



GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GEOGRAPHY
AS**

SUMMER 2019

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EDUQAS GEOGRAPHY

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COMPONENT 1

General Comments

The paper was accessible across the ability range with little evidence of questions being omitted. 56% of candidates chose to answer the glacial option in Section A and although questions on both options performed similarly, candidate outcomes were slightly higher on the coastal option. All items on the paper differentiated well and provided the opportunity for candidates to display the ability to appropriately apply their knowledge and understanding of the specification content. There was evidence that centres are preparing the students well to answer essay questions and many are able to address the evaluative element of the essay questions on this paper. Some candidates continue to find the geographical skills requirement on the paper a challenge and many are unable to access the highest marks on questions that require map reading skills and/or use of numerical calculations. 97.6% of candidates were able to attempt question 7 and there was increased evidence of candidates being able to apply knowledge from across the specification to the demands of this challenging question.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1 (a)** Most candidates could identify the processes of longshore drift but they could not effectively explain how the process contributed to the formation of the landform selected. Few looked at depositional processes in any significant detail. Annotations on diagrams were sporadic and simplistic at times and candidates could benefit from further practice at drawing and annotating diagrams in preparation for an examination situation.
- (b)** Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the role that wind plays in the development of coastal sand dunes. Candidates who effectively examined the role of wind were able to consider the importance of wind in comparison to other factors. Although conclusions are not required where questions are weighted towards AO1, the use of a brief conclusion assists students to summarise their evaluative argument and access AO2 marks.
- Q.2 (a)** Most candidates were able to use the key to interpret Figure 2 successfully, and were able to describe the general pattern seen. Some candidates did not understand the latitude and longitude axis, but this was not essential in order to access the highest mark band for this question. A number of candidates did not address the command word and attempted to explain the patterns instead. Some candidates did not support their descriptions with sufficient use of the figure and should take note that the command word '**use**' requires candidates to make detailed use of the provided figure in their response.

- (b) Candidates generally understood the concept of isostatic or eustatic sea level change but it was disappointing that many could not apply this to the development of one coastal landform. There was limited use of a named example. Some candidates were able to make reference to specialised concepts in their answers and gained credit for doing so. Candidates who scored highly were able to show how the change in sea level affected the development of an identified landform and were able to bring temporal change and other factors into their discussion. Some candidates were able to conclude their arguments effectively, a requirement of questions such as these 15 mark short essays which are weighted towards AO2. These 15 mark questions are the highest tariff questions on the paper and better candidates are clearly prepared to write at length in response to the evaluative command word given.
- Q.3** (a) This question was not answered well in most cases with candidates lacking a specific understanding of the landform identified in the figure. Annotations were sporadic and limited in terms of quality.
- (b) Many candidates demonstrated a thorough understanding of differences between upland and lowland glacial landscapes. The more successful answers were looking to address the command word throughout and some made use of a detailed conclusion. The ability to discuss a named example of a glacial landscape assists candidates to develop their responses and adds clarity to their discussion. Some responses contained annotated diagrams which supported answers effectively.
- Q.4** (a) Question 4 showed the lowest facility factors on the paper. Most candidates were able to use the key to interpret Figure 4 successfully, and were able to describe the general pattern of ice retreat. Although not essential, it was disappointing that many candidates did not understand the latitude and longitude axis. Some candidates did not support their descriptions with sufficient use of the figure and should take note that the command word 'use' requires candidates to make detailed use of the figure in their response.
- (b) This question was not answered well with some candidates failing to understand the focus of the question concerning changes to glacial landscapes over different time scales. The question of change over different time scales is addressed multiple times within this specification and it is a concept with which candidates should be familiar. This question directly addressed the content of Focus 1.2.8 in the specification, the quality of responses seen suggesting that greater emphasis may be needed here from teachers as they plan for specification delivery in 2019-20. This question, weighted towards AO2 required a discussion and therefore a conclusion. Many failed to use a named glacial landscape and although not essential in order to achieve the top mark band, a context may have helped candidates to develop their responses.
- Q.5** (a) (i) Many candidates were able to infer possible impacts from Figure 5 and were able to use detail from the figure effectively in order to suggest possible impacts of the tectonic event on this specific region. However, all candidates should be reminded of the requirement given by the command word to use the resource to support their answer. Some candidates fail to enter the higher mark bands as their responses lack application to the context provided.

