on the relative wealth of a coastal area. This will affect the number and quality of sea defences for example. This was well answered with many candidates gaining full marks.

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(c) In this final question candidates had to consider the advantages and disadvantages of different strategies that are used to reduce the risk associated with sea level rise in Small Island States. Most candidates tried to discuss the pros and cons of hard engineering or alternative strategies such as planting mangroves. The better answers emphasised that these island nations are facing a losing battle against rising sea levels and that expensive projects such as floating islands might never be started let alone completed.

Summary Points:

- All mathematical, graphical and statistical skills from the Appendix in the specification must be covered during the teaching of the specification content. The weaknesses in these skills identified in this paper link to interquartile range and dispersion graphs, which must be covered but were not well understood by candidates.
- Counter-urbanisation and it's impacts on rural villages continues to be a topic that candidates find challenging, indeed this was noticed in the Wales equivalent Unit 1 paper this summer as well.
- Analysis and use of resources in the high tariff questions is continuing to improve, and many candidates make full use of the resources to score high marks in these questions. There are still significant numbers of candidates who lose out by not reading the question in full and answering about LICs when a HIC example is required, or about human activity when physical processes are required in the question. Practice at deconstructing the questions and ensuring the correct examples are chosen from the candidates' own knowledge is vital.
- Continued practice on questions involving OS maps and the skills associated with them is always advised; in this paper a relatively simple question involving direction was not answered well, and the question asking for map evidence to illustrate why a location is prone to flooding saw many candidates give general answers that did not specifically refer to map evidence e.g. mentioning low lying land without giving spot heights or contour patterns from the map.

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COMPONENT 2: ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Overview of the Component

All four assessment objectives were assessed in this component. Theme 5 covered content on low- and high-pressure systems, tropical rainforests and their comparison with savanna grasslands, and issues associated with the impacts of drought. Graphical skills and the ability to describe location using a map were also assessed within this theme. Theme 6 began with issues relating to water resources before shifting focus to multinational corporations (MNCs) and concluded with a question requiring candidates to evaluate different approaches to development, which also assessed spelling, punctuation and grammar. Graphical, numerical and OS map skills were additionally assessed in Question 2.

The optional questions in Themes 7 and 8 both required candidates to complete a graph. Theme 7 focused on the reasons for declining death rates in South Asia, as well as international refugee movements and the associated challenges. Theme 8 assessed understanding of e-waste, ecotourism, and the challenges involved in addressing tourism-related issues in coral reef ecosystems.

There was evidence of several misconceptions, highlighting areas of the specification that were not well understood by some candidates. In Theme 5, these included confusion between latitude and altitude, a lack of understanding of the definition of a biome, and difficulty explaining the link between habitat destruction and soil erosion. In Theme 6, misconceptions were evident in responses relating to the definition of water security, the relationship between growing consumerism and increased demand for water, and the impacts of over-abstraction of groundwater.

Where candidates demonstrated secure knowledge and understanding, AO1 questions were generally answered well. However, a significant number of responses revealed incorrect or imprecise knowledge, emphasising the importance of candidates being familiar with the terminology used within the specification and the associated definitions.

AO2 questions require explanation, and therefore the development of ideas is essential for accessing the highest marks. There was evidence that some candidates were using structured approaches to tackle the longer six-mark AO2 questions, which can be effective in ensuring both breadth and depth in responses. However, the main factor limiting performance on questions such as 2aiv and 1aiii was a lack of understanding of the topic content itself.

The AO3 questions produced many encouraging responses. Some candidates used clear structures to ensure that their answers remained focused on the question, often by explicitly linking points back to the issue being considered. Responses that moved beyond simply copying information from the resources tended to achieve higher marks. Stronger answers made effective use of wider geographical knowledge, understanding and alternative examples, particularly in Themes 5 and 6. Candidates should be encouraged, however, to avoid providing descriptive accounts of case studies without using them to support evaluation or decision-making.

