

# **Examiners' Reports**

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**January 2011**

**HX83/R/11J**

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Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Advanced GCE Geography (H483)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE Geography (H083)

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## Chief Examiner's Report

There seemed to be a better understanding of what each paper required in terms of approach, especially on the A2 units. More candidates tackled F763 Section A effectively and in F764 neither essay seemed to cause problems for the candidates.

### Common Problems

Sufficient space was no longer an issue with most candidates at AS but many did use additional sheets in F764, although there are pages at the back of the answer book specifically for this. It remains important that candidates indicate in their work if they are continuing answers elsewhere. This is particularly important for F763, where candidates should avoid writing answers to Section B in the space for Section A and vice versa.

The quality of communication was worrying. Many struggled to express their ideas especially in Section A answers of all papers, whilst essay answers in Section B were noticeably of higher quality. Candidates need to understand that it is in the short answer questions that clarity and conciseness are vital. Good material was often made ineffective by the way the candidate wrote the answer. All too often careless errors marred answers and the quality of handwriting was an issue.

More care is needed in reading the full question or key terms in the question. This is the single biggest cause of under-achievement at both AS and at A2.

### Topic/Question choice overview – AS units

Unit	Section	Topic	Question	% candidates
F761	A	River Environments	1	57
		Coastal Environments	2	43
		Cold Environments	3	57
		Hot Arid and Semi-Arid Environments	4	42
	B	River Environments	5	22
		Coastal Environments	6	47
		Cold Environments	7	22
		Hot Arid and Semi-Arid Environments	8	9
F762	A	Managing Urban Change	1	70
		Managing Rural Change	2	30
		The Energy Issue	3	47
		The Growth of Tourism	4	52
	B	Managing Urban Change	5	20
		Managing Rural Change	6	15
		The Energy Issue	7	24
		The Growth of Tourism	8	41

**Topic/Question choice overview – A2 units**

Unit	Section	Topic	Question	% candidates	
F763	A	Earth hazards	1	93	
		Ecosystems and environments under threat	2	27	
		Climatic hazards	3	35	
		Population and resources	4	58	
		Globalisation	5	39	
		Development and inequalities	6	48	
	B	Earth hazards		7	10
				8	63
		Ecosystems and environments under threat		9	11
				10	5
		Climatic hazards		11	6
				12	5
		Population and resources		13	25
				14	7
		Globalisation		15	31
				16	7
		Development and inequalities		17	10
				18	20
F764	A	n/a	1	44	
		n/a	2	22	
		n/a	3	33	
	B	n/a	4	Compulsory	
		n/a	5	Compulsory	

**AS – F761 and F762**

**Section A**

Parts (a) and (b). Common problems included:

- not referring specifically to the data or the resource shown in the figure in part (a)(i) eg in – F762 an alarming number of candidates got grid references wrong;
- not following the instruction to describe (what they could see) but rather suggesting generic points;
- not keeping to the number of points requested. If it says 'two', then don't do three or more.
- confusing technical terms eg 'issues' does not only mean problems, 'weathering' is neither 'erosion' nor 'weather';
- wasting space with irrelevant 'chat' or introductions;
- not understanding basic geographical terms eg in F761 – not understanding 'meltwater'.

Parts (c) and (d) – extended answers, worth 9 marks. Common problems included:

- using inappropriate examples eg Oxford as a rural area;
- not reading all of the question eg in F762 – too many gave more than the one required example in 1(c) and 2(c);
- not understanding terms eg 'impact', 'land use', 'sustainability' and 'ecotourism'.
- lack of sketch maps or diagrams;
- including long sections of irrelevant material eg an account of the war damage in Docklands as an answer on current dereliction;
- including a lot of generic material rather than using material clearly and tightly based on example(s);
- using more than one example when they only repeat what the first exemplifies eg in F762 – ecotourism in question 4(c).

## **Section B**

Essays were usually well argued and candidates scored well in this section but to be even more effective candidates need to:

- keep to a few detailed examples rather than a lot of repetitive superficial ones;
- show some attempt at a conclusion as the mark scheme rewards clear or effective conclusions;
- be wary of chatty introductions;
- consider including a sketch map or diagram if it helps the argument, but remember to use black ink or HB pencil when drawing it;
- keep it all relevant to, and focused on, the question asked. Read the question fully and carefully focusing vital key words;
- try to keep answers analytical and explanatory rather than purely descriptive;
- make it locational with a clear sense of place – exemplification of the 'eg Manchester' type is not effective;
- use more local examples;
- structure answers – use paragraphs each with a distinctive aspect. A plan does help organise an answer.

## **On a positive note**

Those aspects of the examination that were encouraging included:

- good knowledge and understanding of the topics, especially cause and effect;
- broadly effective essay writing which is often a new challenge to AS candidates;
- timing – this did not seem to be an issue;
- the papers did seem to differentiate the candidates effectively especially at the top end.

## **Notes of caution**

If candidates do use the end pages of the paper for extensions of their answer (and that is what they are there for) they should note that they have in the main answer. A simple 'cont.' will suffice.

Consistency is the key for doing well on these papers. A few weak answers in Section A, often the last part of a question, greatly reduced the overall level of performance. A consistent performance did tend to achieve at a higher level than one that contained excellent answers but also careless slips.

**A2 – F763 and F764**

The key at A2 is the ability to evaluate. Some candidates do not seem to appreciate what this means so gave broad descriptions. Typically in F764 candidates were asked to evaluate the success of their investigation but often this resulted in a description of how they did their investigation. In F763 too many gave causes for their issues in Section A – another example of candidates not reading the question.

The key issues were similar to AS. Candidates must learn to:

- read the question carefully and then answer each aspect of it;
- be relevant – do not include material that is not needed;
- exemplify with a clear sense of space or location;
- use diagrams to illustrate points – especially in F764;
- structure their work with a worthwhile conclusion.

