GEOGRAPHY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 27	28 - 40	41 - 52	53 - 63	64 - 74	75 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 26	27 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 63	64 - 74	75 - 100

Higher and standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 30

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a wide range of work submitted for moderation, covering an impressive range of fieldwork investigations, mostly related to topics from paper two. The most common topics selected for fieldwork were related to urban areas, coasts and rivers. In most investigations, candidates had worked in groups to collect suitable primary data. Most centres offered candidates an appropriate level of guidance; teachers are reminded that candidates must complete the writing of their reports, the presentation of their results, analysis, conclusions and evaluations on an individual basis.

Some fieldwork reports incorporated secondary information. This usually played only a minor supporting role in the report. A small minority of reports relied too heavily, or even entirely, on secondary information and did not meet the requirements for IA fieldwork.

As always, the variety of work submitted made for very interesting reading. There is some excellent fieldwork being undertaken by centres on every continent.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A – Fieldwork question and geographic content

Most projects had well focused aims (often with appropriate hypotheses) and the best candidates had linked the geographical context (such as bid rent in urban areas, plant succession in a psammosere, Bradshaw model in river work) to the locational or spatial context.

Maps are still very variable in both quantity and quality. It is essential that good maps of the research area and locations of fieldwork are included. Many locational maps were not "personalized" in any way by the student with relevant background information. Annotations on maps can be a very effective way to help set the scene and describe the geographic context.

Candidates are expected to state which area of the syllabus is relevant to the fieldwork question.

The feasibility of all fieldwork should be carefully considered before it is undertaken. Where practicable, a pilot study may help reveal unexpected challenges and allow for the fieldwork topic or techniques to be improved.

Criterion B – Method(s) of investigation

Candidates observed, collected and recorded raw or primary data in the field. In most cases, methods were not only described but well justified. Weaker candidates failed to justify any of the methods used. Ideally, methods should be agreed through discussion, taking into account the relevant geographic concepts. For example, in the case of river velocity, the discussion might consider whether the appropriate variable to measure is mean surface velocity or maximum sub-surface velocity.

Knowledge of sampling strategies is still weak amongst some candidates.

Almost all fieldwork did produce data of sufficient quality and quantity to allow for meaningful analysis. In cases where questionnaires were used it is important that the questions are justified and that there is a clear reference to the number of responses, time of survey and location of survey points. A target number of questionnaires needs to be set in order to collect enough material for varied analysis and treatment.

Criterion C – Quality and treatment of information collected

A wide range of maps, graphs, diagrams, photographs and other illustration was used. Some could have been significantly improved by relevant labels and annotations.

Statistical methods such as Spearman's rank correlation, Pearson's product moment correlation and Chi-squared should only be used if minimum sample size requirements are met. Prior guidance is needed about how to test the significance of results.

Many reports are illustrated by outstanding graphical illustrations and statistical maps (isolines, choropleths). Careful consideration must be given to the choice of technique and use of colour. It is not appropriate to repeat precisely the same data using several different methods (such as drawing both a pie chart and a histogram for identical data). Candidates should choose between possible methods, selecting the one which is most preferable for their purpose, and justify their choice as needed.

Criterion D – Written analysis

The written analysis was variable. Better candidates wrote perceptive analyses, including valid explanations, and easily reached the top mark descriptors while weaker candidates tended to resort to simplistic statements and descriptive summaries. All written analysis should be clearly linked to the data and any graphical or statistical treatment. Anomalies should be explained, not simply ignored or ascribed to some form of observer error.

Criterion E – Conclusion

Conclusions were generally consistent with results and analysis. Weaker candidates often introduced new material into their conclusions including information which might have been better placed in their analysis.

Criterion F – Evaluation

Most candidates were able to make some sensible evaluations of methods. In some cases, the evaluation also considered how the original fieldwork question or hypothesis might be improved. There were more recommendations for improvements than for extensions.

Criterion G – Formal requirements

It is disappointing that many candidates failed to gain full marks for this criterion.

Most candidates added their total word count to the front cover of their report; many also gave the number of words for each section of the report.

A small minority of candidates did not number all illustrations sequentially, or included material in the appendix that was of central importance to the report and should have been included in the body of the report. It is important that all material pertaining to criteria C and D be interwoven into a single section of the report.

