GCE

Geography

Advanced GCE **A2 H483**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS H083**

OCR Report to Centres

January 2013

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

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.

CONTENTS

Advanced GCE Geography (H483)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE Geography (H083)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Overview

General Comments:

There seemed to be a marked rise in standards of work this session, especially at AS. Far fewer candidates did not attempt sections, wrote single side essays or did not produce English of an acceptable quality.

Some candidates still struggle to express their ideas, particularly in Section A in all four 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.

Candidates need to carefully read the full question or key terms in the question, especially at A2. Not doing this is the single biggest cause of under-achievement. Too many candidates offer pre-learnt answers that do not fit exactly the demands of the wording of the question. Some geographical or specification terms were not understood eg social factors.

The quality of handwriting remains an issue. Centres should consider using word processors for their candidates where this is a problem.

Comments on the AS units:

Consistency is the key for doing well at AS. 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.

Those aspects of the examination that were encouraging included: good knowledge and understanding of the topics (especially cause and effect) and broadly effective essay writing, which is often a new challenge to AS candidates.

Section A

Parts (a) and (b)

Key points to remember:

- refer specifically to the data or the resource shown in the figure in part (a)(i)
- follow the instruction to describe (what can be seen) rather than suggesting generic points
- carefully read the particular terms in questions
- keep to the number of points requested - if in doubt number them
- don’t include irrelevant ‘chat’ or introductions that repeat the question
- ensure that basic geographical terms are understood
- clearly indicate in the margin which Section B question is being answered
- clearly indicate when answers go onto additional pages

Parts (c)/(d)

Key points to remember:

- ensure that appropriate examples are used
- ensure that terms used in the questions are addressed eg sustainability
- include sketch maps or diagrams if appropriate
- don’t include long sections of irrelevant material

- include material that is clearly and tightly based on the example(s), rather than a lot of generic material
- ensure that when a second example is used it does not just repeat what the first exemplified

Section B

Essays were usually well argued and candidates usually 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
- think if a sketch map or diagram helps the argument
- keep it all relevant to and focused on the question posed
- try to keep answers analytical and explanatory, rather than be purely descriptive
- make it locational with a clear sense of place
- use more local examples
- structure answers using paragraphs, each with a distinctive aspect
- produce a plan, which helps organise an answer

Comments on the A2 units:

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 an aspect of their own investigation but often this resulted in a description of how they did their investigation or how they would improve it. In F763 too many candidates gave lengthy sections on the causes of their issue(s) in Section A.

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

- read the question carefully and then answer each aspect of it
- be relevant – don't include material 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:

Many candidates seemed unfamiliar with the term “sub-aerial” that was used in Q2 (b); this term is used in the specification and distinguishes processes such as weathering and mass movement from wave processes. A similar, although far less significant, lack of familiarity occurred in Q1 (b) with the use of “slope processes” as distinct from channel processes.

As is often the case, candidates tended to lose marks in many questions through a lack of clear focus on the precise question wording. There was also a tendency for answers to 9- mark questions, requiring the use of examples, to lack located evidence to support the points being made. This was less of an issue in essays where answers often contained a great deal of located information, although not all of it was always directly relevant to the question.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A

River Environments

1(a)(i) Most answers scored well and candidates showed effective descriptive skills. The general trend in the variations was not always recognised. Data was well used.

1(a)(ii) Answers were of variable quality. References to rock type seldom went beyond a basic idea of “hard” and “soft”. The use of terms such as “unconsolidated” would help, as would references to lines of weakness. Those using velocity often produced clearer explanations; the best made explicit links to the availability of energy.

1(b) Many produced competent answers based on weathering processes with freeze-thaw most widely used. Some answers referred to mass movement processes. Not all responses had a secure grasp of the differences between mechanisms such as slide and slump.

1(c) Many answers started with the naming of an example, but this was then seldom referred to again. The result was that responses were very generic rather than specifically located. References to imports and exports, for example, seldom named materials or products. Many candidates used conservation as an activity; more specific reference to species and habitat detail would aid the quality of explanation for the named example.

Coastal Environments

2(a)(i) Most answers scored well and candidates showed effective descriptive skills. The general trend in the variations was usually recognised. Data was well used.

2(a)(ii) Most answers used appropriate factors such as rock type and wave energy. References to rock type need to go beyond a basic idea of “hard” and “soft” in order to access Level 2. The use of terms such as “unconsolidated” would help, as would references to lines of weakness. Those using wave type often produced clearer explanations; the best made explicit links to the availability of energy. Some answers did not refer to “these” variations and used temporal rather than spatial factors such as tides.

2(b) There was much confusion over the term "sub-aerial" with many answers referring to wave processes. Some produced competent answers based on weathering processes with freeze-thaw and salt crystallisation most widely used. Some answers referred to mass movement processes. Not all responses had a secure grasp of the differences between mechanisms such as slide, creep and slump.

2(c) Many answers started with the naming of an example, but this was then seldom referred to again. The result was that responses were very generic rather than specifically located. References to imports and exports, for example, seldom named materials or products. Many candidates used tourism as an activity; more specific reference to climate data would aid the quality of explanation for the named example.

Cold Environments

3(a)(i) Most candidates were able to extract appropriate evidence from the resource and the terms used in the question seemed to be very well known.