- (b) Most candidates were able to interpret the photographs in a basic way but many did not make use of the scale or north arrow provided to help develop their descriptions. Inability to use some of these basic geographical skills continues to hinder some candidates from achieving higher marks and centres could place increased focus on using past questions and papers to build student confidence around the use of scale, compass points and other general map skills.
- (c) (i) Many candidates failed to either show their workings and/or answer to two decimal places. Candidates are reminded of the importance of reading and addressing each element of the set question.
- (ii) This question was not answered well with a significant number of candidates unable to give a correct answer. Marks were available for displaying the correct working but some did not attempt to show the stages of calculation and relied on the calculator.
- (iii) A wide variety of graphical methods were acceptable as a response to this question and most candidates were able to identify a suitable method, for example, a line or bar graph.
- (iv) Justifications were mostly simplistic and lacked development but most were able to address the central requirement of the question. Candidates should be aware of the meaning of justification and more sophisticated answers would be expected to move beyond simple evaluation to explain why the chosen option is better than other possible options.
- (d) (i) This AO1 question required candidates to access learnt knowledge and understanding from the specification and many were able to do this effectively. The content of this part of the specification had been well addressed with some candidates showing high levels of detail concerning effusive and explosive eruptions.
- (ii) This question was well-answered for the most part but, for two full marks to be awarded, candidates must remember to develop their given reason rather than producing a simple one-word response.
- (e) Most candidates were able to identify a range of hazards. However, there were many answers which lacked specificity and supporting evidence was weakly presented. Some candidates failed to apply their case studies to the question and lacked the discussion element, including the substantiated conclusion that is required by the command.
The most successful answers developed a balanced argument to show that different hazards operate at different scales. Some also considered the level of economic development and the extent to which risk can be mitigated through the application of technology. Strong supporting evidence was provided by many.
- Q.6 (a)** This was a well-answered question where the mean mark showed a significant increase on the previous year. Pupils were able to make extensive use of their case study knowledge and apply it effectively to examine impacts of earthquake hazards on countries with differing levels of development. A few demonstrated excellent knowledge of current and recent case studies which was pleasing to see. Some candidates were able to mention the way technology in general is used to reduce risks associated with tectonic hazards.

- (b) The quality of responses seen to the second part of Question 6 was more variable in respect of the level of depth and detail shown. Many candidates tended to list the variety of responses utilised after their named event and failed to evaluate the success or failure of the responses. There were a variety of acceptable ways to approach this question and most tended to address a broad range of more generalised responses to tectonic events rather than focusing and comparing the success or failure of a specific response in two different contexts. Case study material on Haiti, Christchurch and Nepal was popular and was appropriately used by most candidates.

Q.7 The quality of responses to this question is generally improving year on year. The facility factor of 62.1% showed a 12.6% increase on 2018. Centres have understood that this question requires more than a simple regurgitation of the resource. More significant numbers of candidates are able to draw on knowledge and understanding from across their areas of learning and some candidates are able to generate synoptic links very successfully, for example, looking at the changing landscape within their 'home place' and applying this knowledge to the question.

Summary of key points

- Performance is improving on essay questions as candidates address the AO2 demands of the questions more effectively.
- Use of dated case study examples continues in some cases. Centres should be aware that candidates will benefit from the use of contemporary examples applied to the specification.
- Responses to the skills questions continues to vary significantly in quality with some better candidates unable to utilise some of the more basic geographical skills in order to aid and develop their responses. Centres should continue to remind candidates of the requirement to make direct reference to figures produced in the paper where the command word makes this explicit.
- As in 2018, centres should continue to raise candidate awareness of the geographical terminology used in the specification. The wording of questions continues to be derived directly from the wording of the specification.
- Although a significant improvement has been seen in the quality of responses to question 7, many candidates fail to identify the synoptic requirement and fail to apply their knowledge and understanding from across the specification.

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COMPONENT 2

General Comments

The paper was accessible across the ability range with limited evidence of questions being omitted; however, many candidates continue to find some of the geographical/fieldwork skills questions challenging. The paper differentiated well, and all questions and their constituent parts gave the required characteristic of providing the opportunity to the most able to demonstrate some excellent knowledge and understanding of the specification, whilst also being accessible to those of lower ability. The mean mark scored by candidates in 2019 was slightly higher than in the previous year, the most significant improvement seen in the mean marks awarded for questions 4 and 5.