The use of appendices should be limited to, for example, a sample copy of any questionnaire or data sheet used, or a worked example of a statistical test.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

The fieldwork reports submitted should be the originals, so that the moderator assesses any coloured diagrams, maps and photos as the candidate intended. The judicious use of colour can considerably enhance the clarity of the geography in fieldwork reports.

Fieldwork reports should not be bound into plastic pockets or ring binders. Further advice is given in the teacher support material for geography.

While secondary information obtained from the internet might be used for support or comparison purposes, it may not be used as the basis for the fieldwork.

Candidates should be encouraged to:

- ensure they have a fieldwork question that is tightly focused. The emphasis should be on an analytical or scientific investigation rather than lengthy descriptive accounts.
- ensure that any hypotheses are scientifically-testable statements.
- use an annotated sketch-map to show the location, choice of topic and/or sample points. Maps from Google Earth or similar sources must be enhanced by the addition of the student's own annotations

- avoid using extensive tables to describe the methods used, and remember that almost all words in tables do count towards the total word count
- seek to incorporate a variety of relevant graphical techniques
- avoid simplistic analysis and try to interpret and explain their results, especially any spatial patterns or trends identified, referring regularly to the original fieldwork question and any hypotheses
- include in the analysis a discussion of any anomalies encountered.

Teachers should be encouraged to:

- help candidates choose an appropriate hypothesis or hypotheses
- ensure that the fieldwork study involves the collection of sufficient quantitative data, and describe, on the reverse of form 3/IA, the extent of any guidance given to candidates.
- add comments to all reports (either on the report or as a separate matrix or marksheet) explaining why particular marks were awarded.

Higher and standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 26	27 - 32	33 - 39	40 - 45	46 - 60

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 26	27 - 32	33 - 39	40 - 45	46 - 60

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

Some candidates had difficulties with the use of case study materials. In many situations the candidates were not equipped with recent, detailed and geographically located examples. Many scripts contained historical case studies, which were of marginal relevance. Some candidates still confuse explanation with description and insisted on writing long detailed accounts with reasons and causes when only simple identification of patterns or trends was required. Specific subject areas that candidates seemed to struggle with were: debt relief; identifying a natural external forcing; soil degradation; explaining the relationship between energy usage and ecological footprints and providing an evaluation in the extended response question.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Population in transition was well prepared. As was knowledge of the MDGs, especially in relation to female empowerment. On the whole candidates were well versed in identifying spatial patterns and temporal trends however a number still fail to quantify their description. Good detailed knowledge on the possible consequences of climate change was evident. Some excellent well exemplified longer responses on the benefits of migration. Many candidates seemed to be able to fit their responses neatly and concisely into the boxes provided. If not, most took the opportunity to continue on extra sheets. We had quite a number of examinations scoring full marks where the candidates had used only the booklet provided.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Section A

Question 1

a) This question was misread by a large number of candidates who described the temporal changes as opposed to the situation in 1997. It was still possible to grant some marks though if they still described and quantified the situation in 1997. A significant number of candidates scored full marks for this question.

b) This question was on the whole well answered with candidates opting for breadth or depth. Reasons given were quite varied ranging from the role of the MDGs, cultural diffusion, the impact of media networks, NGOs working on gender issues, governments introducing quotas etc. Sometimes the reasons were not linked back to the question though i.e. empowerment in politics, which prevented full marks from being awarded.

c) Some excellent and detailed responses here with the popular examples being Singapore, France, Sweden, Spain and Japan. However some candidates failed to analyse (they just described the policy) and therefore did not get full marks. Some candidates relied on policies from the 1950s and 1960s; although they still accessed the marks it would be better if they studied more up to date case studies. A minority of candidates used anti-natalist policies, which scored no marks.

Question 2

a) Good responses although some lacked quantification or the identification of an anomaly. Unfortunately there was still the odd response that referred to Africa as an LEDC.

b) This was well answered with candidates providing detailed criticism of this indicator. Reasons varied: it is not a composite indicator; is only an average; is only economic, ignores PPP etc.

c) It was obvious from some responses that the candidate did not know what debt relief is. A largish minority actually left this question blank. Those who did answer it struggled to explain what debt relief is and could not go further with the question.