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Overall, AO4 questions were answered well. However, candidates must read these questions carefully and pay close attention to command words. For example, in Question 1biii, candidates were required to describe differences rather than simply describe the graph, while in Question 2ai they were required to describe change over time.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Theme 5: Weather, climate and ecosystems

Q.1 (a) (i) Candidates were required to select the correct definition of climate. This was answered successfully by most candidates, indicating a secure understanding of this key term.

(ii) This AO1 question assessed knowledge of the weather conditions associated with low-pressure systems in the UK. The most common correct responses included cloud, rain and wind, with many candidates identifying enough features to gain full marks. There was, however, some occasional confusion between the characteristics of low- and high-pressure systems.

(iii) Candidates were required to identify a reason why high-pressure systems in the UK bring dry conditions. The strongest AO2 responses developed the idea that descending (subsiding) air suppresses cloud formation, reducing the likelihood of rainfall and resulting in dry weather conditions.

(iv) This AO2 question required candidates to demonstrate an understanding of how latitude and ocean currents influence variations in temperature across the UK. Many candidates confused latitude with altitude; the role of ocean currents was also an area of the specification that appeared to be poorly understood. These misconceptions significantly limited the marks achieved by many candidates. Where understanding was secure, however, responses were often detailed and well-developed, resulting in high marks.

(b) (i) Candidates were required to complete a paragraph by selecting the correct characteristics of tropical rainforests. This AO1 question proved accessible to most candidates, with many demonstrating a sound knowledge of rainforest characteristics.

(ii) This AO4 question required candidates to complete a graph. It was clear that several candidates had not read the question, as many left it unanswered. Accuracy was particularly important here. Although clear guidance was provided on the axes to support completion of the graph, several candidates failed to plot the bar accurately or shade it correctly.

(iii) Candidates were asked to identify three climatic differences between Bulawayo and Manaus in this AO4 question. Those who read the question carefully generally performed well, providing clear comparative statements between the two locations. However, candidates who simply described features of the individual climate graphs were unable to gain credit, as the question specifically required comparison.

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(iv) This AO1 question required candidates to define a biome. To gain credit, responses needed to recognise that a biome is a large-scale ecosystem or area with distinctive vegetation, wildlife and climate. Performance on this question highlighted the importance of candidates being familiar with specification terminology and precise geographical definitions.

(v) Candidates were required to demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between habitat loss and soil erosion in this AO2 question. Some responses were very effective, explaining how deforestation removes vegetation cover, leaving soil unprotected and therefore more susceptible to erosion by wind and rainfall. However, many candidates focused on nutrient cycling, which was not relevant to the question. As with other AO2 questions, the highest marks were awarded to responses that developed their ideas rather than simply identifying them.

(c) (i) This AO4 question required candidates to describe the location of Bulawayo. Most candidates were able to do this successfully. However, candidates should be encouraged to demonstrate a wider range of map skills, as many relied solely on compass direction. When describing location using direction or distance, candidates must refer to specific places or points on a map. References to borders, large features such as Lake Kariba, or entire provinces were not credited in this instance.

(ii) The final AO3 question required candidates to assess whether Zimbabwe can respond effectively to drought. There were many focused and well-developed responses. However, some candidates limited their marks by relying heavily on information copied from the resources or by making only simple comments on resource material without further development. The strongest responses were balanced, considered both sides of the argument, and explored a small number of key ideas in depth. These responses used detailed chains of reasoning and maintained a clear focus on the issue throughout, enabling candidates to produce a well-supported judgement that directly addressed the question.

Theme 6: Development and Resource Issues

Q.2 (a) (i) Question 2 began with an AO4 question requiring candidates to describe the change in freshwater use. Candidates who read and interpreted the question carefully generally performed well, with some using data effectively to support their descriptions. Lower-scoring responses tended to describe the data rather than identify and explain the changes over time.

(ii) This AO1 question was another example where precise knowledge of terminology was required. Responses that defined supply rather than security did not achieve any marks. To gain credit, candidates needed to refer to concepts such as reliability, sustainability, safety or cleanliness of supply.