Time management did not appear to be an issue with some candidates producing lengthy, detailed answers to all questions. The problem of poor handwriting persists for a number of candidates. It is easy to lose the thread of an argument or account when focusing on deciphering what has been written. Centres are urged to encourage those with poor handwriting to explore opportunities to have the use of a word processor or a scribe. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are still proving to be an issue for a number of candidates.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1 (a)** All candidates were able to access the resource in Figure 1 and many had clearly been taught the advantages of displaying data using located proportional symbols; this was pleasing to see, however, some candidates did not pay attention to the marks available, and thus gave one simple reason, scoring just one of the three marks available. In answering the second part of the question, it was evident that not all candidates were familiar with the concept of 'government support' as a locational factor encouraging cluster growth; this is an example of where questions are derived directly from the specification.
- (b)** This question was generally well done. Most candidates were familiar with social change in urban areas and were able to develop their understanding of one such change. A minority of candidates did not adhere to the word 'social' and their answers focused on economic changes. Candidates must be encouraged to read (and highlight) key words in questions to ensure that they answer the question set.
- (c)** This question was disappointingly answered by the majority of candidates, some even omitted this. In very few cases, candidates were well-prepared for this part of the examination insofar as they clearly understood the concept of 'factors affecting place'; many were descriptive of leisure facilities of their home town, or attempted to describe city-wide characteristics. What they were unable to do, was identify the (human and/or physical) factors that have shaped (and continue to shape) the demographic, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of their home place. It is worth reminding ourselves that the scale of the home place expected by the specification is that of a 'neighbourhood, locality or small community'.

In many cases, the answer that was provided was descriptive of a place, while the command word was 'examine' and thus requires a different approach than 'describe'. The instruction to 'examine factors' in a geography examination is also intended to prompt candidates into 'thinking like a geographer', for instance by focusing on empty shops in their local high street, they might be able to link with changes occurring in other places e.g. the building of an out-of-town retail park in the neighbouring town. The aspect of the specification from which this question is drawn (factors that have shaped and continue to shape) was rarely acknowledged in candidates' answers; some candidates would benefit from forensic coverage of the wording of the specification.

The best answers examined continuity and change in their local community. Candidates who accessed the full range of AO2 marks available typically evaluated which factor was the most important in determining the 21st century characteristics, recognising that factors shaping places are dynamic and interdependent with changes in other places. It is worth centres explicitly reminding students of the need to embrace the 'specialised concepts' outlined in the specification, particularly when answering questions requiring 'examination' or 'evaluation'.

- Q.2 (a)** Almost all students successfully calculated the range as required by part (i); where marks were lost, this was either because candidates did not follow the instruction to 'show working', or errors of mis-identifying the highest or lowest number in the table. In the second part, many students suggested that the range was a 'useful average'; clearly they did not have the vocabulary necessary to answer this question. Students should be reminded that they are likely to be asked to justify why named statistical techniques are appropriate (or not). In part (iii), too many candidates were unable to describe how to calculate the interquartile range; they should be reminded of the need for familiarity with the skills listed in Appendix A.
- (b)** This question was the highest tariff question on the paper and better candidates were clearly prepared to write at length presenting evidence to support their arguments about the consequences of deindustrialisation. The question discriminated between those students who had not carefully read the word 'urban areas' in the command. Disappointingly, some students focused on impacts of mechanisation of agriculture or loss of fishing as a result of overseas competition; better candidates were able to identify social, economic and environmental impacts of loss of manufacturing industry to identify the negative multiplier effect as well as the opportunities provided by regeneration of inner city areas, particularly for tertiary and quaternary industries. Some candidates successfully approached the command to 'examine' by discussing positive and negative impacts of loss of traditional industries and indeed provided detailed (contrasting) place evidence to support their answers. It was disappointing how many candidates relied on London's Docklands to answer this question; such answers – possibly based on GCSE knowledge – typically went no further than providing a narrative of decline and regeneration; in many cases, answers failed to identify what the consequences were. As with question 1c, comments relating to the essence of 'changing places' and use of specialised concepts apply here too.
- Q.3 (a)** Most candidates were able to calculate the straight line distance between the places named, although significant numbers of candidates omitted this question and / or the subsequent one.

Using the scale of the OS map to convert the measurement into km and then work out the area of the Science Park was a significant barrier to many candidates, even when they were familiar with the formula for the area of a triangle.