Those who did have some understanding were able to explain what debt relief was and how it might help nation states reduce disparities, but very few were able to provide detail such as examples or indicate some understanding of the WB and IMF's, HIPC initiative. There were a small number of superb responses one actually arguing that debt relief does the opposite and is not helping reduce disparities due to the conditions attached to the HIPC programme. Haiti was a commonly used example in the stronger responses.

Question 3

a) There seemed to be quite a lot of confusion in identifying a natural external forcing. Technically this needs to be external to the Earth's atmospheric system and as such only a limited range of answers could be credited. As these correct answers were relatively few and far between and this is a new syllabus we allowed for some flexibility with this question. Please refer to the markscheme for the acceptable answers.

b) Candidates have become more confident in describing trends. On the whole well answered. Those who did not gain all three points generally found it difficult to relate the first period in the graph (1850 – 1920) to the long-term temperature average.

c) Most candidates had quite a lot to write here with detailed knowledge of potential environmental consequences with good explanation and exemplification. For example, ice caps melting – habitat loss – polar bears vulnerable. In some minor cases sticking to environmental impacts proved problematic, as responses came back to the impact on humans rather than ecosystems of natural environments.

Question 4

a) This was a straightforward question, which was remarked upon in a number of the G2 comments. Interestingly enough a large number of candidates did not score both marks here. Some interesting incorrect answers such as wood, carbon, diamonds.

b) Generally answered very well. Developed and with examples, especially when discussing the hazardous nature of nuclear energy. Candidates perhaps do need to explain what they mean when referring to nuclear energy as 'renewable' as technically this is not correct. Many responses used recent events in Japan to highlight contemporary changes taking place in some countries' nuclear programmes. Perfect.

c) Most candidates attempted to describe the ecological footprint calculation and then stated that there is a positive relationship between energy use and ecological footprint. It was best explained when two countries with differing footprint sizes and energy usage were given as examples. Few candidates mentioned the waste aspect of the footprint i.e. dealing with carbon dioxide emissions which is very much linked to the type of energy used and hence relevant to the question.

Section B

Question 5

This was definitely the popular question with perhaps 90% of the candidates attempting it. Most responses showed a good knowledge of benefits and problems migration brings to the countries of origin and destination. At least some examples/case studies were presented by almost all. On the other hand though very few evaluated more than one type of migration, most of the candidates focused solely on international/economic migration without expanding their answer onto internal or forced migration as well. Stronger responses provided a sound evaluation to the question posed. Candidates do however need to take care when making generalizations about particular migrations.

Question 6

Very few candidates answered this question. While the candidates understood the MDGs there was a weak treatment of how rapid population growth will prevent countries from meeting the goals. Arguments tended to be unsubstantiated and lacked sound examples.

Question 7

This was a very unpopular question. Some candidates who answered the question had, generally speaking, little knowledge and understanding of soil degradation, hence scored very low marks. Those who did possess a good basic knowledge of soil degradation wavered on the evaluation part. There were some responses that ignored the question completely and wrote about deforestation.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should stress the importance of reading and re-reading the questions so that they are not misinterpreted. Candidates also need to be taught the importance of using the data in graphs/maps/diagrams in the short answer questions in order to obtain full marks especially if the command term is ‘describe’. Candidates should be taught up to date case studies rather than relying on outdated examples from way before their own lifetime. Candidates should also be made aware that the definitions provided in the syllabus are key to assisting them in their examinations. They need to plan their use of time with care and try to confine answers to the boxes provided.

For extended response questions, it is recommended that candidates shorten their introduction and contexts. For example candidates continued to define migration and explain migration movements in terms of push and pull factors. This is unnecessary. By getting into the question quicker and focusing more on their conclusion, candidates can be awarded marks in the upper mark bands for evaluation and overall consideration of points made in relation to the question.

Further comments

Please guide the candidates in terms of presenting short, accurate and concise answers as far as possible in the boxes provided. The boxes were introduced due to time concerns associated with this examination and are there to help guide the student in terms of the detail/length required for full marks. If candidates do feel that they need to continue on extra sheets as is presently allowed in IB booklet examinations, they must make reference to this continuation in the box.

