

Geography

Entry Level Certificate **R406**

OCR Report to Centres

June 2012

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

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

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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CONTENTS

Entry Level Certificate

Geography (R406)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Content	Page
R406 Entry Level Geography	1

R406 Entry Level Geography

General Comments:

Centres are to be congratulated again on the standard of their students' work and their marking of this work. In the majority of cases the levels based mark scheme had been applied correctly.

There was the usual variety of work ranging from straight adaptation of OCR provided internal assessment materials to those centres where a specific package has been planned to tailor to the local needs of the community the school serves and the specific interests and/or needs of the students following the course. Inevitably the latter centres tend to be the ones where the students attain higher marks because their interest has been maintained throughout the course.

As centres continue to move towards planning new courses for their students, I would like to remind centres that the new specification should allow the better field study based tasks from previous specifications to be utilised. It is also worth noting that there is still the opportunity to use oral assessment (recorded for moderation) as part of the Key Theme project.

It is good to see the growth of this new specification this year and to see the take up of centres new to the specification. The marked step up in the level of preparation of work and resources from previous ELC Geography work continues with some centres revising work used last year for this year's course. Well done to staff and students alike for this.

The new format of an internal investigation and a centre administered 'examination' continues to work well. There were still a few minor issues with some centres not fully realising that both elements of the work were required for moderation, though the time frame for completing the moderation process allowed these misunderstandings to be cleared quickly.

The Key Theme Project saw a variety of themes being addressed. Most centres developed one piece of work, in some cases using the work planned for GCSE studies and adapting the delivery and assessment of the resulting study. A few centres developed a series of mini investigations which also worked very successfully. Where GCSE work has been submitted for ELC it is the centres responsibility to ensure that the ELC mark sheet is applied to the work and that annotation is utilised to demonstrate to the moderator where the various criteria have been met in the candidate's work.

Again there was a wide variety of work developed and used. Many appeared to have used ideas from the exemplar work on the OCR website, some even using aspects of this integrated into their own work such as the decision making exercises. Most centres introduced an aspect of primary data collection though a few chose to base their work on secondary research. The range of themes included; shopping centre developments, changes/growth in urban areas, physical geography investigations of coasts or rivers, natural hazards (mostly through secondary research), national parks (in particular the impact and management of visitor pressures) and 'my place'. There was no dominant theme in this range of studies though urban data collection was more common than the use of rural areas for field work.

It is refreshing to see students at ELC level developing extended studies, obviously having spent a considerable amount of time researching and presenting their information. Many centres make excellent use of ICT facilities to develop this work. Personal teaching experience suggests that students at this level are often motivated by the ability to produce professional looking work through ICT and will then take a greater sense of ownership of their studies. The work seen this June certainly bears out this idea. Centres are starting to make good use of ICT to develop their studies with PowerPoint presentations (saved to disc or USB memory drives for moderation).

OCR Report to Centres – June 2012

The internally administered examination once again proved very successful with no suggestion of misinterpretation of the extended answer tasks within the papers. Interestingly more centres selected Option Two for this assessment this year.

In marking terms most centres got their assessment of their students' work right. In the few instances where moderators disagreed with centre marks, the moderation team felt that this was more the result of an unwillingness to use the full range of marks in the mark band range rather than incorrectly assigning work to level one, two or three for the various Assessment Objectives. Where the assessor feels that most of the criteria for a mark band have been covered the mark should reflect this and be at the higher end of the range for that mark band.

Administration throughout was felt to be very good by the moderation team. Thank you to all centres entering students for this assessment, this certainly helps the process to run more smoothly and quickly.

Finally, attention must be drawn to the OCR website where documents and support materials for the specification can be found. These include specimen materials for both tasks, interactive marking coversheet, teacher handbook and some sample lesson plans. For centres considering this specification these documents and support materials should prove very helpful.

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