3(a)(ii) The concept of sustainability was very familiar; it is a theme that runs through the specification. Answers sometimes lacked reference to the specific scheme in the question. Confusion existed over the needs of future generations and the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

3(b) Most answers included reference to appropriate ways. Explanations were of variable depth and accuracy. Transpiration and evapotranspiration seemed to be used synonymously. Confusion existed over root systems, with many suggesting that the permafrost was a supply of water. Good answers made explicit links to the environmental conditions to which species were adapting.

3(c) Many answers were very descriptive with few focusing on "change". Some lacked all linkage to ecosystems, instead concentrating on the development of thermokarst. The question required the use of more than one human activity. More reference to change in food chains or biodiversity would have enhanced many responses.

3(d) The most popular landforms used were erosional, although some used depositional examples such as moraines. Level 2 answers typically showed some understanding of specific erosion mechanisms such as plucking and abrasion. The best answers in Level 3 made explicit links to the shaping of the landform; abrasion during rotational movement leading to deepening of a cirque being a good illustration of this quality. Located examples were not required, but many used them anyway; this is perfectly acceptable and may help the candidate ensure sufficient focus.

Hot Arid and Semi-Arid Environments

4(a)(i) Most candidates were able to extract appropriate evidence from the resource and the terms used in the question seemed to be very well known.

4(a)(ii) The concept of sustainability was very familiar; it is a theme that runs through the specification. Confusion existed over the needs of future generations and the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Answers sometimes lacked reference to the specific scheme in the question.

4(b) Most answers included reference to appropriate ways. Explanations were of variable depth and accuracy. Transpiration and evapotranspiration seemed to be used synonymously. There was sometimes confusion over why some plants have tap roots and others extensive shallow roots; both are valid if explained correctly and references to the depth of the water table helped.

4(c) Many answers were very descriptive with few focusing on "change". Some lacked all linkage to ecosystems, instead concentrating on the human activities themselves. The question required the use of more than one human activity. More reference to change in biodiversity or food chains would have enhanced many responses.

4(d) The most popular landforms used were depositional with dunes especially popular, although some used erosional examples such as yardangs. Few were able to explain why dunes initially form; most only explained their subsequent migration. Level 2 answers typically showed some understanding of specific erosion mechanisms such as abrasion through saltating sand grains. The best answers in Level 3 made explicit links to the shaping of the landform; abrasion taking place close to the surface eroding the base of pedestal rocks being a good illustration of this quality. Located examples were not required, but many used them anyway; this is perfectly acceptable and may help the candidate ensure sufficient focus.

Section B

River Environments

5 This was a very popular question with many answers using the River Thames and/or the Yangtze as their examples. Some candidates focused too much on flood management as a theme and this inevitably seemed to result in inappropriate conflicts or an emphasis on "issues" rather than conflicts between different land uses. Those who used the Colorado River showed good locational knowledge. Conflicts referred to were mainly focused on disputes over water allocation rather than those between different land uses as required by the question and so did not score well.

The generic principles of management seemed to be well understood. To produce effective answers, candidates needed to ensure that they explicitly "explained" how the management strategies employed resolved the conflict. Answers would be improved by showing a clear understanding of who is responsible for management decisions; many answers simply refer to "they", rather than showing awareness of the Environment Agency and local council policies.

Coastal Environments

6 This was also a very popular question with many answers using the Solent, Dubai or St. Lucia as their examples. Some candidates focused too much on erosion or flood management as a theme and this inevitably seemed to result in inappropriate conflicts or an emphasis on "issues" rather than conflicts between different activities. Those who used the Solent showed good locational knowledge, whereas other examples used were rather vague. The conflicts sometimes used were focused on disputes over whether to defend the coastline or not, rather than those between different human activities as required by the question and so did not score well.

The generic principles of management seemed to be well understood. To produce effective answers, candidates needed to ensure that they explicitly "explained" how the management strategies employed resolved the conflict. Answers would be improved by showing a clear understanding of who is responsible for management decisions; many answers simply refer to "they", rather than showing awareness of the Environment Agency and local council policies.

Cold Environments

7 Few answered this question but those who did showed secure knowledge of Alaska, Alps, Nepal and Antarctica. The key to a successful answer was to provide a clear focus on the challenges "for" development rather than "from" development. Most references to the environment were about the negative impacts of development rather than the inherent difficulties caused by its fragility. Social challenges were more clearly addressed with a focus on the traditional lifestyles of the indigenous populations being a common theme. Antarctica does not lend itself so well to this. Economic challenges generally related to remoteness. A key issue here is the additional costs involved in overcoming the challenges in order for development to take place. This was often neglected and many answers spent too long describing how the challenges could be overcome without specifically referring to the additional costs and time involved.

To score well in AO2 candidates needed to respond to the command word "examine" and comment on the challenges, referring perhaps to similarities/differences between them.

Hot Arid and Semi-Arid Environments

8 Very few answered this question but those who did showed secure knowledge of Arches National Park, Draa Valley and central Australia. The key to a successful answer was to provide a clear focus on the challenges "for" development rather than "from" development. Most references to the environment were about the negative impacts of development rather than the inherent difficulties caused by its fragility. Social challenges were more clearly addressed with a focus on the traditional lifestyles of the indigenous populations being a common theme. Economic challenges generally related to remoteness. A key issue here is the additional costs involved in overcoming the challenges in order for development to take place. This was often neglected and many answers spent too long describing how the challenges could be overcome without specifically referring to the additional costs and time involved.