Higher and standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 13	14 - 22	23 - 28	29 - 35	36 - 41	42 - 60

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 23	24 - 27	28 - 40

General comments

All questions are now structured which is a change from the old format for paper two. It was encouraging to see that many teachers had taken on board lessons from previous subject reports to help their candidates improve their responses. This trend continued from 2010. For example, most candidates respond to the details in the response material and to the requests for reasons. Generally, candidates are spending an appropriate amount of time on each section. However, a small minority of candidates answered all the questions in the options that they studied. Consequently, they did not spend enough time on any questions and scored low marks.

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

The skills involved in producing annotated diagrams (required in 2(a)) were poorly demonstrated by most candidates. However, annotated diagrams for 4(c) were generally quite good – this suggests that the topic in 4(c) was better understood that the topic in 2(a) (aquifers). Understanding of urban microclimates in question 14(b) was particularly weak at standard level. In the longer questions (the 10-mark part (c)s) many candidates wrote pre-rehearsed answers with little reference to the question. This was disappointing and candidates should expect to use the materials to answer the question. Evaluative skills are often needed to access bands E and F.

The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrated

In general, candidates' understanding of many key geographical terms was relatively good. However, some terms were used in a way that revealed uncertainty about their particular meaning – this was especially true regarding hazards and disasters. In the higher mark ranges, there was excellent knowledge and understanding and very good use of skills. The best responses frequently included well-chosen contemporary and detailed examples. The tsunami in Japan this year was frequently used as an example, as was the 2010 Haiti earthquake. The use of field work can also be useful – the urban microclimate questions were open to detailed local examples. Annotating skills were variable (poor on aquifers, good on ocean trenches). The interpretation of command terms was generally good. Graph interpretation was also good with the majority of candidates including reference to data and data manipulation.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Optional theme A: Freshwater – issues and conflicts

Question 1

This was a popular question.

a) Some candidates over-complicated matters by referring to rock type and permeability when there was no evidence to support this on the diagram, but the concept of infiltration capacity was well understood.

b) This was generally well answered. Candidates wrote about a range of consequences, notably flooding and sea-level change (though few referred to drowned or emergent coastal landforms that could result from consequent eustatic or isostatic changes). However, some candidates failed to go into detail – that would be alright if they had a large range of consequences.

c) There were some very good answers which dealt with a named drainage basin. However, some candidates did not identify a basin – nor a strategy – and identified conflicts over access to water e.g. Israel and Palestine. Others wrote about the advantages and disadvantages of large dams – which is relevant – but needs to go further into strategies. Competing demands could also have been explored in more detail as numerous responses did not identify these with specific reference to the chosen basin.

Question 2

This was also a popular question with parts (b) and (c) scoring very well but part (a) not scoring well.

a) In general, this was not done very well – however, a small minority knew it very well.

b) This question was answered with great detail – candidates knew their material and showed a wide range of support and explanation.

c) The answers to this varied from the detailed evaluation of small-scale wetlands e.g. Wicken Fen in the UK to large-scale ones such as the Kissimee restoration scheme in Florida. There was an impressive range of knowledge and understanding shown.

Optional theme B: Oceans and their coastal margins

Question 3

This was a popular question.

a) (i) This was generally well done although a minority of candidates made a list rather than described a pattern.

(ii) This was generally very well done – candidates were clearly aware of the factors that are needed for the development of coral reefs.

b) Again, a well developed answer, in general, with benefits being explained.

c) This question generated a variety of responses from those that were focused and well supported to those that were not answering the question. The latter frequently meandered into geopolitics and competition for ocean resources rather than competing land uses along coastal margins.

Question 4

Overall this question scored well.

a) The mid ocean ridge / rift valley system (A) was almost universally identified whereas the transform fault (B – B1) was almost universally **not** identified, in fact very few candidates recognised it as a fault, which would have been credited.

b) Most candidates provided a good explanation of why the ocean floor gets older with distance from the central ridge.

c) In general, candidates provided good diagrams of the formation of ocean trenches although many candidates provided descriptive labels rather than explanatory annotations.

d) Generally, this was answered well, with support mainly coming from the Arctic and its geopolitical conflict though at standard level there was little reference to other important ocean areas of conflict giving the responses too narrow a focus to reach the higher mark range.