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(iii) This AO2 six-mark question required candidates to explain why the growth of consumerism is causing an increased demand for water. Many candidates had not fully grasped the concept of consumerism and were therefore unable to access the marks available. However, there were many high-quality responses that explained links between activities such as the manufacture of fast fashion, increased food production requiring greater irrigation, and the growing use of AI technologies, all of which increase demand for water. As with all questions of this nature, higher-scoring responses developed their ideas into detailed chains of reasoning with a clear link back to the question.

(iv) This AO1 question assessed knowledge of the impacts of groundwater over abstraction. Candidates with secure subject knowledge achieved high marks. However, many candidates confused groundwater with water sources more generally, resulting in responses that did not gain credit. The most common misconception was to confuse groundwater with water stored in the soil.

(v) This AO1 question was answered well by most candidates, who correctly identified ways of managing water supply. Credit was awarded to responses across a range of scales, from household-level measures such as rationing to larger-scale water transfer schemes.

(b) (i) This AO4 question proved highly accessible, with most candidates responding successfully.

(ii) This AO2 question required candidates to explain why GNI has limitations as a development indicator. Most candidates produced responses worthy of some credit by recognising that GNI only considers economic factors. However, many responses did not achieve full marks because they lacked explanation of why this is a limitation. Stronger responses referred to measures of health and education or explained that GNI does not show how wealth is distributed or invested to support development.

(iii) A further AO2 question required candidates to explain one reason why MNCs locate in NICs. This question proved accessible to most candidates, who demonstrated understanding of factors such as lower labour costs. The main discriminator was the quality of development, with the strongest responses linking these factors clearly to increased profits for the MNC.

(iv) The focus shifted to HICs in part 2biv, beginning with an AO4 question assessing OS map skills. Most candidates found this question accessible, with many achieving full marks.

(v) This AO1 question assessed knowledge of the impacts that MNCs have in HICs. The question proved accessible to many candidates, with common responses referring to employment opportunities and contributions to the growth of local economies.

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(c) Part 2c shifted focus to responses to uneven development and assessed AO3 skills. Candidates were required to evaluate the best approach using resources relating to development aid, fair trade and emergency aid. The most successful responses discussed two or more of the approaches presented, weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of each. These responses typically included well-developed chains of reasoning, considering positive and, in some cases, negative multiplier effects. Candidates supported their arguments using evidence from the resources and, where appropriate, their own geographical knowledge.

Theme 7: Social Development

Q.3 (a) (i) This AO4 question required candidates to complete a bar on a population pyramid. The question proved very accessible, with the main issue arising where candidates omitted the question entirely.

(ii) This AO1 question required candidates to identify two factors that have influenced death rates in South Asia. Most candidates performed well. The most common issue was that responses did not refer to improvement. For example, answers such as *healthcare* without any qualification were not credited. Candidates needed to identify improvements, such as improved healthcare or improved sanitation, to gain marks.

(b) (i) This AO2 question required candidates to explain two reasons for international refugee movements. Responses referring to reasons for economic migration were not valid. The most successful answers referred to factors such as conflict and natural hazards, with development linked to refugees seeking safety from these threats.

(ii) This AO3 question required candidates to decide whether the challenges created by refugee movements are too difficult to resolve. The most successful responses provided a balanced discussion supported by detailed chains of reasoning before reaching a clear judgement. Some candidates used alternative examples to support their conclusions; however, care should be taken not to reproduce case study notes. Responses that simply demonstrated knowledge were less successful than those that applied evidence and evaluated the issue in the context of the question.

Theme 8: Environmental Challenges

Q.4 (a) (i) This AO4 question required candidates to complete a bar on a graph. The question proved very accessible, with the main issue arising where candidates omitted the question entirely.

(ii) This AO1 question required candidates to identify two impacts of e-waste on people. Most candidates responded successfully. The most common issue was that some responses did not focus specifically on impacts on people and instead provided general statements about e-waste, which did not gain credit.

