GEOGRAPHY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 26	27 - 39	40 - 51	52 - 62	63 - 73	74 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 27	28 - 39	40 - 50	51 - 61	62 - 72	73 - 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

The work submitted for moderation covered a very wide range of topics. The strongest investigations all had a clear spatial component.

The most common topics selected were related to: Patterns in environmental quality and sustainability (part one, core theme topic 3); Freshwater – issues and conflicts (part two, option A); Oceans and their coastal margins (part two, option B); Leisure, sport and tourism (part two, option E); and Urban

environments (part two, option G). Fieldwork based on topics in the core and the part three higher level extension (global interactions) often did not reach the same high standards as work related to part two, though there were some noteworthy exceptions.

In this session, a small number of centres submitted internal assessment (IA) reports that were entirely based on secondary information and therefore did not meet the formal requirement that IA be based on fieldwork.

A small number of candidates chose fieldwork questions that had an inaccurate or very weak link to the subject guide.

It was especially pleasing to see new fieldwork topics being attempted, many with considerable success. One example this session was a study of the short-term impacts of film-induced tourism.

Fieldwork questions including the word “sustainable” or “sustainability” are becoming more common, but were rarely done very effectively, with most attempts taking an overly narrow view of what is meant by “sustainable”. In several cases, such investigations considered only one (sometimes minor) aspect of sustainability, while completely ignoring other aspects. In such cases, a judicious rephrasing of the fieldwork question would have given candidates a better chance to access higher marks.

Several centres looked at socially-responsible and environmentally-responsible topics and employed sophisticated fieldwork techniques, often requiring a degree of originality on the part of the candidates. The resulting first-hand accounts showed that candidates were prepared to consider all manner of irregularities, inequalities and injustices.

In most centres, candidates worked in groups to collect suitable primary data. Though not required by the syllabus, most centres are now allowing candidates some choice in deciding the fieldwork question and/or the hypotheses to be investigated. Where group work has been undertaken as a class or with another centre, teachers should be encouraged to indicate the nature and extent of teacher involvement and direction.

There has been a marked increase in the number of fieldwork studies where far more data is collected (and analysed) than is necessary to answer the chosen fieldwork question (and hypotheses, where relevant). In most cases, the inclusion of superfluous material has prevented the candidates concerned from gaining higher marks, causing them to write a less focused, and less in-depth analysis than that required by their fieldwork question.

On an administrative note, the fieldwork reports submitted for moderation must be original (not photocopies) with true colours and clear details, so that the moderator assesses any diagrams, maps and photos as the candidate intended.

Teachers are also reminded that any form of permanent binding of IA (ring binders, and so on) is neither necessary nor desirable**.**

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A – Fieldwork question and geographic context

Most work had a well-focused fieldwork question. In many cases, this was followed by appropriate hypotheses. Most candidates wrote clear introductions in which background theory was linked to the precise geographical context where the study was undertaken.

The best work tended to have fieldwork questions which were narrowly focused and appropriate, with manageable hypotheses. Fieldwork questions that were vague, had obvious outcomes, or were based on overly simplistic questions, inevitably led to poorly developed reports.

It is important to find a spatial focus for the fieldwork and use techniques of data representation that can reveal any spatial patterns in the fieldwork results. Non-spatial topics rarely score well.

Almost all candidates included a clear link stating the area of the syllabus to which the fieldwork related.

Locational maps are essential and must show the study area(s) and include additional material such as sample points and pertinent geographical features. All maps must follow standard conventions and include a title, key, scale and orientation. The maps used in many fieldwork reports could be greatly improved. There is no value in including a downloaded map unless it is annotated to show the key places relevant to the study being undertaken.

Almost all candidates gave the source of any non-original maps or diagrams used in reports. This requirement applies equally to any non-original base maps used by candidates for showing data. The source should be placed as near as possible to the diagram or map, rather than only being given in the notes at the end. All sources should also be included in the bibliography.

Criterion B – Method(s) of investigation

In most cases, methods were not only described but adequately justified, and likely to yield sufficient data in both quality and quantity to enable adequate interpretation and analysis (often including the use of statistical tests). Many reports would be improved if candidates explained precisely how the sample size was determined, as well as the selection method employed.

Using a table to show methods (presumably in an attempt to circumvent word count restrictions) is **not** acceptable practice. In extreme cases (such as where the methods used are described by means of **only** a table), every word used in the table may be included in the formal word count. On the other hand, incorporating annotated photographs in reports can be a very useful way to help describe the methods used.

Weaker reports lacked sufficient justification for the methods used. Ideally, the discussion of methods should take 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.