Optional theme C: Extreme environments

Question 5

This was not a very popular question, nor was it one that was answered well.

a) Many candidates struggled with this question – many even omitted this part of question 5. Very few were able to suggest a name for the lake as a possible kettle lake or collapsed pingo.

b) (i) Solifluction was either explained very well or very poorly – there was little in the middle.

(ii) Similarly, the formation of pingos was not very well understood. Some were excellent but many were weak – merely describing the shape and size of pingos.

c) Surprisingly, this was not done very well. Many answers were very descriptive and lacking in support. It appeared that permafrost (and periglaciation in general) was not well understood.

Question 6

On the whole, parts (a) and (b) were not well answered but there were excellent answers for part (c).

a) In general, this was not answered very well. Surprisingly, there was relatively little on the spatial element, and little attempt at quantification.

b) Some candidates confused glacial advance and glacial movement. Candidates were generally quite good on accumulation and ablation but less confident on the reasons for these – apart from on an annual basis.

c) This attracted some excellent responses with a wide range of examples and reasons. The best answers gave both sides of the argument with support.

This topic was well understood and there were some excellent contemporary examples, though at standard level many responses simply described desertification and effects on named areas without providing a balanced discussion with regard to whether or not it is inevitable.

Optional theme D: Hazards and disasters – risk assessment and response

Question 7

This was a popular question prompting a wide range in responses.

a) Generally this was answered quite well although some candidates tackled the distribution of both earthquakes and volcanoes, and some used material that was not shown on the map.

b) This was surprisingly poorly answered. Relatively few candidates referred to the relationship between frequency and magnitude (high magnitude-low frequency, low magnitude-high frequency), and even fewer tried to explain the relationship.

c) Many candidates had good case studies up their sleeves and generally wrote very well about the impacts. The strategies tended to be more generic and generalised (although relevant) and needed more focused detail.

Question 8

This was a popular question with a variety of responses.

a) Candidates either knew the IB definitions of hazards and disasters or they did not – this differentiated those who scored 2, 3 or 4 out of 4.

b) There were some excellent answers which identified parts of the community (aged, young, women, infirm, poor, disabled) and explained why they are at increased risk. However, too many went for the MEDC/LEDC contrast and did not appreciate the scale involved in the question.

c) Answers frequently examined the methods used to predict their chosen hazards rather than evaluating their effectiveness. The two most frequent natural hazards chosen were hurricanes and earthquakes – which lend themselves to a very good contrast. However, answers needed to compare the effectiveness of the methods to predict to access the higher bands (E and F).

Optional theme E: Leisure, sport and tourism

Question 9

In general, not a particularly common response nor particularly well done.

a) There was some confusion regarding primary and secondary resources, and some candidates did not refer to the area requested in the question.

b) Some candidates listed three likely problems, and some suggested problems likely to occur in other areas.

c) There were some good answers, but overall the quality was weak. Many candidates used an inappropriate scale – national rather than urban – and others described management strategies – rather than discussing the strategies in terms of their success or failure.

Question 10

This was generally answered very well.

a) Many candidates scored full marks here. The characteristics of sustainability were generally well understood.

b) Again, this was well answered. Some mentioned impacts on the human environment rather than the physical environment, but these candidates were in a minority.

c) This was generally answered very well, with a strong focus on the question. The best candidates considered positive and negative aspects of social and economic impacts, though at standard level, many responses failed to provide a balance between positive and negative impacts.

Optional theme F: The geography of food and health

There were very mixed responses to this option – in general the 'food' questions were not answered very well whereas the 'health' questions were.

Question 11

a) i) Many candidates listed countries and gave some quantification. Relatively few identified a pattern.

ii) This was answered quite poorly – relatively few suggested valid reasons for the decline in agricultural subsidies.

b) This prompted a variety of responses from those who explained why food availability would increase, to those who gave a variety of reasons why food availability might decrease.

c) There were many good answers that included a variety of human and physical factors, and a recent famine e.g. East Africa 2011. A small minority of candidates used inappropriate examples (i.e. not in the candidates' lifetime).

Question 12

a) (i) This was answered well with good use of quantification.