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(b) (i) This AO2 question required candidates to explain two reasons why ecotourism can be sustainable. Responses referring to the impacts of tourism in general were not valid. The most successful answers referred to factors such as education, the small-scale nature of ecotourism, and the positive benefits it can bring to local communities.

(ii) This AO3 question required candidates to decide whether the challenges created by tourism in coral reef environments are too difficult to resolve. The most successful responses provided a balanced discussion, supported by detailed chains of reasoning, before reaching a clear judgement. Some candidates used alternative examples to support their conclusions; however, care should be taken not to reproduce case study notes. The strongest responses applied their knowledge to the specific context of coral reef tourism and evaluated the effectiveness of potential solutions.

Summary of key points:

- Develop secure knowledge of specification terminology to reduce common misconceptions.
- Focus on explanation rather than identification by encouraging students to develop points into clear chains of reasoning to access higher AO2 marks.
- Practise interpreting command words, particularly the difference between describe, compare, explain, assess and evaluate.
- Address recurring misconceptions directly, such as latitude versus altitude, refugee versus economic migration.
- Strengthen AO3 evaluation skills; candidates should use evidence, consider alternative viewpoints and reach supported judgements.
- Candidates should be given regular practice of graph completion, data interpretation, map skills and describing change over time.

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COMPONENT 3: APPLIED FIELDWORK ENQUIRY

Overview of the Component

In Part A candidates were asked to investigate the use of qualitative surveys in fieldwork. In Part B candidates were asked to investigate cycles and flows in fieldwork. In Part C candidates were asked to apply their understanding of UK geography to issues surrounding water stress in the UK.

The Assessment Objectives are as outlined in the specification.

The content assessed in Part A consisted of AO3 & AO4 fieldwork questions on urban land use changes and redevelopment in Kelham island, an area in central Sheffield. Part B assessed AO3 & AO4 fieldwork questions on visitor cycles and flows in the Lake District. Part C assessed all assessment objectives with questions focused on water supply and demand in the UK.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Part A: Investigating the use of qualitative surveys in fieldwork

Q.1 (a) The first question asked candidates to describe the location of an area in the centre of Sheffield using an OS map extract. It was answered well in the main although candidates should be encouraged to use a variety of methods (e.g. grid reference, distance and/or direction from another location) when describing location if more than 1 mark is on offer.

(b) (i) Candidates were asked to compare two street maps and identify two changes. Most gave accurate although relatively generic changes. When given two sources, candidates would do well to identify which source, in this case Map 1.2 or Map 1.3, they are referring to when making comparisons.

(ii) This question was answered well by most candidates with all three areas being correctly identified on the photograph.

(iii) Another question answered well by candidates with many achieving both marks by giving both a reason and why that might make a photo like the one in the paper unreliable as evidence. Most answers revolved around the idea of photographs being a ‘snapshot’ in time, focussing in on only a small area or being in some way biased.

(c) (i) Many candidates found this question quite challenging and often made the same point twice so only achieved 1 mark. Others failed to focus on the advantage of asking local people specifically.

(ii) This was attempted by most candidates, and most were able to give a disadvantage of this method of data presentation. Many focussed on lack of information relevant to the context of the data presented.

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(d) Although most candidates attempted this question many gave very descriptive answers which simply described what they did rather than evaluating their success thus limiting the marks awarded to them. Relatively few failed to refer to qualitative surveys and instead wrote about quantitative data. The best candidates were able to share their strength and weaknesses with specific reference to their own examples such as advantages of specific open and closed questions on their questionnaires or references to specific bias on environmental surveys. The mean mark of 1.9/6 shows that there is still a lot of improvement to be made in the dedicated fieldwork answers, and that specific reference to the candidates' own fieldwork is still vital to achieving high marks in these answers.

Part B: Investigating Cycles and Flows

Q.2 (a) Most candidates were able to tick the correct two statements in the table.

(b) (i) This question was answered very well with most candidates able to extract the correct data from the information sheet.

(ii) Successful candidates referred to the dates as the table contained fluctuating data. Unfortunately, some candidates failed to realise the table contained different data ranges and so gave generic statements that were not correct for the table overall.