To score well in AO2 candidates needed to respond to the command word "examine" and comment on the challenges, referring perhaps to similarities/differences between them.

F762 Managing Change in Human Environments

General Comments:

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 urban dereliction, atmospheric pollution, urban/rural sustainability, physical factors (influence the supply of renewable energy), political decisions, exploitation (of energy resources) were not always understood, resulting in some candidates not fully addressing particular aspects of certain questions. A second concern was the use of examples which were somewhat generic or not entirely appropriate, at times because of their historical nature. While general examples (which give ideas about the topic rather than consider the specific aspect of the topic under discussion) can give some insight into the question they often lead to answers which are rather vague or superficial and can be rather descriptive. This can be a significant factor in showing depth of understanding. The choice of example(s) often dictates the overall quality of the response; this is very noticeable at the higher mark levels.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A

Managing Urban Change

1(a)(i) A range of points was identified, including closed businesses, boarded up housing, lack of maintenance and care of the street and general points about neglect and rubbish in the street. A small number of candidates suggested that the building in the distance looked like a closed factory. A number of candidates went beyond the brief of the question and began to consider reasons for the general state of the area. This was clearly not appropriate for this question and in some cases clearly caused confusion in relation to the following question 1(a)(ii).

1(a)(ii) The majority of candidates showed a good understanding of this question and were able to offer thoughtful and appropriate reasons why the area in Fig. 1 had become run down. The more common observations were based on the closure of industry and people moving away from the area. Some candidates developed this theme by introducing the “spiral of decline” idea and bringing in observations about the negative multiplier, often to good effect.

Less common ideas included points about crime and the reputation of the area making it less attractive so people move away, and general points about the age and quality of the buildings and facilities with suggestions that the area had been left while awaiting regeneration. A small number of candidates suggested that the current state of the area may be the result of a natural disaster. Those candidates who identified any two of these reasons and showed a clear understanding of how they might result in the situation shown in Fig. 1 scored high marks.

1(b) Virtually all candidates were able to show some understanding about atmospheric pollution in urban areas, the great majority mentioning vehicle pollution. What tended to differentiate responses was the extent to which candidates picked up the command “urban change”. Those that did generally produced very effective and well documented answers. In the context of “change”, a significant number of candidates considered factors such as the increase in the number of vehicles, the development of industry and power stations and the growth of unregulated urban areas that might be burning coal. A small number of candidates developed this theme by suggesting that

environmental legislation had not kept up with rapid change which added to the risk of atmospheric pollution pressures. It was evident that a very small number of candidates were not totally clear about the term “atmospheric” and consequently brought in ideas that were not entirely appropriate.

1(c) There were three main approaches to this question. One approach was where candidates looked at examples of carbon neutral housing developments or regeneration projects where elements of sustainable management had been incorporated. The second approach was where examples of eco-towns/cities were used to illustrate the range of methods that are being used to ensure that urban areas are as sustainable as possible. The third approach tended to focus on individual elements of urban management which might be considered to be part of a broader sustainable strategy. In many cases the focus for this approach was transport management. Of these approaches, the first two appeared to give the best opportunity to show an understanding of the question. Those candidates who took a broader, more holistic view of sustainability generally produced more satisfactory answers. The starting point for the best answers was usually an appreciation that sustainability includes social, economic and environmental elements. Where this idea was developed through the use of appropriate example(s) responses were often very impressive. Where the focus was on one element of sustainability (usually transport or housing) or on one broad aspect (often environmental) answers tended to be rather limited and did not always show a clear understanding of the idea of “sustainability”.

Managing Rural Change

2(a)(i) A range of points was identified, including closed businesses, boarded up housing, lack of maintenance and care, vegetation growing out of the buildings and general points about neglect. A small number of candidates suggested that there was a link between declining business and vacant accommodation in relation to rural areas. A number of candidates went beyond the brief of the question and began to consider reasons for decline in the area shown on the photograph. This was clearly not appropriate for this question and in some cases clearly caused confusion in relation to the following question 2(a)(ii).

2(a)(ii) The majority of candidates showed a good understanding of this question and were able to offer thoughtful and appropriate reasons why the area in Fig. 2 may have declined. The closure of local industry or decline of farming were seen as significant factors by a number of candidates, many developing this theme by suggesting that these factors would lead to out migration and subsequent negative multiplier factors.

Other ideas included points about younger people moving away resulting in changing population structures and declining populations, the seasonal impact of second home ownership and general observations about a lack of opportunities or investment in the area. The concept of “threshold” in relation to the success of rural business was considered by a number of candidates. Those candidates who suggested two appropriate reasons and were able to show clear “cause-effect” links generally produced very sound and effective answers.

2(b) The majority of candidates showed some understanding of the question and were able to offer appropriate reasons for the increase in traffic congestion in rural areas, although “rural” was often considered in terms of “urban fringe” areas. Responses tended to fall into two categories. A number of candidates offered fairly generic ideas about increasing wealth and car ownership. While these can be considered reasonable ideas they were not always well linked into the basic reference to “rural areas” and consequently this was often self-limiting. Those candidates who clearly identified appropriate reasons which were very focused on rural areas (in some cases

quoting places) often produced excellent answers. Observations in this context included points about growing residential population, increasing numbers of road commuters and growing numbers of seasonal visitors. A small number of candidates considered a lack of management in the face of growing vehicle numbers as a reason for increasing congestion or the issue of seasonality creating management challenges.