# F761 Managing Physical Environments

## General Comments:

Some high quality scripts were seen and it was pleasing to note an increasing proportion of candidates attempting to explain their cause-effect links, although in a number of cases the answers could have been more fully developed.

Performance on this paper was rather uneven, however. Many candidates revealed gaps in their knowledge and uncertainty in their understanding. Essays tended to lack a clear focus on the demands of the questions set, despite containing much detailed case study material.

There appeared to be few difficulties with the rubric or with time allocation. Some candidates needed to use the additional pages at the back of the question paper but they did not always indicate that they had continued their answers elsewhere, nor did they always say which page they had used. They should be reminded to do this.

## Comments on Individual Questions:

### Section A

#### River Environments

##### Question 1

1(a)(i) This was generally quite well answered, with most achieving at least 2 marks. Although a range of features was usually identified, the major problem was lack of description of the features. This often applied to the debris in the channel, the shape and size of which was seldom described. Candidates often included explanation even though none was required, and many stated 'meander' as a feature rather than referring to the winding route of the river around the interlocking spurs. Description of both the channel and the valley was required for full marks.

1(a)(ii) Answers here were a little disappointing. The main weakness was the lack of linkage to the valley form, even though processes seemed to be well known. Some answers lacked the development of processes and offered little beyond 'erosion'. Better responses gave detail of the mechanisms involved, such as abrasion. Weathering and mass movement were also relevant, but again few gave detail of specific mechanisms. The best answers focused on vertical erosion deepening the valley floor. Many suggested that mass movement steepened valley sides, although the reverse is often the case.

1 (b) Although this seemed to be a well known topic, answers tended to be very vague, with references to the environment being "destroyed" or "damaged" very common. Some of the best answers provided detail of the positive impact of sediment deposition on the floodplain providing fertile soils. A significant number gave lengthy accounts of the causes of flooding, rather than the impacts, whilst many others paid scant regard to the environment and focused instead on social or economic impacts.

1(c) The detail of human activity was strong and well described, but few candidates explained the opportunities that existed. Some good answers were seen on the fertile soils of the flood plain providing opportunities for agriculture. References to tourism and recreation tended to be related to general comments about the attractive environment. A number of answers suggested that the River Thames was important for HEP, whilst comments about trade and transport were often vague and lacked detail of what was being transported and where it was being transported to/from.

## **Coastal Environments**

### **Question 2**

2(a)(i) Some similar strengths and weaknesses were seen here as in 1(a)(i), although rather more description was offered about the beach and the variations in its material. Cliffs were usually identified as a feature, but many did not describe their height or steepness.

2(a)(ii) Although processes were well known and understood, they were not always used to explain the shaping of the coastline, rather they tended to be addressed in isolation. Erosion, deposition and sub-aerial processes were all relevant. Some of the best answers addressed the undercutting, collapse and retreat of the cliffs, whilst some good explanation of beach formation was seen with ideas about wave energy applied accurately.

2(b) Answers were a little disappointing with many referring to hard engineering methods such as groynes and rip rap. Although the terms beach nourishment and beach recycling were sometimes both offered, they seemed to be used to mean the same thing. Description of these methods was sometimes secure, but how additional beach material protected the coastline was generally not specified. Re-profiling was seldom understood or explained clearly whilst those discussing managed retreat needed to link this to protection. Do nothing approaches also, unsurprisingly, were not well linked to protection. The best answers referred to how additional beach material reduced wave velocity by increasing friction and/or by absorbing wave energy when they break.

2(c) As with 1(c), answers tended to be very descriptive, with a lack of explanation. Some good answers were seen that explained that Poole Harbour is very shallow and sheltered from waves by the Sandbanks peninsula, making it very safe for pleasure boats and windsurfing. Answers about tourism developments in Dubai tended to focus on their negative impacts or the developments themselves being the opportunity. Few gave details of the climate or the attractions of coral reefs for snorkelling.

## **Cold Environments**

### **Question 3**

3(a)(i) This was quite well answered, with many describing the overall increase in days of melt and then adding detail of the coastal or southern changes being the most significant. Some appeared to see the shading as representing areas of the ice sheet that had melted away.

3(a)(ii) A large number of candidates missed the point of this question. Answers were invariably focused on the role of human activity, such as oil pipeline construction, melting permafrost. Most were able to gain a mark or two by mentioning global warming, but few specified how this might cause sub-zero temperatures to rise to above zero. A small number of good answers considered a lengthening of the summer season, whilst others considered how a warming of ocean temperatures might cause more melt days on the coast. Those that simply referred to the south being nearer the equator missed the point about change.

3(b) This was generally well answered with many scoring highly. Some good detail was seen of behavioural adaptations such as migration and hibernation, although clear links were not always made to the climatic conditions. Physiological adaptations such as fur were often explained in simple terms such as 'keeping them warm', with few providing detail such as the trapping of warm air.

3(c) Very few candidates seem to be aware of any landforms produced by meltwater, even though outwash plains are explicitly mentioned in the specification. A small number of candidates explained these well, whilst eskers and kames were also occasionally seen. Most tried to focus on the role of sub-glacial meltwater in enabling glacier advance and the resultant erosional landforms. Many weak answers suggested that the ribbon lakes and tarns of the Lake District contain meltwater from the last glacial period.

## **Hot Arid and Semi-Arid Environments**

### **Question 4**

4(a)(i) This part was soundly answered with the key lines of latitude being used as locational evidence. Some failed to distinguish between the different levels of risk and others offered explanation when none was required.

4(a)(ii) Many answers tried to explain the climatic conditions with reference to the Hadley cell; this was done with mixed success. Even those who understood this correctly tended not to finish their answer with direct reference to desertification; areas were just hot and dry. The role of human activity was also frequently mentioned, but seldom were links between overgrazing and desertification explained in terms of soil degradation.