- (b) The discriminator in this question resulted from candidates' reluctance to engage with all of the introductory text; many candidates answered the question that provided the investigation title rather than the question asked for part b). Furthermore, where candidates had grasped the context, many overlooked either the 'secondary' data element of the question or the 'sources' of said secondary data. At AS level, it is to be expected that candidates are familiar with, for example, the Census and / or a commercial website listing houses for sale. Centres should be reminded that the enquiry process forms part of the specification (Section B page 23) and as with other areas of the specification, candidates will benefit from familiarity with the wording thereof. For those students who were familiar with the concept of secondary data, they were able to access all 5 marks available with comparative ease.
- (c) Most candidates scored the mark available for adding up the scores in the final column, although a significant minority gave the (same) incorrect answer. In the second part of this question, candidates were asked to draw a graph to present the data; only a tiny minority of candidates drew the expected bi-polar graph; help was provided by the 'y' axis being provided. Bi-polar graphs are listed in Appendix A and, as said earlier, candidates are expected to be familiar with all of the skills listed. In the final element of this question, candidates struggled to identify a strength and weakness of their chosen technique.
- (d) In this final question in this section, answers to this question fell into one of two camps: those candidates who were familiar with measures of central tendency, and those for whom this was very unfamiliar territory. By utilising the data presented rather than approaching this question hypothetically, candidates were supported in identifying the mean as the most suitable measure.

Q.4 Although the overall mean mark for this question was higher than in 2018, the quality of response varied significantly from centre to centre as well as between candidates within centres. There was a huge discrepancy between how well centres had prepared their students for this section. This was unexpected as it very much follows the pattern of the legacy papers from previous AS specifications and was a clear element of both the SAMs and the previous papers for this Specification. Six marks were available for an account of the data collection techniques of the physical geography investigation with four further marks allocated for evaluating the chosen techniques. The best answers were richly detailed and referred to one or more data collection techniques in a specified local context. The best candidates were able to critique the advantages and disadvantages of their chosen techniques. Meanwhile, many candidates did not read the question carefully and simply described their data collection methods. Centres are to be reminded that it is expected that fieldwork themes are drawn clearly from the specification; it is unclear how an investigation into the Bradshaw Model fulfils this expectation.

- Q.5** Question 5 also showed an increased mean mark in comparison to 2018 but there was a significant variation in candidates' answers to this question. Some answers demonstrated that candidates understood how data collection methods influence the results obtained and consequently the conclusions reached.

Those who accessed the full AO2 marks available (four in this instance) were able to do more than a simple critique of either their methods or their results. It is to be acknowledged that it is probably teachers (rather than the candidates) who have planned this fieldwork for this component; however, as in other questions, the more the candidates are familiar with the wording of the specification, the better armed they are to respond to questions derived directly from it. In answering this question, the best candidates were also able to evaluate the contribution of planning and data presentation / analysis to the success of their investigation.

For centres entering their candidates as a milestone for the full A level qualification, it is worth ensuring that candidates are familiar with all stages of the enquiry process as they will be expected to approach this independently for their A level NEA, and indeed the final evaluation section carries the highest number of marks.

Summary of key points

- Throughout the paper, the answers to the skills questions varied in quality with some better candidates unable to answer some of the more rudimentary skills questions (e.g. the distance from Cambridge Science Park to the station in question 3a(i)). Both the enquiry process on page 23 of the AS specification and the skills cited in Appendix A on page 27 are elements of the specification that should not be overlooked when preparing candidates for examinations; it is to be expected that some skills will be examined in every examination session.
- It was pleasing to note some higher marks that were awarded in the questions relating to candidates' own fieldwork and that mean marks and facility factors on questions 4 and 5 have significantly improved. However, there were some centres where all candidates scored low marks on one or both fieldwork elements and the issue of thorough follow-up to fieldwork needs to be addressed by these centres.
- As in last year's paper geographical terminology could also usefully be stressed, paying particular attention to the wording used in the specification; for example, the question about 'government support' is drawn directly from the specification, many students struggled to provide an answer that was geographical.
- The role of '**place**' in the specification is significant and whilst some candidates are very familiar with case studies *per se*, the central tenet that 'this section is fundamentally at the local level' was not apparent in candidates' responses. This is an issue that was evident in previous years' examinations and has not been fully addressed by centres in their approach to specification delivery
- In some cases, supporting data / evidence in candidates' answers was 'creative' or at the very least confused: centres should remind their students that (i) examiners are familiar with the 'standard' case studies some of which, including the 'London Docklands' should be replaced by more contemporary examples; (ii) it is easy for examiners to check case studies on the internet.
- Candidates need to be reminded to respond directly to each command word given.



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