At the other end of the spectrum, some methods were exceptionally well thought-out and even innovative. For example, in several cases, candidates had devised their own completely original scale to quantify a variable such as “environmental quality” or “urban stress” when it played a central role in their investigation.

In cases where questionnaires were used, the methods section should incorporate some justification for the precise questions asked, together with clear reference to the number of responses, time of survey and choice of survey points. A copy of the questionnaire should be included in the appendix.

The methods section should also refer, even if only briefly, to how any secondary material used in the report was selected and obtained.

Criterion C – Quality and treatment of information collected

A wide range of maps, graphs, diagrams, photographs and other illustrations was used.

The best reports included some truly outstanding techniques of data treatment and display, which easily exceeded the demands of the top markband for this criterion. However, many candidates still fail to label axes, do not include scales or orientation, and make little or no use of colour even when it would improve clarity.

Many reports used statistical methods such as Spearman's Rank Correlation and Chi-squared. However, these tests were not always appropriate and should certainly not have been used when sample size was smaller than the test’s minimum requirements. Most candidates did attempt to show an understanding of how to check statistical significance.

Many reports were illustrated by outstanding graphical illustrations and statistical maps (isolines, choropleths). More candidates are now producing maps based on their findings; this is a key to success in IA fieldwork as it guarantees that the report has a clear spatial focus. An increasing number of candidates are now placing their graphs/data directly onto background maps, making it much easier to visualize any spatial patterns that may exist.

Weaker candidates continue to offer multiple, repetitive graphs on dozens of pages where the possible spatial connections between them are impossible to determine easily. In addition, weaker candidates often presented their results (especially those portrayed on graphs) in apparently random order, even where it would make sense to reorder the data (for example, by distance from a central point such as a CBD or specific hotel) so that any pattern became easier to identify and explain.

For this criterion, the choice of scales and use of colour remain two relatively weak areas. For graphs to be compared, it is essential that scales are identical. In the case of quantitative maps, such as choropleth maps, it is important that the colours chosen help the viewer discern which the highest class is and how the classes are ordered, for example by grading several tones of a single colour from light (= less) to dark (= more).

Criterion D – Written analysis

The written analysis was the most variable section of reports. Better candidates wrote perceptive analyses, including valid explanations, and quickly reached the top mark

descriptors. They referred confidently to findings by actually quoting graphs and figures. Trends, spatial patterns and any anomalies found were identified, linked and discussed. In the best reports these discussions were associated strongly to the specific fieldwork question and the established geographical theory/context.

Weaker candidates tended to resort to simplistic statements and descriptive summaries. In the worst cases, they largely ignored the data they had collected.

Reports which investigated more than one hypothesis and then presented separate analyses for each hypothesis tended to score less well on this criteria than reports which integrated the discussion of results into a single section where the connections between hypotheses could be readily explored.

As noted earlier, one growing trend is for reports to include material that is not relevant to the specific hypotheses being investigated.

Criterion E – Conclusion

Most conclusions did refer back to the original fieldwork question and were based on the evidence and consistent with the results and analysis. Weaker candidates sometimes introduced new material into their conclusions or included information which might have been better placed in their analysis.

Criterion F – Evaluation

Most candidates were able to make some sensible evaluations of methods, with valid suggestions for improvements. However, this criterion is designed to make candidates think beyond any problems resulting from the weather, teachers and class mates, and evaluate the fieldwork process in terms of such things as sample size, choice of locations and the quality and quantity of data/information collected.

Many candidates failed to consider how the original fieldwork question or hypothesis might be modified or improved. There were more recommendations for improvements to methods than for worthwhile extensions.

Criterion G – Formal requirements

A handful of candidates exceeded the word limit. Teachers are reminded that deliberate attempts to circumvent the word limit by the excessive use of linked annotations (even if each individual annotation has fewer than 10 words), or by relying on tables to describe methods or evaluation, should not be encouraged.

It is disappointing that many candidates still fail to gain full marks for this criterion. There are still too many reports which lack a final “polish”. Moderators would like to see all candidates gaining the full four marks available for this criterion.

Though almost all reports did respect the 2,500-word limit, teachers are reminded of the need to check word limits carefully and to award zero marks for this criterion if the limit is exceeded. Most candidates wrote their total word count on the front cover of their report. Some candidates also (helpfully) gave the number of words for each section of the report.