4(b) Some very good answers were seen here, with excellent detail provided of how, for example, large ears allow animals to cool down. A few referred to plants rather than animals, whilst others lacked reference to climate when discussing camels' eye-lashes, for example. Behavioural adaptations were also relevant as were comments about diversity and boom-bust cycles.

4(c) Answers here were rather better than in 3(c), with a range of appropriate landforms being attempted; canyons, wadis and alluvial fans were commonly considered. These were often well explained, although mesas and buttes were less effectively used. Although the role of water in erosion or deposition was generally the focus, valid references to weathering and mass movement were also seen. Examples were used with varying levels of success, with the best not only naming landforms but also indicating scale or rock type.

## **Section B**

### **River Environments**

#### **Question 5**

Answers to this question were generally very lengthy and often containing plenty of good case study material. However, very little understanding of appropriate processes was typically shown, and so marks tended to be limited, especially in AO2. The most successful answers were those that considered basin processes such as infiltration and surface run-off which were then able to be directly linked to management strategies such as afforestation. Some usefully discussed the impact of dam construction on sediment transfer and the potential consequences of this for farmers downstream, especially in examples such as the Aswan Dam. Those who focused their response on channel management strategies, such as deepening and straightening of the Mississippi, were less successful in relating these to specific processes, even though references to meandering would have been appropriate.

## **Coastal Environments**

### **Question 6**

As with Question 5, the case material was substantial and detailed, with many making good use of locations on the east coast of England. Candidates seemed to find it a little easier to make links to processes in this question with many referring to erosion or longshore drift. Disappointingly, explanation of these processes was often lacking or limited and so the links with management strategies tended to be rather vague or tenuous. The best responses often made good use of examples, such as the impact of groyne construction on locations further along the coast in terms of starvation of beach sediment.

## **Cold Environments**

### **Question 7**

Answers typically focused on oil extraction and tourism in locations such as Alaska and the Alps. Explanation of the opportunities was often very limited or even lacking, with few providing any reasons at all for why ski tourism is so popular in the Alps. More explanation of oil extraction was often provided with details of the known reserves and the desire for countries not to be dependent on others for their oil. When it came to challenges, the approach was usually to discuss the negative impacts resulting from the taking of the opportunities, rather than the difficulties of doing so. Some achieved focus by emphasising the fragile nature of the ecosystems rather than recounting details of the damage caused. Few answers explicitly addressed the issue of development and how taking the opportunities enabled economic and social progress. Some did, and then qualified their comments by noting the problems caused by leakage, for example.

## **Hot Arid and Semi-Arid Environments**

### **Question 8**

Case detail was less strong in this question than in the equivalent Question 7. Many of the same weaknesses were seen, such as the lack of explanation of the opportunities. Tourism and resources again featured heavily, but those discussing irrigation opportunities from exogenic rivers, such as the Draa, often scored well. Negative impacts on the environment by tourists was the main way in which challenges were addressed; again few fully considered the inherent difficulties of the locations such as their remoteness and the harshness of the climatic conditions.

# F762 Managing Change in Human Environments

## General Comments

Virtually all candidates completed the paper, suggesting a high level of preparation in relation to the timing of the paper. There were very few rubric errors.

The use of the resources was not always strong, errors in basic skills costing a significant number of candidates what might be considered fairly easy marks. The follow-on question in Section A (part (ii)) was often answered very effectively. This pattern suggested sound understanding of the key ideas, while at the same time a basic lack of practice in relation to the use of resources.

Responses to the six mark questions generally showed a good level of basic understanding and in many cases some sound development. However, a number of candidates failed to respond to the command which asked for two factors and went on to mention three or four points. This often resulted in rather superficial answers and was usually self-limiting. A significant number of candidates used appropriate and well developed examples in the nine mark questions, at times to great effect.

Responses to the essay questions were generally sound. They showed a good level of understanding and in many cases considerable locational detail. It was evident that the majority of candidates had been well prepared for the essay and a significant proportion of candidates drew up a clear plan which was then used to produce a well structured essay.

Two general concerns were identified from a number of scripts. Firstly, it was evident that a number of candidates did not understand some of the basic specification terminology. Terms such as deprivation, dereliction, land-use and ecotourism were frequently misunderstood, resulting in a failure fully to address particular questions. A second concern was the use of examples which were largely historical, particularly in the urban questions. While historical examples can give a useful insight into change, they often lead to answers which are superficial and descriptive. This can be a significant factor since the choice of example(s) often dictates the quality of the higher mark responses.

## Comments on Individual Questions

### Section A

#### Managing Urban Change

##### Question 1

1(a)(i) Use of Figure 1 was generally good with the majority of candidates identifying two different types of land use effectively. A small number of candidates failed to identify the second part of the question command which requested the location of the chosen land uses or gave two examples of the same type of land use. The use of basic map reading skills was variable, a significant number of candidates making elementary errors.

1(a)(ii) Candidates generally showed some awareness of the economic influences on land use. The most common theme was transportation networks, which when linked to industrial location provided a useful suggestion. The idea of Bid-Rent was considered by a small number of candidates. In many cases these ideas were developed effectively to express links between the cost of land and land use. A significant number of candidates failed fully to address the question because they did not respond to the 'how' in the question. Appropriate ideas were expressed, but exactly how they influenced land use was not considered. This generally restricted responses to Level 1.

1(b) It was clear that the majority of candidates had some understanding of urban deprivation and were able to use this to suggest a range of issues linked to it. The understanding of 'social' was variable, with many candidates drifting into economic and environmental ideas. Where these ideas drew particular links to social conditions this was clearly acceptable, but in many cases they did not establish these links. The most common 'problem' identified was crime, at times very effectively expressed and developed to suggest why it was a problem. In many cases appropriate ideas were expressed but why they might be considered a 'problem' was not always fully considered. This tended to be rather limiting.