(iii) Candidates were given a photograph and asked to suggest advantages and disadvantages of choosing this area to collect data. The highest scoring candidates referred to what they could see in the photograph and elaborated on the strengths and weaknesses of that area and how it would impact on data collection.

(c) (i) This question asked candidates to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of sampling techniques they used in their own fieldwork. Many candidates failed to refer to any sampling technique and instead gave a description of their data collection method. Other candidates are still confusing random sampling with opportunistic or giving generic strengths and weaknesses such as 'we could cover the whole area' or 'we might miss significant data' which, whilst creditworthy, need more specific reference to their own fieldwork for the higher marks. The mean mark of 0.9/4 reflects this and mirrors the comments for Q1d.

(ii) Many candidates were able to explain why flows needed to be measured more than once giving clear explanations and elaborating for the second mark. Answers tended to refer to flows changing by time or place or to increased number of measurements making data more reliable and therefore valid conclusions could be drawn.

Part C: The wider UK dimension

Q.3 (a) (i) Candidates were asked to identify choropleth shading, but few candidates successfully managed this. The facility factor for this question was 27.2 and the mean mark 0.3/1.

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(ii) The second part of Q3a asked candidates to use the same choropleth map and decide whether 3 statements were true or false. Most candidates were able to read data from the choropleth map successfully, with a facility factor of 92.7 and a mean mark of 2.8/3 this suggests many more candidates can successfully read a choropleth map without knowing exactly what to call it.

(b) Whilst many candidates were able to link a HIC's wealth to water consumption, some candidates referred to population size rather than wealth and levels of development.

(c) Candidates who answered this question well were able to link together chains of reasoning showing how high levels of water consumption leads to more abstraction, resulting in fewer stores and an inability to recover sufficiently. Thus, creating water stress where supply cannot meet demand.

(d) (i) Whilst most candidates completed this question some failed to correctly shade the segments using the key.

(ii) Successful candidates could refer to either continuous or discrete data depending on whether they were referring to what a line graph was or wasn't used for.

(iii) Alternative graphs that could be used for this data were identified accurately by most candidates.

(e) Relatively few candidates managed full marks on this question. Some focussed wholly on describing specific locations whilst others repeated ideas or used locational skills inaccurately.

(f) Whilst most candidates scored on this question, many were kept in the lower band due to basic or one-sided points, giving a mean mark of 3/6 overall. The most successful candidates gave conflicting views and elaborated by referring to the reasons behind this conflict using specific viewpoints.

(g) The same attempt rate of 91.7% and a very similar facility factor (just under 50%) than in 2025 suggest that candidates, although answering the final question, still find it challenging to do well on.

This year candidates were given two 'solutions' to water security in the UK; these were water conservation and water transfer schemes.

Many candidates were able to talk about both strategies, and some could give both strengths and weaknesses of them. The most successful candidates compared these strengths and weaknesses and were able to evaluate which was better with reference to sustainability. Many candidates who referred to sustainability talked about different aspects such as economic sustainability as well as environmental. This is a pleasing link to the 12 mark question in Eduqas B2, where similar trends have been noticed.

There were a pleasing number of candidates referring to and quoting information from both the paper and resource folder although some used the information to back up their evaluations better than others.

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Summary of Key Points

- Candidates should use a variety of map skills in skills questions worth more than one mark.
- Candidates should refer to specifically to resources e.g. dates, figures, when using them to come to conclusions or describing differences.
- For fieldwork questions, candidates should not simply describe ‘what we did’ but evaluate successes and/or weaknesses. Candidates should always refer to their specific experiences of their fieldwork day(s).
- Candidates should still aim to cover both sides of any argument given and consider reasons for viewpoints from all perspectives when asked to do so. Q3f asked for an explanation of conflicting views over reservoir building in the UK, which saw answers that were too often one-sided and not a balanced explanation of all views.
- Although 3g shows more candidates referring to the resource folder, this information needs to be used in a way that enriches the candidates answer rather than simply being lifted and stated in the text.

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