Some candidates failed to number all illustrations sequentially, or included material in the appendix that was of central importance to the report and which should have been incorporated into the main text. Centres are reminded that moderators are not required to read the appendix, which means that any diagrams or maps essential to the study must be included in the main body of the report.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be encouraged to:

- Choose a tightly focused fieldwork question and, if relevant, a strictly limited number of hypotheses. Where hypotheses are used, there is no requirement that more than one hypothesis be investigated.
- Avoid questions that concern future impacts, and ensure that all 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 given added value by the addition of individual, carefully chosen, annotations.
- Avoid using extensive tables in reports; almost all the words in tables do count towards the total word count.
- Seek to incorporate a variety of relevant graphical techniques; reports using only one or two kinds of diagrams rarely score well.
- Avoid simplistic, descriptive analysis and focus on trying to interpret and explain results, focusing on any spatial patterns or trends identified.
- Quote and refer to graphs and images during the analysis.
- Structure reports in line with the recommendations in the subject guide, including the suggestions given for the number of words allocated to each section.

Teachers should be encouraged to:

- Help candidates choose an appropriate fieldwork question, and any related hypothesis or hypotheses. The basis of good fieldwork is choosing an appropriate, well-focused fieldwork question, and putting it in context by providing details of whatever elements (climate, soils, relief and communications, and so on) are relevant to the precise fieldwork question chosen.
- Ensure that the fieldwork study involves the collection of sufficient quantitative data.
- Ensure that the work has a clear spatial component, and involves collecting data that the candidates can then represent on a map or maps.
- Encourage candidates to justify the methods of data collection.

- Help candidates become familiar with the assessment criteria and the structure of reports.

- Add comments to all reports (directly on the report or as a separate matrix or marksheet) explaining why particular marks have been awarded.

- Allocate some class time (prior to fieldwork) to teaching techniques for representing and analysing data. In this process, emphasis should be placed on ensuring that normal conventions are always followed for the choice of scales, symbols, colours and other aspects of formal presentation.

Final comments

The general standard of work seen at moderation was encouraging. The fieldwork reports submitted for moderation demonstrated some excellent examples of candidates collecting, describing and analysing their own fieldwork data, testing hypotheses and interpreting patterns in a vast range of geographical environments. Most candidates are acquiring a valuable knowledge and a sound understanding of basic fieldwork investigations. Thanks are due to all the teachers concerned for helping candidates undertake such valuable work and to further develop their candidates' skills in researching, processing and interpreting empirical data.

Higher and standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 9	10 - 18	19 - 25	26 - 31	32 - 38	39 - 44	45 - 60

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 9	10 - 18	19 - 25	26 - 31	32 - 38	39 - 44	45 - 60

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

This exam did seem to have some candidates struggling with time management. In many cases the essay seemed quite rushed, short and and/or superficial. Some candidates struggled with the descriptive data response questions tending to provide lists with data, rather than picking up on the subtleties of the patterns or trends. A minority of candidates are still providing explanation for the command term “describe”, which is contributing to the time issue. Candidates must also read the requirements of the question carefully: where the question asks for a certain number of reasons/factors they need to organize their answers so that each is recognizable – for example where two reasons were requested it was often the case that the examiner was left with the task of disentangling the answer. Similarly if **one** example/reason is needed, it is unwise for the candidate to adopt a pot-luck approach and write down as many possibilities as they can think of – examiners will be instructed in this case to mark the first factor only. The weakest responses tended to be associated with the questions on soil degradation and a sustainable management strategy. In some instances there were obvious gaps in knowledge and it is important that candidates cover the entire core syllabus. Analysis is also vital in the essays and this is a skill that was lacking in many section B responses. In section B, question 6 seemed the most popular but only by a narrow margin, with question 5 being the least popular.

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

Most candidates appeared familiar with the command terms and hence gave appropriate answers. Population and disparities were mainly done well. In many of the essays there were some good up-to-date case studies that displayed original research. There was evidence that many candidates made a rough plan of their essay before writing it. Very few candidates needed any extra pages this session and any that were attached to the scanned exam tended to be rough notes only.

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

Section A

Question 1

(a) Some variation here from perfect definitions to very poor knowledge and understanding. A number of candidates referred to per 1000/women, and a significant number defined the crude death rate.

(b) (i) The majority of candidates got the figure correct but many neglected to include units – per 1000 or %.

(ii) Most candidates were able to achieve this mark.

(c) Most mentioned future/estimate but were less confident on how this was achieved through projected demographic trends based on such variables as present age–sex structure, rates of fertility, mortality and migration.

(d) Many candidates struggled to come up with two distinct reasons, many also rolled their answer into one paragraph and it was difficult for the examiner to distinguish between the two separate reasons. There were also some excellent responses that clearly tackled the question.

Question 2

(a) Good candidates recognized this as a Lorenz curve and were able to explain accurately their choice using the data given.

(b) Again candidates must be made aware that two separate reasons must be clearly developed about their **one** named country or region. Many good answers based on gender, ethnicity and rural, urban differentials.