1(c) There were a small number of very good responses to this question. These responses used an appropriate example and showed a detailed awareness of how change can create the conditions for areas to become neglected and fall into dereliction. A significant number of candidates clearly had little understanding of dereliction, often translating it into 'decline'. While this approach often touched on the general idea of dereliction and at times considered environmental decline quite effectively, these responses tended to lack a precise focus on the question. A particular issue for a number of candidates was the use of more than one located example. The question clearly requested a response based on 'one located urban area'. However, a number of candidates brought in more than one example. This generally led to poorly developed and generic responses which achieved fairly low marks.

## **Managing Rural Change**

### **Question 2**

2(a)(i) Use of Figure 2 was generally good, with the majority of candidates identifying two different functions effectively. A small number of candidates failed to identify the second part of the command which requested the location of the chosen functions or gave two examples of the same function. The use of basic map reading skills was variable, a significant number of candidates making elementary errors.

2(a)(ii) Candidates showed some awareness of the factors that might have influenced the economic development of the area shown on the map extract. Ideas about the economic opportunities created by leisure and recreation were often well developed, as were observations based on communication networks. A number of candidates failed fully to address the question because they did not respond to the 'how' in the question. Appropriate ideas were expressed but how they influenced economic development was not really considered. This generally restricted responses to Level 1. Many candidates failed fully to appreciate the scale of the map and showed limited appreciation of the physical landscape. Observations about the river being a major import/export route and a large area of flat land being ideal for arable farming showed a lack of understanding and poor interpretation of the map extract.

2(b) The majority of candidates were able to suggest evidence of decline in rural areas. Issues such as out-migration, the closure of services and the decline of economic activities were commonly offered. A significant number of candidates failed fully to develop these ideas and link them to the key idea of 'social problems' expressed in the question. Consequently, responses frequently simply described evidence of decline without really considering why the evidence expressed created problems for people in rural areas.

2(c) There were a number of very good responses to this question. These responses used an appropriate example to show in detail how particular changes can create the opportunity for areas of dereliction to develop in rural areas. A significant number of candidates clearly had little understanding of dereliction, often translating it into 'decline'. While this approach often touched on the general idea and at times considered environmental decline quite effectively, these responses tended to lack a precise focus on the question. A particular issue for a number of candidates was the use of more than one example. The question clearly requested a response based on one located rural area. However, a number of candidates brought in more than one located example. This generally led to poorly developed and generic responses which achieved fairly low marks.

## **The Energy Issue**

### **Question 3**

3(a)(i) It was clear that virtually all candidates understood the idea of energy mix. However, some candidates were not clear about 'renewable' energy, with a small number identifying fossil fuels as renewables. Use of Figure 3 was generally good, with the majority of candidates able to identify the differences in the energy mix of Kenya and Germany. Most candidates picked out individual differences, while a small number also considered differences in the overall energy mix. A number of candidates simply described the energy mix of each country without offering any comparative observations.

3(a)(ii) Candidates generally showed a good basic understanding of the question and many identified the different level of development (LEDC/MEDC was given in the resource) as a significant reason for the differences in the energy mix. When used with some degree of explanation this idea provided a useful initial reason for the differences shown. However, in many cases the link to development was not well developed or the general idea of economic differences was used to express both reasons and some overlap was evident. There were a number of thoughtful ideas expressed, including points about the rural nature of Kenya, the lack of infrastructure and power stations in LEDCs and the more limited skill/technology base in many LEDCs. A small number of candidates totally ignored the command 'two reasons' and went on to mention any number of possible reasons. Generally this type of answer was very descriptive and offered limited reasoning, with the two most significant points achieving only basic credit.

3(b) It was evident that a small number of candidates did not understand the idea of physical factors. Clearly this limited the quality of their responses. Those that did understand the basic idea of how physical factors influence energy supply were able to come up with a number of useful factors. Points about remoteness, difficult environments, basic geological links to fossil fuels and links between weather conditions and renewable energy sources were common. When effectively developed these ideas provided the basis for excellent answers. There were two limitations to this. Firstly, a number of candidates identified possible factors but did not fully explain how they might influence energy supply, and secondly, a number of candidates had a somewhat simplistic view of the link between physical factors and energy supply. For example, suggesting that hydro-electricity is only viable in very fast flowing rivers or wind energy requires very high wind speeds.

3(c) There were a number of very good responses to this question with the majority of candidates selecting appropriate examples to describe how renewable energy was being increasingly used. High level responses considered the reasons for the need to use increasing amounts of renewable energy and then used particular examples to explain how this was being achieved, often with considerable factual detail.

## **The Growth of Tourism**

### **Question 4**

4(a)(i) Use of Figure 4 was variable. A significant number of candidates did not attempt to use the actual data, simply describing change using basic descriptive terms, such as 'increased' or 'decreased'. In a number of cases candidates described a single change, usually the overall pattern or change just related to Europe. Since the data described changes in six different areas and the question clearly asked for 'changes', this was a limiting factor.

4(a)(ii) The majority of candidates had a good general understanding about the factors that might influence the demand for holidays. The ideas of increased leisure time, increased incomes and more affordable travel opportunities were frequently used, often to reasonable effect. The link between these ideas and the data expressed in Figure 4 was not always well expressed. For example, the idea that 'increased leisure time might lead to an increase in long haul tourism to the Americas/East Asia' clearly suggests a reason while linking the idea back to the resource rather than simply saying 'increased leisure time'. In some cases candidates failed to consider the command 'two reasons' and mentioned a broader list of ideas. In most cases this led to a list of superficial ideas, the strongest two often only gaining marginal credit because of a lack of development.