2(c) The strength of responses to this question was often dictated by the level of locational detail shown. Where candidates had well located and detailed examples at their command they generally produced thoughtful and effective responses. Where they did not use clearly focused examples, responses were usually quite generic and lacked sufficient detail to reach the higher levels. In most cases candidates focused on environmental and/or economic factors. The thrust of the discussion in these cases was generally about protecting and conserving the environment and maintaining socio-economic cohesion in rural areas. Where candidates linked these ideas to an appreciation of sustainability they often produced very useful answers. A number of candidates used the idea of National Parks as a sustainable management system. This avenue of approach produced quite varied responses, from the basic and fairly descriptive (footpath and litter issues) to more detailed and analytical observations about how some of the National Park strategies might be considered to be sustainable. The quality of these responses was often dictated by the extent to which candidates went beyond simply discussing environmental considerations.

The Energy Issue

3(a)(i) The majority of candidates used Fig. 3 effectively to offer a general description of the variations in energy consumption in Africa. A significant proportion of candidates developed their ideas by using the specific data in the key. A small number of candidates did not offer a complete description of energy consumption, some simply picking out the highest and lowest numbers with little or no reference to the map.

3(a)(ii) The majority of candidates showed a good general understanding of the question and were able to suggest reasons for the variation in energy consumption within Africa. Most candidates considered that level of wealth played a significant part in determining energy consumption, in many cases offering quite detailed observations about the “cause-effect” links between these two variables. Many candidates found a second reason more difficult to identify, in some cases tending to restate observations about the impacts relating to levels of wealth. Those candidates who did identify a second reason often came up with thoughtful points, including observations about energy supply variations (sometimes linked to the idea of “land locked” countries), levels of infrastructure development, relative amounts of manufacturing industry, and points about rurality. A number of candidates made observations about the use of fuel wood, a number indicating that this might not actually be counted in consumption data. A number of candidates translated “energy consumption” into “oil consumption”, consequently basing their response on an understanding of oil supply. This tended to narrow the question, making it more difficult to score at the highest level.

3(b) The majority of candidates were able to identify two physical factors which might influence the supply of renewable energy. Observations about the amount of sunshine, wind and surface water were commonly used, at times somewhat superficially. A number of candidates made observations which suggested a rather simplistic understanding of the question. Examples included points about the need to be near the equator in order to take advantage of solar energy or the need for very strong winds or coastal locations to be able to generate wind energy. Although these ideas may have given a useful opportunity to consider the supply of renewable energy in a relative sense, they were rather too frequently considered in an “all or nothing”

context. A number of candidates did not pick up the command "explain" and offered only a basic, generic description of physical factors that might affect energy supply. Those candidates who offered appropriate physical factors and were able to consider why they were influential in terms of energy supply generally produced sound responses which achieved high marks. A small number of candidates did not pick up the key words "renewable energy" and discussed either any type of energy supply or just non-renewable energy supply. This approach was clearly not appropriate.

3(c) "Political decisions" were often seen in a very generic way rather than with a clear focus on energy supply as expressed in the question. Consequently, observations about corruption in Nigeria and the use of energy revenues to develop social services in Norway did not fully address the question. Those candidates that did clearly focus on the link between political decisions and energy supply often produced excellent answers. More commonly used ideas included observations about decisions to encourage the development and use of renewable energy (California, Germany and the UK were frequently used examples), points about planning and government policy, and observations about environmental legislation influencing energy supply decisions. A number of candidates included international political points, mentioning international agreements to reduce the use of fossil fuels or develop renewables, or observations about the restrictions imposed in relation to the development of nuclear energy.

The Growth of Tourism

4(a)(i) The majority of candidates used Fig. 4 effectively to offer a general description of the variations in international tourist arrivals in Africa. A significant proportion of candidates developed their ideas by using the specific data in the key. A small number of candidates did not offer a complete description of international tourist arrivals, some simply picking out the highest and lowest numbers with little or no reference to the map.

4(a)(ii) The majority of candidates showed a good general understanding of the question and were able to suggest reasons for the variation in tourist arrivals within Africa. Most candidates considered that levels of development played a significant part in determining the number of tourist arrivals, in many cases offering quite detailed observations about the "cause-effect" links between these two variables. Some candidates found a second reason more difficult to identify, in some cases tending to restate observations relating to levels of development. Those candidates who did identify a second reason often came up with thoughtful points, including observations about the varying range of physical and human attractions, personal safety, variations in levels of accessibility and infrastructure and the relative use of tourism as a driver for economic development.

4(b) It was evident that a number of candidates had only a limited understanding of what constituted a "social factor" in the context of the question. Consequently discussion frequently drifted towards what might be considered largely economic factors, the more common being about relative incomes, changing patterns of wealth and observations about marketing. Where candidates made points which were largely concerned with economic factors these were creditworthy when they touched on the idea of social decision making. However, in general these types of observations had only marginal worth in relation to the context of the question. Those candidates that did focus clearly on social factors often produced thoughtful answers, including points about the influence of education and cultural exploration. A number of candidates took a broader view by considering how demographic change (changing family size, age of having children) might influence travel choices.