(ii) This was defined well with good use of supporting examples.

b) Again, there was a strong awareness here, with exploration of the factors of poverty e.g. water supply, sanitation, housing and/or food supply, mainly with reference to areas of the world that lack economic and social development. The best answers explained why some areas in developed nations are also subject to diseases of poverty.

c) There were very good case studies about policies of prevention and policies of treatment. Less well done was the consideration of the factors that determine the relative importance of each e.g. cost, effectiveness, availability of treatment or extent of the disease.

Optional theme G: Urban environments

A popular option showing some evidence of detailed understanding – but also major confusion and inaccuracies.

Question 13

a) Generally very well done with accurate manipulation of data.

b) Surprisingly poorly done – many were able to list appropriate symptoms but explanations tended to be lacking or generalized. At standard level a number of responses incorrectly referred to the causes of urban growth or urban sprawl.

c) Relatively well done with good support. At the top end answers were excellent. At the lower end, answers were highly generalized with a lack of supporting examples and no real focus. The better responses were able to identify that poverty and deprivation occurs in cities in developed nations as well as in cities in less economically developed nations and were able to refer to affected locations in these cities.

Question 14

a) Sustainability seems to be well understood and most candidates gave a good response – many referred to the Roger's model and many provided annotated diagrams to illustrate it.

b) Surprisingly, overall, this was done quite poorly. Many referred to the greenhouse effect and there was considerable confusion over the causes of the urban heat island.

c) Some answers were excellent but many took an inappropriate scale (national population growth rather than urban) or did not consider natural increase as well as migration. The use of supporting examples made it easier for candidates to access higher mark bands.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should help candidates develop their ability to:

- read the rubric and the questions carefully
- know and respond to the command terms
- write concisely
- learn key definitions (e.g. hazards, disasters)
- practice describing and analysing data in the form of graphs, maps, tables
- practice annotated diagrams (many may find this a useful way to revise for examinations)
- include a range of names and located case studies
- when discussing use alternative, and often contrary, points of view
- use map evidence (grid references and square references) when requested
- make sure they allocate the appropriate amount of time per question (roughly two minutes per mark)
- practice examination answers under timed conditions
- use compass directions when referring to maps rather than left/right/top/bottom

Higher level paper three

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 25

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

The simple design of the new paper three higher level extension perhaps makes it a harder paper in general for poorly-prepared candidates; unlike paper one and paper two, there is no visual stimulus material for them to work with. As a result, it was evident that weaker candidates found the paper as whole difficult and challenging, frequently scoring a mere handful of marks. In contrast, significant numbers of clued-up and well-prepared candidates scored full marks or just below.

Specific and common areas of weakness, several of which have already been alluded to, included:

- a lack of understanding of what is meant by ‘global interactions’. This lack of comprehension was most evident in 3(a) where the question asked how global interactions have fostered environmental awareness. Whilst many candidates showed knowledge of key global and regional environmental issues, they could not link this material with the concept of global interactions. Perhaps the single greatest area of concern for some examiners was the failure of some candidates to distinguish between ‘global interactions’ and ‘globalization’. ‘Global interactions’ is the title of the syllabus, and understood as including all its sections and subsections. ‘Globalization’ is an important process relevant to the syllabus (and defined at the start). ‘Globalization’ is *not* synonymous with ‘global interactions’, but is only one of several possible outcomes of global interactions.
- the phrase ‘foster environmental awareness’ was not understood (although the phrase is taken from the subject guide).
- ignorance of the ‘temporal and spatial pattern of adoption’ in cases where a ‘potted history’ of a branded commodity was nonetheless known (n.b. the phrase is taken from the guide)
- lack of understanding of what was required in 1 (a) when explanation of the growth of ‘one network’ was asked for (although the phrase is taken from the guide).

A common theme emerges here: part (a) questions sometimes brought errors of interpretation, despite using phrases that it might be assumed candidates would be familiar with given they are used almost verbatim from the guide. Teachers might impress on future cohorts the need for familiarity with the guide.

Finally it is clear that some candidates and perhaps teachers are not well-versed in AO3 requirements - the idea of *synthesis* being required in the (b) section of the questions. The idea of drawing on the units as a whole to answer the question was quite obviously not a skill that had been taught in some schools.