4(b) The idea of recent change was interpreted very broadly by a number of candidates, some of whom brought in ideas about the growth of package holidays and the general development of international tourism linked to the growth of air travel. This often led to rather descriptive responses which offered only limited explanation (which was clearly demanded by the question). Those candidates who took a more contemporary approach often produced thoughtful and well reasoned answers. Ideas about the growth of cruise holidays, specific activity based holidays, wilderness and adventure holidays and medical holidays were frequently used.

4(c) It was clear that a significant number of candidates had very little understanding of what is meant by ecotourism. In many cases candidates simply responded to the word 'benefits' while virtually ignoring the ideas of ecotourism and local communities, as expressed in the question. Consequently, very often totally inappropriate examples were used, including in some cases mass tourism locations. A significant number of candidates considered National Parks as ecotourism locations. While this gave some opportunity to consider environmental management and links to local communities it did not give an opportunity fully to address the question. Those candidates who used an appropriate example(s) and developed ideas about the socio-economic and environmental sustainability of local communities generally produced well considered and thoughtful answers.

## **Section B**

### **Managing Urban Change**

#### **Question 5**

There were a significant number of interesting responses to this question, many offering detailed case study material. The idea of change was usually seen either as decline in MEDCs or rapid growth in LEDCs. Either of these possibilities provided a useful focus for the question. The key here was to respond to the idea of 'challenge'. Those candidates who simply considered the question in terms of 'problems' often produced useful, but rather descriptive observations but did not always fully address the question. The most successful responses used an appropriate, detailed example(s) and identified the issues brought about by urban change and then went on to consider the challenges that these posed. For example, in developing cities the issue of growing slum areas with poor quality housing and a lack of services was often considered. The better responses went on to consider the challenges of improving housing for the urban poor and developing basic infrastructure such as water and sanitation systems. A small number of candidates failed to pick up the idea of both 'social and economic challenges', focusing largely on one or the other. This generally produced thoughtful answers but did not fully answer the question.

### **Managing Rural Change**

#### **Question 6**

There were a significant number of interesting responses to this question, many offering detailed case study material. The idea of change was usually seen as the decline of rural areas resulting from agricultural change, industrial closure or population decline. A small number of candidates considered the question in relation to the challenges posed by the development of rural areas. The key here was to respond to the idea of 'challenge'. Those candidates who simply considered the question in terms of 'problems' often produced useful, but rather descriptive observations but did not always fully address the question. The most successful responses used an appropriate, detailed example(s) and identified the issues brought about by rural change and then went on to consider the challenges that these posed. For example, the issue of the decline of employment opportunities in rural areas was often considered. The better responses considered this in relation to changing population structures and the decline of both social and economic services. A small number of candidates failed to pick up the idea of both 'social and economic challenges', focusing largely on one or the other. This generally produced thoughtful responses but did not fully answer the question.

### **The Energy Issue**

#### **Question 7**

Candidates showed a very good understanding of this question and there were a significant number of very thoughtful and well developed responses. The majority of candidates used detailed examples to express the problems that the exploitation of energy resources can bring to both people and the environment. It was interesting to note that examples about both non-renewable and renewable energy resources were used; oil in Nigeria and Alaska and the Three Gorges Dam being the more popular examples. A small number of candidates also included ideas about small scale energy developments and how they might create issues and conflict in local communities.

## **The Growth of Tourism**

### **Question 8**

Candidates showed a very good understanding of this question and there were a significant number of very thoughtful and well developed responses. The majority of candidates used detailed examples to express the problems that the growth of tourism can create for people and the environment. In a number of cases candidates tended to focus more on the environmental pressures, at times this produced a slightly unbalanced response. Examples were drawn from across the world and varied in scale. The level of detail and moving beyond the descriptive to the more analytical tended to be the considerations that highlighted the most successful answers.

## **F763 Global Issues**

### **General Comments:**

The small entry for this Unit means that observations on the performance of candidates can only be cautionary as regards their wider applicability. Although responses were read in all Options, some questions received only a handful of answers and consequentially feedback is limited.

### **Comments on Individual Questions:**

#### **Section A**

All six Options were answered amongst the entry with Earth Hazards receiving the single largest set of responses. The standard of response ran right across the whole range of marks available.

#### **Earth hazards**

##### **Question 1**

Most candidates offered a suitable geographical issue with the higher level responses making detailed and effective use of the resource, quoting place names, estimated population affected and degree of potential structural damage. A significant number of weaker candidates failed to read the title of the middle column of the data table and so did not appreciate that the estimated figures of people affected were in thousands. The scale of the hazard event was, therefore, not appreciated.

A variety of management strategies were offered, most of which were appropriate. These ranged from immediate search and rescue efforts, through temporary housing to longer term reconstruction based on more secure building techniques.

#### **Ecosystems and environments under threat**

##### **Question 2**

Candidates recognised the likely impacts of human activity on ecosystems as indicated in the photograph of a sand-dune location. The negative issues of degradation of the ecosystem were the focus, with the more convincing answers making clear and direct reference to evidence from the image. Management strategies were generally appropriate, making reference to actions such as exclusion (fencing off areas) and those designed to minimise impacts constructing boardwalks for example.

#### **Climatic hazards**

##### **Question 3**

This was probably the least well answered question in Section A. Too many candidates seemed not to know the weather conditions associated with anticyclones and offered answers based on the impact of a tropical storm (cyclone). There were those who discussed the impact of heatwave and drought and suggested appropriate strategies, although it was disappointing not to read more about measures taken in advance of the hazard occurring such as water storage and irrigation techniques that make more efficient use of water.

## **Population and resources**

### **Question 4**

Contrasts in population change for selected world regions were successfully discussed by the majority of candidates answering in this Option. Many chose to outline the implications for resource consumption such as food and energy of the growth in Africa and South Asia, while others identified the ageing of Europe with its implications for dependency ratios. Very few candidates seemed to recognise population as a resource itself and there was the potential to make much of the contrasts in human capital indicated by the figures in the resource. Some of the comments about over- and under-population indicated only a superficial understanding of these rather intricate concepts.