4(c) The strength of responses to this question was often dictated by the level of locational detail shown. Where candidates had well located and detailed examples at their command they generally produced thoughtful and effective responses. Where they did not use clearly focused examples responses were usually quite generic and lacked sufficient detail to reach the higher levels. An example of this was seen in a number of cases where the focus of the answer was largely about "jobs and money", observations that could clearly be appropriate to any location. A significant number of candidates were able to develop this theme further by considering broader multiplier impacts and showing how increasing employment opportunities created broader infrastructure advantages and opportunities for social development. A small number of candidates considered that the growth of tourism also created opportunities for the preservation of environments and cultures. This approach, when combined with effectively documented case studies often produced very sophisticated and impressive responses.

Section B

Managing Urban Change

5 The majority of candidates tended to focus on land use rather than the "pattern" of land use. In many cases candidates built up a detailed picture of why particular land uses were found in particular parts of an urban area, often using very detailed knowledge of one particular place. Where candidates showed a broad understanding of a particular urban area and considered a number of different (or changing) land uses this approach was successful because it picked up the general idea of "pattern" in the overall discussion. However, where this approach considered a very narrow range of land uses it tended to drift into a general description of locational factors, usually with no real overall understanding of "pattern of land use". Those candidates that did pick up on the idea of the pattern of land use often used land use models as a background to the essay. The quality of these responses was generally dictated by the extent to which candidates related the land use models to their chosen example(s). Responses were often very effective where candidates were able to describe the land use models and then compare them with the pattern of land use of their chosen example(s). Where they were not able to express this level of understanding the essay increasingly became a description of the land use models with tentative links to the chosen example(s).

Managing Rural Change

6 The main thrusts of the majority of answers, was based on the link between access and opportunities in rural areas and the economic possibilities offered by the development of tourism. The first of these ideas was often discussed in terms of the rural-urban fringe, where it was considered that ease of access gave the opportunity for the development of housing in rural areas as more people were able to commute to urban areas for employment. When supported by effectively developed and located examples this approach produced thoughtful responses. A significant number of candidates used the development (or not) of tourism as a discussion point. The main considerations expressed were that some areas have easier access so are able to attract more visitors, resulting in opportunities for economic development. Some candidates used local, small scale examples very effectively to develop this theme, while other candidates brought in more commonly used examples such as the Peak District National Park. This theme was further developed by a number of candidates who also expressed the view that some areas had a broader range of possibilities because of their human or physical characteristics. There were a number of other approaches to the question, some of which took a broader view and discussed the idea of development in terms of both opportunities and constraints. The more

commonly used ideas in this type of discussion centred on agriculture, mining and forestry. A small number of candidates considered how planning decisions and redevelopment strategies can either help to encourage or discourage development in rural areas. Where these answers were supported by appropriate examples responses were often very impressive.

The Energy Issue

7 The idea of "problems" was often considered in terms of social, economic and environmental issues. Examples were chosen from a wide range of places, the more commonly used being oil exploitation in Nigeria and Alaska and the development of hydro-electricity in China (the Three Gorges Dam scheme). The quality of responses to this question was generally dictated by the depth of locational detail and how effectively the locational information was used. Those candidates who selected appropriate examples and used them to offer a detailed analysis of the question usually produced thoughtful answers, many of which showed a high level of understanding. A small number of candidates took a broader, more global view, considering that the exploitation of energy resources created environmental issues such as acid rain and global warming. This approach did not address the key idea of the question where candidates were asked to express their understanding through the use of "located examples".

The Growth of Tourism

8 The idea of "problems" was often considered more specifically in relation to environmental issues, although a number of candidates brought in wider points about social, political and economic issues. Examples were chosen from a wide range of places, the more commonly used being coastal and environmental tourism in Kenya, tourism development in Jamaica and tourism in Myanmar. Other examples were often chosen to express particular issues, for example using national parks to consider environmental issues. This approach was often very effective since it used a clearly appropriate example to make a specifically identified point, rather than making general observations with only tentative links to the selected example. The quality of responses to this question was generally dictated by the depth of locational detail and how effectively the locational information was used. Those candidates who selected appropriate examples and used them to offer a detailed analysis of the question usually produced thoughtful answers, many of which showed a high level of understanding.

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 consequently feedback is limited.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A

The standard of response ran right across the whole range of marks available although generally candidates offered effective responses focusing on one geographical issue and then offered two or three (and occasionally more) appropriate strategies. There is, however, the continuing trend of too many candidates approaching this section with what reads as pre-learned answers: the resource is not referred to, issue and strategies do not relate directly to the specific context of the question.

Earth hazards

1 Nearly every script contained an answer to this question. The majority of candidates picked up on the velocity aspect of the table. Mentioning the potentially severe hazard of high velocity flows to human activities. Generally strategies were valid with afforestation, slope re-grading, drainage, pinning, netting and land-use zoning the most frequently discussed. Some candidates offered quite detailed descriptions of particular hazards which tended not to answer the actual question in terms of relationship with the resource.