This is something that teachers need to address, especially in schools with large numbers of ESL candidates that already struggle with the language. Thus, lengthy accounts of how the Dani tribe have adapted to the modern world will always score less marks on this paper than a briefer account of the Dani that leaves the student with more room/time for a wider range of themes to be briefly examined.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

This paper introduces IB geography candidates to a new style of written assessment that explicitly rewards synthesis in addition to evaluation. It was pleasing to see many responses 'getting it right' at the outset. Stronger candidates were able to demonstrate an ability to analyse, evaluate and come to clear conclusions using good supporting evidence and case studies. An ability to organize thoughts and plan effective essays in a short time-frame was demonstrated by stronger candidates. The majority could argue for both sides of the case in the part (b) discussions.

Most candidates employed their knowledge, understanding and skills to good effect, generally staying on, or close to, the question topic. Below-average quality answers could still manage to find some evidence to back up any assertions, with only the very weakest tending to rely solely on personal observations and feelings.

Very few candidates appeared to experience any serious time issues.

Particular strengths in student performance (and presumably school teaching) included:

- Cultural geography and the nature of globalization: despite some over-reliance on the contents of McDonald's menus, this is a student-friendly concept that has clearly been well-taught and which most candidates can explain in an evidenced way. The strongest candidates were able to thoughtfully question whether a customized fast food menu is symptomatic of true diversity or is a just a clever marketing tactic by culturally imperialistic TNCs!
- Financial flows: the better half of the cohort has learned the guide's list of flows (teaching strand 3) and could debate the importance of remittances, FDI etc. in a carefully considered way.

It was good to see many acknowledging the fundamental difference between globalization and the broader concept of global interactions (as defined, in both cases, by the guide).

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

a) The question was generally quite well answered, though with a tendency for weaker candidates to ignore the spatial aspects implied by the term 'network' in the question (and guide). A small number of candidates explained the growth of *more than one* network, by, for example, writing about transport *and* communications networks (this approach tended to bring breadth of description, rather than depth of explanation, resulting in a lower likelihood of reaching band E). A few very strong responses charted the growth (i.e. actual spatial expansion) of airline hubs, or the roll-out of broadband (and could reference the internet 'switching-on' of specific places, such as Kenya or Bangalore, rather than 'Africa' or 'Asia' in general).

The poorest answers described a timeline of travel ('growth' came to mean 'speeding up' – not quite the same thing), starting with the invention of the wheel or walking. Within the context of a contemporary global interactions paper, this kind of 'general knowledge' response would not have achieved many marks.

b) A proper examination of the 'relative importance' of financial flows was not always delivered by candidates; most conclusions failed to reach the desired level of evaluation. Better responses did, however, make accurate reference to a variety of financial flows and displayed a good grasp of how they connect core and peripheral areas bi-directionally. The weakest responses failed to relate core and peripheral areas to specific locations and exhibited little knowledge of what flows are financial, or how financial flows operate. Moreover, some had no grasp of what the 'core and periphery' pattern looks like in a 21st century global context. A simple 'Brandt Line approach' is not an appropriate framework for contemporary global analysis, given today's complex map of emerging economies and the spread of world cities / global hubs. No credit was given to those who took 'core' to mean CBD.

Question 2

a) It is clear that many centres are teaching detailed case studies of Coca-Cola and McDonald's as branded commodities (very few responses mentioned other branded commodities). It was common for the temporal pattern of adoption to be treated in more detail than the spatial pattern of adoption, despite the guide's wording (that gives equal weighting to both). Weaker answers failed to reference any named places, cities, countries or regions – or could argue for little beyond a basic diffusion 'from MEDCs to LEDCs'. Most responses looked only (and partially) at where the commodity was adopted. Fewer considered the delimitation of the pattern i.e. could recognise the 'black spots' where it was not yet adopted, either because it was not offered or was rejected (this strand of argument was actively looked for at Band E, given the over-arching rationale of this part of the course – as set out in the very first paragraph of the part 3 guide - which encourages teachers and candidates to consider patterns of *resistance*, *as well as adoption*, in relation to global interactions).

b) 'Disparities' is a wide umbrella term whose employment here aimed to open the question up, thereby allowing a synthetic response ideally to be developed. The best answers appreciated this, and could demonstrate that not all disparities are income-based (the commonest interpretation). Stronger responses also included reference to disparities relating to race, gender, ethnicity and social status. Mid-level responses tended to be limited to a consideration of just two kinds of interaction typically remittances and investment by TNCs. A third theme was usually introduced in better answers, such as trade interactions taking place within trade blocs (more than two themes is very much to be to be encouraged if bands D and E are to be attained in a part (b) essay, following AO3 'synthesis' criteria).