## **Globalisation**

### **Question 5**

It was only a minority of candidates answering in this Option who picked up on the primary issue of 'aid'. Within this topic there was a wealth of material available for discussion such as type of aid and the degree to which it benefited the recipient or brought problems for them. Comments focused on the environmental impact of the project with rather too many responses caught up with the short-term effects of construction such as emissions from the large scale machinery and water pollution. While there was some credit to be had from this issue, these answers did not emphasise the temporary nature of such effects. It is perhaps helpful for centres to re-visit the Specification to remind themselves of the importance of aid as a topic within this Option.

## **Development and inequalities**

### **Question 6**

The resource consisting of a choropleth map representing intra-urban death rates drew a wide variety of responses. The more secure answers referred to the inequalities highlighted by the data, in particular the inner/outer contrasts. Effective comments were made concerning differentials in housing standards, living conditions in general and access to health care. There were also a few convincing comments regarding possible contrasts in age structure amongst areas within the city. It was, however, disappointing to read too many scripts whose main focus was on gun and knife crime in inner areas. In the context of the levels of death rates per thousand people, candidates were unaware of the very small contribution this particular type of crime represents.

## **Section B**

### **Earth hazards**

#### **Question 7**

Few answers were written evaluating the range of human responses to mass movement hazards. These tended to be rather limited in their coverage of the topic focusing on contrasts between countries across the economic spectrum. Factors such as differences in predictability amongst mass movements, cost-benefit contrasts and variations in energy release amongst mass movements were neglected.

### **Question 8**

Discussions about the relative significance of physical and human factors in contributing to impacts from earth hazards ranged right across the mark spectrum. At the top end responses evaluated factors such as scale and intensity of earth hazard events as well as LEDC/MEDC contrasts. These candidates were also characterised by considerations of relief and differences between coastal and inland locations, for example when dealing with flooding. The less secure essays tended to focus almost exclusively on contrasts amongst countries and their economic abilities tending to ignore physical factors.

### **Ecosystems and environments under threat**

#### **Question 9**

Assessments of the relative importance of physical and human factors in causing change in ecosystems were quite effective but tended to focus on human factors and dealt with change in a negative way. A few towards the higher end of the mark range made authoritative mentions of the role of physical factors in the context of succession within ecosystems but it was disappointing that more secure references were not made to the flora and fauna involved.

#### **Question 10**

Evaluations of the impacts of periods of rapid economic development on physical environments were rare amongst the entry at this session. Variations in human impacts over time are explicitly mentioned in the Specification and candidates seem less sure of such material as they might be.

### **Climatic hazards**

#### **Question 11**

A very small handful of scripts contained answers to this question. They tended to be very unconvincing in their evaluation, in particular when dealing with long-term impacts from drought. They were also less secure when discussing the long-term impacts of high energy climatic hazards such as those issuing from tropical storms.

#### **Question 12**

Discussions focused on the locational impacts of tropical storms were generally effective in their evaluation but the higher level answers were characterised by their inclusion of contrasts such as coastal versus inland locations or rural versus urban places with their implications of differences in population density. Much was made of differences in impacts between locations at different points along the development continuum with some good factual details used from Bangladesh, Philippines, the Caribbean and the USA for example. Good use was made of the variety of impacts emanating from one storm as it crossed a region and it was encouraging to read some sophisticated comments made about the role political factors can have such as in the context of Cyclone Nargis and Hurricane Katrina, for example.

## **Population and resources**

### **Question 13**

There were some encouraging essays discussing the extent to which demand for resources varies with time. The most common approach was to look at how and why resource demand alters with increasing populations mainly in conjunction with rising standards of living with examples taken from amongst MEDCs and nations such as China and Brazil. There was, however, a lack of factual detail regarding resource use, for example changes in energy consumption through time. An interesting perspective hardly ever discussed was changes in per capita resource demand through time.

### **Question 14**

The few responses evaluating the significance of migration in population change in MEDCs were rather restrictive in their interpretation. Exclusively they considered the impact of international migration on national population totals, ignoring intra-national regional change. Details such as variations in fertility rates amongst migrant and indigenous groups eluded the candidates.

## **Globalisation**

### **Question 15**

About half the candidates answering in this Option evaluated the impacts of transnational corporations in LEDCs and or NICs. There was plenty of empirical material offered concerning Nike, in the main, although a disappointing number of such discussions failed to offer much by way of hard evidence. Generalised comments about worker exploitation and pollution would be more convincing with the support of details. There were comments about the economic benefits accruing to countries and individuals from the presence of TNCs with the more substantial responses extending these economic impacts to infrastructure developments resulting from wealth creation. It would have been good had more been offered by way of non-manufacturing TNCs such as mining companies or banks which operate in LEDCs and NICs.

### **Question 16**

Discussions evaluating the contribution of economic aspects to the process of globalisation made up the other half of answers in this Option. The more convincing essays gave a fully discursive airing to the nature of globalisation, considering both its economic and cultural elements: thoughtful comments emerged concerning matters such as music, foods and fashions. Most candidates were confident in their appraisal of economic elements with some effective use made of the roles of bodies such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation. The role of TNCs was well employed to support the significance of economics to globalisation mainly in terms of foreign direct investment. More might have been made, both in economic and non-economic terms, of the role that aid has been playing in globalisation.

## **Development and inequalities**

### **Question 17**

Few answers were read discussing the extent to which physical factors hinder the development process. They tended to suggest that, in the main, physical factors are significant but few drifted into a form of environmental determinism. Most essays referred to the case of Japan with its relatively limited physical resource base as an example which countered the idea that an absence of physical resources hinders development. There was, however, a focus on a limited range of factors in the responses. Aspects such as relief, soils, climate, vegetation, coastal access were ignored and too little discussion concerning the role of human capital and politics for example.