Ecosystems and environments under threat

2 Generally responses tended to lack focus and simply repeated the title by offering such statements as 'The issue is one of environmental degradation.' More convincing were the responses which picked up on a specific location or biome such as tropical rainforests or the semi-arid regions. They were then able to offer more specific strategies such as protection through allocation of status such as national park or world heritage site. A few made effective use of land management strategies.

Climatic hazards

3 Candidates tackling an analysis of the photograph of a large urban area under anticyclonic conditions tended either to focus on photochemical smog or on issues arising from an extended period of high pressure such as a heatwave. Strategies were, in the main, appropriate and offered with sufficient detail, such as measures to reduce the output of pollutants or strategies to ameliorate the effects of persistent hot conditions on inhabitants, in particular the elderly.

Population and resources

4 There was an interesting variety of responses to the resource illustrating the abandoned mine workings. Issues identified included the exhaustion of the resource, the reduction in demand for the resource being mined, or the collapse in price of the resource resulting in the mine becoming uneconomic to operate. Strategies therefore needed to relate directly to whatever was the chosen issue. One comment examiners

feel centres could pass on to their candidates is that the word “mine” does not automatically mean “coal mine”. Quite a few candidates found themselves tied up with discussions about energy supply which had the potential to be appropriate but too often were not. It was disappointing to read so many comments about Chile being a LEDC.

Globalisation

5 The text concerning the impacts of globalisation was generally well handled by candidates selecting this option. They picked up on the issue of the differential impacts and offered suitable strategies such as the role of TNCs, both positive and negative, as well as the management offered by supra-national bodies (WTO for example) and various NGOs.

Development and inequalities

6 Issues such as the inequality at the global scale emerged and it was encouraging to read responses reflecting detailed analysis of the resource such as the names of the five boxes on which one of the quartet in the boat was sitting. It was particularly pleasing when a candidate highlighted the proportion of people in the boat, one person sitting on wealth and economic growth and three people being exhorted to put more effort into “rowing”.

Section B

Earth hazards

7 This was a popular question which, by and large, drew encouraging responses from candidates. It is clear that most candidates were knowledgeable and authoritative regarding both the physical and human factors contributing to flooding. Some chose to offer a factor led analysis while others formed their discussions around case studies: either approach allowed a candidate to reach Level 3. The key aspect for Level 3 in AO2 was the quality of evaluation, a point that is fundamental for all questions in Section B. However detailed the narrative of, flooding along the Rhine or Severn, candidates must explicitly evaluate the respective factors. Many of the more persuasive discussions included coastal flooding, with effective use made of inundations of one or other episodes undergone by Bangladesh, Netherlands, New Orleans and Eastern England for example. Candidates should be reminded of the valuable material to be drawn upon for questions such as this, from their AS studies.

8 This question allowed candidates to draw analysis and factual detail from across the entirety of the Earth hazard Option, when discussing the relative seriousness of primary and secondary impacts. There were good answers dealing with tectonic hazards and in the context of earthquakes, a sharp and effective focus was given to the contrasts between countries at different places along the development continuum. Thus earthquakes and their impacts were compared between California, Chile, Japan and Haiti for example. Likewise, volcanic eruptions and their impacts were compared between Mt St Helens, Pinatubo and Etna. One cautionary note should be passed on to candidates concerning the dynamic nature of the real world we study; countries are not static in their place on the development continuum and it was disappointing to read quite so many references to Chile as a LEDC. The one area of analysis which might have received greater attention is that of the predictability of a hazard and the relationship between this and its impacts, both primary and secondary.

Ecosystems and environments under threat

9 Very few candidates attempted to evaluate the significance of human activity in ecosystem change. Those that were read tended to concentrate on the negative changes brought about due to human activities such as reduction in biodiversity due to deforestation. Virtually no candidates discussed the positive changes human activities can bring about such as species re-introduction. An interesting analysis is to be had here concerning the role of human activities on the loss of species in the first place and then subsequent moves towards recovery.

10 Very few candidates attempted this question. It is therefore difficult to draw any meaningful comments.

Climatic hazards

11 There were some interesting discussions regarding the impacts of tropical storms on different locations. The majority of the relatively small number of responses read focused on contrasts amongst locations at different places along the development continuum. Thus there were valid analyses of Hurricane Katrina and Cyclone Nargis for example. More could have been made of contrasts in impacts between urban and rural and coastal and inland locations. With tropical storms, it is also worth exploring the contrast in impacts between locations receiving the full force of the storm as its very heart passes overhead and those towards the periphery of the storm.

12 Very few candidates attempted this question. It is therefore difficult to draw any meaningful comments.

Population and resources

13 Most answers to this question did not assess the relative significance of natural increase vis a vis migration. Instead they tended to offer detailed assessments of the factors affecting population change such as the role of social factors (female literacy and health care for example) and government. All that was offered in these discussions was of direct influence on rates of natural increase and was not, therefore, evaluating the question's assertion. Those responses which did engage with the role of migration, either regional or international for example, tended to be more convincing and thus found Level 3 in AO2 more accessible.

14 Candidates who evaluated the different ways resources can be defined and classified were usually more convincing when they had substantial knowledge of definitions such as renewable or finite and of the different types of renewability. There were some interesting discussions of how technology influences resource definition with reference to resources such as uranium and oil for example. A focus on energy resources tended to yield encouraging discussions and probably represented a strong inheritance from AS and the energy topic in the F762 unit. In this respect there was much to be made of the changing role through time of resources such as water and wind for example.