Question 3

a) One striking general weakness observed here was that many responses were insufficiently focused on *how global interactions can foster* environmental awareness. Answers could often explain 'why' (for instance, it was widely argued that global awareness of climate change is inadvertently fostered by the careless polluting actions of TNCs that have come of the public's attention) but could not address 'how' (i.e. the processes or pathways which link global interactions to environmental awareness).

Good answers sometimes looked at use of global media (old and new) by NGOs; global diffusion of films such as 'An Inconvenient Truth' (and the follow-up globe-trotting of Al Gore, celebrities and academics, in order to help raise awareness of important issues); or the idea of representatives of nations 'interacting' at key global environmental meetings and conferences such as Stockholm, Kyoto, Copenhagen, etc. 'Environmental awareness' was equated to 'hazard awareness' by a few; there is some legitimate topic overlap, but they are really not equivalents and such responses tended to be self-limiting. Overall, there were some very strong answers to this question, the most popular of the three on the paper.

b) There were some strong answers to this question that used a commendable range of appropriate examples. In many cases, the net was thrown wide, allowing plenty of AO3 credit to be awarded as candidates synthesized a mixture of ideas dealing with TNCs, diaspora groups, nationalism, global media and more.

Weaker answers showed little understanding of what 'culture' does, or does not, include (and had little idea of cultural traits, for instance). They also tended to see changes of culture in a very simplistic way. For example, many argued that TNCs or other global interactions 'destroy' local culture. Most interpreted any change at all as being towards homogenization, even when the influence of incoming cultural forces was limited and a more logical and appropriate conclusion might have been that local culture had undergone 'diversification' (pleasingly, some employed terminology such as hybridity or glocalization here). Very few could tackle the more complex yet very useful idea (in this context) of culture as a 'performance' - for instance, in the context of querying the nature of the 'loss' when a local tribe retains its traditional clothing or dances/rituals for the tourist gaze - but may simultaneously (and more or less invisibly?) be adopting a modern / secular / consumerist world-view. This is a complex idea requiring thoughtful evaluation that sadly eluded the majority (but is in fact very important if ideas of cultural change and exchange are to be properly explored). A sensible conclusion reached by some of the best candidates was that true global diversity (in terms of different languages) has fallen (though offset to some degree by proliferation of new hybrid glocalisms). Whereas at a *local* level, some global hubs / core regions / megacities have witnessed an increase in cultural diversity due to the global interaction of migration. Toronto and London are extremely diverse world cities (however, the 'melting pot' hypothesis suggests this hyper-diversity may be transient – over time, differences may lessen at this scale also, as different cultures inter-mingle).

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Ensure that candidates fully understand the meanings of key geographical terms (e.g. culture, homogenization, network, financial). It is a sound practice to provide a brief definition of each key term as they are introduced in the essay. This helps examiners understand the candidate's intended scope of usage for each important term.
- Ensure that candidates are familiar with the wording of the guide, from which future part (a) questions especially will be derived.
- Remind candidates that statements and arguments must be based on solid facts, examples, details, names, locations and supporting evidence. Entirely unsupported and un-evidenced statements will never be awarded the highest marks.

- The use of maps, sketches and diagrams is always to be encouraged. Simple locational maps generally add little credit, but annotated maps of global flows (such as remittance values) could certainly help boost a mark, for instance. Conceptual diagrams and models of global flows, networks, time-space compression are very much to be highly encouraged.
- Encourage candidates, wherever relevant, to think around the question, looking for alternative ('non-global') viewpoints, and seeking any additional elements that may shed some light on the answer. It is especially important that candidates include valid spatial concepts, links, references and located examples wherever possible.
- Help candidates recognise the need, in discursive responses, to aim for a balanced approach, paying sufficient attention to each side of any discussion to ensure that any evaluation reflects the evidence presented.
- Help candidates recognize the value of producing a note-form plan before beginning to write an essay under examination conditions.