### **Question 18**

There were also relatively few discussions concerning the effectiveness or otherwise of measures used in reducing inequalities in a named country. The crucial discriminator was the extent to which the discussion was evaluative as most of the essays tended to offer detailed descriptions of measures but did not go further than this. There were some interesting responses making generally good use of material set in the context of Brazil. Material set in the UK was not that well assessed with factual details of regional policies in particular being poorly known. Rather more convincing material was offered regarding gender and race inequalities. Differentials in physical resources were not well considered.

## F764 Geographical Skills

### General Comments:

Candidates produced a wide range of performance. The candidates that achieved the top marks did so by directly answering the question, using detailed examples taken from their own investigations and keeping tightly focused on the requirements of the question. Those more marginal candidates had two or more of these essential elements missing. This examination proved quite challenging for some candidates who failed to read the question set carefully enough.

Many, again, seemed to see this as a 'write all you know about' paper and missed the key demands to justify and evaluate. Some linkage to spatial or locational dimensions is required – this is what distinguishes geographical investigations from those of other subjects. Centres should remember this when devising investigations and appropriate titles, although there were fewer examples of 'odd' titles than in previous examinations.

The examination is based on the topics and structure spelled out in the specification and it is important that centres follow it carefully. Essay questions will be set that come from different stages of the investigation and candidates are expected to know what constitutes each of the six stages. Too many saw Question 5 as coming from the analysis and interpretation (stage 5 rather than stage 6).

It was the strength or weakness of Section A responses that tended to have the greatest influence on the overall result.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Section A

This section is testing the candidates' basic understanding of the 'tools' of a geographer. Overall this was answered less effectively than Section B. Many know the tools but not when, how and why to use them. There was little evidence of critical thinking in many answers.

#### Question 1

1(a)(i) This was very popular and offered scope for a vast range of investigations both physical and human (many of which could have been their own geographical investigation but applied to a sensible location in the photo). Again, care is needed when considering an appropriate title for an A level geographical investigation: *'Increased tourism has led to increased pollution.'* Could this be done in the time and resources available to A level students? Yes, but it would need a lot of secondary data suggesting the candidate had not read (a)(ii). Some candidates struggled to present evidence from the photograph. Others had not read (a)(ii) as they offered titles that created problems for them in part (ii) as this focused on primary data. For example a title about the investigation of changes in the volume of tourist visitors over time required secondary rather than primary data. Justification was often poor and is an angle that needs more attention. Justification should relate to the nature of the area shown in the photograph: *'The headland in the background has slopes in at least three compass directions so would be ideal for testing the hypothesis that temperatures are higher on a south facing slope.'*

Justification for an investigation, from a map or photograph, might refer to:

Specific – can you see it in the map/photo? (refer to it eg grid reference/position in photo).

Measurable – what will be measured at that location?

Achievable – is it possible in a typical A level investigation in that location?

Realistic – look at the scale/size and nature of the area (quote distances).

Time – would there be enough time to do it?

1(a)(ii) To a large extent the primary data and its collection had to be appropriate to the title given in (a)(i) and possible in the area shown. The chief limitation was the failure to justify the choice of the primary data collection method. The term justify is still clearly not well understood. All too often it was by the use of a questionnaire. Clearly this is appropriate for many investigations but there was an expectation that how it would be set out (and used) would be described in relation to the investigation. This is a 10 mark question so more detail than: '*I would use a questionnaire*' is required. Some were clearly asking very inappropriate questions: '*Do you know anyone with a gambling problem? If so how many 1, 2 – 5, 6-10, 10+.*' Others gave details of systematic sampling along the beach but failed to say what they were sampling or give sufficient details such as distances. Again it needed some reference to the photograph and with an appreciation of the area shown. Answers should try to give the what, where, when, who, how and ultimately the why that data was to be collected.

A useful framework for data collection might include:

location and time/timing;

what data is to be collected (clear link to title);

sampling strategy – type, size;

equipment, questionnaire etc to be used;

method – how is the equipment, questionnaire to be used.

1(b) This was effectively answered with a wide range of reasons why sites should be visited prior to the actual investigation: '*This would enable us to assess the nature and likelihood of any risks and may suggest some of the planned sites would be too dangerous.*' Some suggested that, however ideal, pre-visits are too time consuming or might distort later findings. Some suggested such a visit was the role for teachers: '*To ensure the investigation is do-able and to check all permissions for access have been obtained the teacher should visit the area before the main investigation.*' This rather misses the point of assessing the value of a visit regardless of who makes it.

## Question 2

2(a) The key was that such a sketch map lacked many of the basic features needed to make it effective such as a meaningful title, scale, key and north direction. Again the inability of the sketch map to show the locational aspects was often ignored suggesting candidates did not appreciate its role in stage 2 of the investigation.

2(b) As this is a part (b) there is no direct linkage to (a) but some candidates did compare maps and sketch maps or field sketches so struggled to get out of a Level 1 type response. Some of the best answers suggested that maps and photographs had differing uses at different stages of the investigation: '*Maps are ideal for planning the investigation whilst photographs can be used to collect or show data so aiding data collection.*' Many candidates focused on their comparative usefulness rather than their specific use in investigations: '*Maps are ideal for giving exact measurements, names of places and the function of buildings e.g. post office whilst photographs give images of a moment in time but do show aspects such as weather, colour and number of pedestrians.*' This tended to ignore their comparative usefulness in geographical investigations so would be unlikely to reach a Level 3 type response. Candidates should always think through each of the 6 stages and see if maps/photos could support them.