Globalisation

15 Very few candidates attempted this question. It is therefore difficult to draw any meaningful comments.

16 There was a good number of evaluations of the impacts of transnational corporations (TNCs) on MEDCs. Most were able to offer some convincing analysis which included aspects such as the ability to outsource manufacturing and thus sustain good levels of profitability, the benefits to MEDC consumers of the affordability of consumer goods made in NICs and LEDCs by TNCs and the loss of polluting industries such as iron and steel and heavy engineering. More subtle were the advantages of Foreign Direct Investment into MEDCs from TNCs with the trend of investment from NIC based TNCs receiving thoughtful analysis. It was good to read essays which understood that the inward flow of FDI has a significant advantage and role in MEDCs.

Development and inequalities

17 The more convincing discussions often began by considering what is meant by 'development' and 'quality of life', highlighting the difficulties encountered with the use of such terms. This was then reflected in an analysis of a variety of measures. Most candidates discussed the effectiveness or otherwise of economic measures such as Gross National Product with the more convincing considering the advantage of the measure being expressed per capita. It was also encouraging to read that candidates appreciate the improvement of economic measures by the application of purchasing power parity to relate to local costs of living. More perhaps could have been made of the under-estimation of wealth creation within a country through the omission of the informal economy and subsistence activities. Most candidates were aware of the Human Development Index measure, but too few were secure in their appreciation of its constituent elements. There were some which regarded HDI as something of a panacea and a more critical appreciation is appropriate. There was also very little reference to qualitative measures of development, something which candidates might find interesting to consider.

18 Very few candidates attempted this question. It is therefore difficult to draw any meaningful comments.

F764 Geographical Skills

General Comments:

Candidates produced a wide range of performance. The group that achieved the top grade 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 who did not score as highly had two or more of these essential elements missing. There were relatively more at the highest level as candidates managed to evaluate more effectively than in previous examinations and clearly understood the geographical concepts.

A small minority still seemed to see this as a 'write all you know about' paper, especially in questions 4 and 5, and missed the key demands to justify and evaluate in many of the questions. Some candidates did not recognise that this was a geography examination which as such expects some linkage to spatial or locational dimensions. This is what distinguishes geographical investigations from those of other subjects. Centres and candidates should remember this when devising investigations and selecting appropriate titles - Where is the question or hypothesis to be investigated? Where is the geography and the spatial variation dimension? Titles without such made answering Q 5 especially difficult.

The examination is based on the topics and structure spelled out in the specification. Essay questions will be set that come from different stages of the investigation and candidates are expected to know what content and activities constitute each of the six stages.

Generally there was evidence of high quality fieldwork which candidates clearly understood and were able to evaluate effectively.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A

This section is testing the candidates' basic understanding of the 'tools' of a geographer. Overall this was answered more effectively than in previous examinations. A minority of candidates know the tools but not when, how and why to use them. It is important that candidates read all three sub-parts of the question as usually the third part is unrelated to the rest of the question to ensure wide coverage of the specification. Generally in this examination these 'additional' parts were done better than in the past.

1(a)(i) This was usually effectively answered with most candidates focusing on the diverse nature of the area that enabled a large variety of human and physical investigations. Better candidates recognised other reasons such as accessibility referring to transport routes or, at the site scale, footpaths. Some also looked at the scale issue:

'This is a relatively small area so it is possible to compare very different [microclimate] sites within a relatively short distance.'

There was a surprising lack of map skills such as the use of grid references to locate features. These skills should be practised for all the geography papers as they are fundamental tools of a geographer.

1(a)(ii) A range of appropriate human or physical geographical concepts were suggested but then many candidates described how they would carry out the investigation rather than justify why it was appropriate to the area shown by the map. Justification should largely be focused on the nature of the area shown on the map rather than its choice as a topic:

'The river in Sq. 5589 is suitable for a river study as it is only about a kilometer long so a number of sample points can be taken within a relatively short distance so saving travel time.'

Some went further and offered aspects of access, safety and even parking. Sometimes candidates should appreciate the need to state the obvious:

'I would carry out a dune transect as the map shows an area of sand dunes on the edge of Pennard Burrows.'

Candidates are expected to refer to the map using place names and/or grid references.
There was more than enough potential from the map that candidates did not need to suggest very speculative titles.

1(b) Nearly all candidates recognised this type of sampling as regularly spaced but many seemed confused over whether it increased or decreased the level of bias in the resulting sample. There were a surprising number of candidates who had an understanding of systematic without stating it was taken at regular intervals. An evaluation should focus on positives as well as negatives.

Positives could include:

- quick and easy
- covers the entire area
- doesn't repeat points
- can be easily repeated

Negatives could include:

- selection of the regular interval is critical and can cause bias or miss aspects
- choice of starting point is often critical
- unsuitable for many statistical tests (unlike random sampling)

Few offered examples of investigations where it could be used effectively:

'Systematic sampling is ideal when asking questionnaires as you could ask every tenth person that passed you.'

Relatively few candidates offered answers based on broad generic points about using sampling in general.