2(c) Answers were generally disappointing, with few really aware of what flow charts can show about 'volumes of movement'. Many had no idea about them showing directions, routes or being subdivided to show various sub-divisions e.g. types of traffic. Some clearly were confused over the use and scale of flow charts: *'Flow charts are ideal for showing the daily movements in and out of London.'* Many tried to give generic answers that could fit any type of chart or graph: *'It is very visual and easy to draw although you have to be careful with the scale.'* Again this stresses that candidates should read all sub parts of a question before they attempt it.

### Question 3

3(a)(i) This was generally done well but few candidates went beyond describing the two best fit lines. This kept them in a Level 1 type response. Higher level responses pointed out the anomalies and or questioned the appropriate use of the best fit line: *'The data is not well clustered around the best fit line suggesting that these are inappropriate.'* Some went further and suggested that the two graphs suggested further data was needed as no overall trend emerged.

3(a)(ii) This could have been addressed in a wide variety of ways. The majority went for the Mann-Whitney test but then spent excessive time/space describing it (or even calculating an example) rather than justifying its use. Some clearly confused this test with Spearman's rank but showed this by saying the result varied between +1 and -1. The simplest approach of using mean (and standard deviation) or median (and interquartile range) were rare but some developed ingenious approaches: *'If you did a Spearman's rank correlation of each of the data sets you could compare the results to see if they were greatly different in the strengths of their relative correlation with distance up the beach.'* In most cases it was the level of justification that let candidates down. Few went beyond the simplistic (referring to median/range): *'This method was quick, simple and did not involve complicated calculations.'*

3(b) This was clearly known but too many candidates wasted time/space describing how to do it rather evaluating its usefulness. Few seemed to know its statistical significance in terms of enabling other statistical tests but most did suggest some of its limitations: *'It is difficult to ensure 'random' is really random, and random may miss a major feature of an area or even repeat the sampling of the same feature a number of times.'* Both pros and cons of this method of sampling were expected at the higher level albeit not necessarily balanced.

### Section B

Both questions are compulsory and must show evidence of candidates carrying out real investigations. Generally this was more effective than in June 2010 with some good reference to their real experiences but at times weaker candidates made it all too obvious that they were quoting all of their own practical experiences rather than selecting the appropriate sections needed by the question.

Answers had to be relevant to the title of the investigation. There is no need to use the same title for both questions although about 80% did, greatly up from the summer.

Try to avoid vague titles such as: *'To investigate pebble size on the beach'*

Where and what aspect? – an improvement would be: *'To investigate the changes in pebble size down drift on Slapton beach.'* Some had titles that were in reality difficult to research such as: *'How does Bengal Spice takeaway affect the village of Deddington?'*

Those candidates that achieved the highest grades:

demonstrated consistently good evaluation – not just the problems;  
 showed detailed locational knowledge– there was a clear sense of place;  
 gave good evidence of their investigation;  
 used appropriate and accurate geographical vocabulary;  
 showed they understood cause-effect relationships – they knew why they were doing a particular activity;  
 answered the question set.

It is not expected that answers will necessarily be of equal length in Section B. In this case it was quite possible to evaluate the relative importance of the two types of data in Question 4 in a fairly concise way whereas Question 5 might require a greater length being essentially a two part answer. It is the depth of evaluation that is critical.

#### Question 4

Clearly the relative contribution varied with the nature of the investigation and the various stages of the investigation. It was perfectly acceptable to say one type of data contributed little as long as this was explained: *'I used very little secondary data as there was no published data on the stream we measured and as we were the first group to measure it we could not refer to other's data.'* To some extent this depended on how candidates saw the two types of data. One approach was to see secondary data eg maps and aerial photos as setting the scene at the planning stage whilst others saw secondary data as comparators to aid analysis or used to increase the data pool and so increase its reliability and accuracy: *'Due to the time constraints we could only measure two transects up the beach so to increase our data and make statistical tests more reliable we used the data processed by the other three groups, giving us eight transects in all.'* Some candidates missed some of the obvious use of secondary data – such as the use of reference books, maps and tables of significance.

It is important that candidates ensure they know what is included in the QCA definition of primary and secondary data as set out in the specification. Thus some candidates included effectively the use of formulae and textbooks as secondary data. Some saw external 'experts', such as tutors from the Field Studies Council, as sources of secondary data: *'Our luminary was Colin who supplied us with data on pH.'* Too many candidates included material that was better placed in answers to Question 5.

The table below may help candidates:

Stage	Primary data	Secondary data
1		Textbook theory Teacher
2	Risk assessment (pilot) Own photos	OS map/GIS/photos Previous investigations Textbooks for strategy Expert eg FSC
3	Key as own data	Census etc Goad maps Reports, brochures etc FSC information Previous investigations
4		Textbook
5		Formulae Other groups Previous investigations
6		Textbook – explanations

## Question 5

This was from stage 6 of an investigation but clearly required reference to other stages such as the planning and data collection stages.

There were two elements to this question but the exact balance varied with the relative success of the investigation. On the whole this question was answered well, with an effective review of the success of the different elements of the investigation and a range of appropriate improvements. Most candidates focused on sampling issues or equipment failure: *'Someone left the trowels at school so we had to use our hands to get samples of soil to test its pH.'* This rather simplistic comment was then developed effectively: *'This meant that sweat from our hands might have distorted the pH reading and our fingers did not always go to the same depth in the soil so we might have been sampling from different horizons.'*

Far fewer candidates evaluated the basics such as the nature of the investigation, its location and the time available: *'We carried out our dune survey in February when it was difficult to get an accurate idea of the types, height and coverage of plant species.'* Suggestions for improvements were sound and ranged from the strategic: *'It would have been more realistic to take pedestrian counts throughout the week to see how these varied especially at weekends.'* To the somewhat unclear equipment improvements: *'To get a more accurate measurement of the river width we should have used GIS.'*

It is worth remembering that all investigations, however successful, can be made more accurate and reliable by increasing the number of measurements and extending the time available or repeating the investigation at different times eg seasons or locations.

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