2(a)(i) Too many candidates saw the words 'statistical techniques' and immediately resorted to Spearman's rank although this was clearly inappropriate here as the data is grouped so could not be ranked. Likewise Mann Whitney U could not be used as the data is in categories making the median impossible to find. Many who chose Chi squared outlined it appropriately. There was no requirement to quote the formula but many did. Others chose central tendency focusing chiefly on comparing modes. Many did not appreciate that it was impossible to calculate the mean for one section of the beach.

2(a)(ii) This was a part (ii) question so the presentation methods needed to be appropriate for data arranged in categories. Those that offered isopleths clearly did not appreciate this nuance. "Describe" could have been achieved by well annotated examples of two presentational methods and it was pleasing to see more candidates did support their descriptions with diagrams. The chief discriminator was the level and variety of comparator points. Some were quite basic:

'It is quicker and easier to draw a bar chart than a pie chart.'

Whilst others were more developed:

'On a bar chart absolute values can be read off whilst a pie chart shows percentages – relative rather than absolute values.'

There is an issue over GIS. Many candidates see this as a method in its own right rather than a collection of methods such as layering of data (essentially a version of a choropleth or proportional symbol map). So just putting the term 'GIS' is unlikely to gain any credit.

2(b) This was often very effective with a wide range of pros and cons of using field sketches although some still confuse a sketch with a map. The key was linking it to a geographical investigation. Many used it to locate their investigation or record qualitative data.

Advantages include:

- visual
- can be annotated
- immediate – related to the investigation at the time
- can focus on what is key for the investigation
- cheap

Disadvantages include:

- time consuming
- need some artistic skill
- not objective – sketcher can add or remove aspects
- perspective/scale issues

3(a) This was a very popular question and usually done well although again a small minority ignored the requirement to relate the advantages and disadvantages of using such a sheet to Fig. 3, so producing largely generic answers. Most focused on the advantages but there were many limitations:

'The tally sheet gives no indication of where the survey occurred, at what time of day or for how long it lasted meaning it is impossible to repeat it.'

A number of candidates seemed to think a tally sheet is a way of displaying data so gave erroneous answers on its representational effectiveness.

3(b) A number of candidates saw this as an (a)(ii) question so linked it to tally chart data. When (i) and (ii) are used then the two parts have some linkage but when (a) and (b) are used they are distinctly separate. This was not a question like 2(a)(ii) where some details of presentational techniques needed describing but rather looked at the factors that needed to be taken into consideration when choosing such techniques:

These included:

- type of data
- purpose of presentation
- range or size of data set
- time available
- audience for the data
- availability of ICT
- artistic skill needed

Few really assessed them by saying which they thought was most important but most offered examples and many appreciated the link between the factor and choice of technique:

'The nature of the data is crucial. If it spatial data then a map of some sort would be best while continuous data over time would be best served by a line or scatter graph.'

3(c) This was usually done well with candidates focusing on faulty equipment, human error, extreme or unexpected conditions and simply random chance. Some confused anomalies with inaccuracy and it is important that candidates appreciate the difference especially when conducting their own investigations.

Section B

Both questions are compulsory and must show evidence of candidates carrying out real investigations. Generally this was very effective 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 90% did.

Titles were either much more effective and clearly geographical this series, especially those based on physical topics, or too vague with no statement of what they were trying to investigate. Candidates should be encouraged to state a place in the title.

Those candidates that achieved the highest marks:

- 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
- wrote in a coherent style
- used diagrams to illustrate their points/methods

It is not expected that answers will be of equal length in Section B. In this case it was quite possible to assess the extent to which findings supported the original hypothesis in Q 5 in a fairly concise way whereas Q 4 might require a greater length being essentially a two aspect answer – accuracy and reliability. It is the depth of evaluation that is critical.

4 Many candidates see the terms 'accuracy' and 'reliability' as interchangeable or essentially the same. They are not the same and those candidates that appreciated the difference and looked at how different aspects of their methods ensured accuracy and reliability tended to produce more effective answers.

Some candidates saw this as an open invitation to simply describe the methods used in their investigations or focused on how they could increase the accuracy and reliability. That was not the question. Candidates should be reminded that there is no credit for saying what they could have done or would do if they repeated their investigation.

Most focused on how they ensured accuracy and reliability via:

- using a pilot to test things
- robust sampling strategies
- repeating and averaging measurements
- accurate use of reliable equipment
- careful management of personnel

5 Clearly those candidates who didn't use a question or hypothesis were at a disadvantage especially if there was no obvious underlying geographical model or concept to test. The Bradshaw model was the overwhelming concept that candidates chose to investigate with the model of a psammosere a long way second. Few chose human topics and many of these had no hypothesis or question.

The question referred to findings but too many neglected to refer to them preferring to state their methodology. The most effective answers supported their assessment with their findings (results) in the form of diagrams, figures and/or statistical tests to demonstrate the extent to which their findings agreed with their chosen question. Also the best answers went on to explain why their findings did or did not support their question:

'It is not surprising that our results did not fit the Burgess model as it was only a generalised model, based on an American city and was designed nearly a hundred years ago.'

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Education and Learning
Telephone: 01223 553998
Facsimile: 01223 552627
Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations
is a Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England
Registered Office; 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU
Registered Company Number: 3484466
OCR is an exempt Charity

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553