(c) The majority of candidates had no problem identifying and explaining two ways remittances can help the receiving nation. Worryingly there were some candidates who did not understand what remittances are. Weaker candidates were hard pushed to explain and illustrate two distinct valid ways. Some slipped into writing advantages of migrants leaving the source country, this was not the question.

Question 3

(a) Most candidates could state a cause worthy of credit.

(b) Most candidates could get full marks here giving a straightforward description with the use of spatial patterns (map) and quantitative data (diagrams both as % and real figures per million hectares). Some responses seemed to veer off into explanation which was not required by the command term (describe).

(c) Well answered on the whole, with good use of examples such as the Loess Plateau in China, or the Sahel region of Africa. There were some candidates who struggled to identify two socio-economic consequences and in some cases the entire question was left blank.

(d) This was a very open question which allowed many possible responses and there were many excellent answers ranging from international agreements like Kyoto to more local projects/strategies. Some answers failed to go beyond description and explain the links to environmental sustainability.

Question 4

(a) Straightforward description was required to demonstrate the various trends in the data. Some candidates struggled to effectively understand the complexities of a compound bar graph, others went too far with attempts at explanation of the data presented instead of a description of trends.

(b) (i) A wide range of examples was seen. Some candidates failed to name both the old and new resource.

(ii) Most candidates could demonstrate why the resource substitution chosen in (b) (i) was beneficial (for example more abundant/economical or less harm to the environment) but weaker scripts failed to gain the extra mark for development and/or exemplification.

(c) The majority of candidates had no problems distinguishing between these two terms and providing relevant examples such as recycling plastic bottles into furniture, or reducing packaging for waste reduction. There were a few candidates who confused recycling with reusing.

Section B

Question 5

Some impressive knowledge of the MDGs was shown by a number of candidates but this was not a popular question. Some excellent answers made reference to Paul Collier's "The Bottom Billion" and the most current Millennium Development Reports, contrasting progress made between Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Many candidates examined the goals in terms of whether they were realistic and attainable in the proposed time frame. The more able candidates were also able to look ahead to where these goals should be taken after 2015.

Question 6

This was the most popular question. In general the best answers had excellent knowledge of the term "sustainable" when applied to specific energy issues. The grade E and F answers had a balanced approach of both energy conservation and alternative energy sources with pertinent exemplification, for example, wind farms in Denmark. Weaker candidates tended to write about the advantages and

disadvantages of numerous alternative energies with little reference to either energy problems or sustainability. These were self-limiting.

Question 7

The best answers were well balanced, with environmental issues evaluated at both origin and destination and with sound and specific exemplification. A significant number of candidates looked at hazards, desertification, and disasters, backing up their migration with good case study material – Tuvalu, Somalia, and so on. Some good answers looked at the environment as a positive, pull factor, such as retirees from the UK to the South of Spain. In some cases candidates relied too much on historical geography and quoted examples from periods which were much older than the age of the candidate, for example, the Dust Bowl of the USA. Candidates are encouraged to use contemporary material. Another issue was that weaker candidates ignored the command that requested the examination of environmental causes.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates need to take care to read the essay questions carefully, and perhaps underline key words in order to ensure that they focus on all aspects of the question correctly.
- Time management needs to be worked on as section A responses were often over-lengthy resulting in poor, rushed essays.
- Case studies and knowledge needs to extend beyond simple general knowledge; relevant, contemporary case studies must be used. In this internet age there is no shortage of material.
- Candidates should study the whole of the core: sometimes there were obvious gaps in knowledge of a particular section.
- If the question asks for **two** reasons, encourage the candidate to write **two** distinct paragraphs.
- Candidates should be warned of the pitfalls of giving more reasons/examples/factors than required by the question.

Higher and standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 14	15 - 21	22 - 28	29 - 34	35 - 41	42 - 60

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 22	23 - 26	27 - 40

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

Particular parts of the syllabus caused significant problems, particularly Oceans and their coastal margins, and Extreme environments. Some areas of the syllabus were evidently less popular than others.

Examination technique was sometimes a weakness, in particular:

- Many candidates did not read the questions carefully and often ignored particular command terms, with the result that their answers were unfocused or had only marginal relevance.
- Examples and case studies were often used ineffectively, many being descriptive regurgitations, rather than being applied effectively to the particular question that was asked.
- In part (b) questions, candidates were usually able to identify relevant factors and score some marks, but often failed to develop the answer to gain the additional marks.
- Many candidates did not provide a meaningful conclusion or evaluation to their responses to the 10-mark questions, which restricted the grade that they could achieve. Many answers were merely descriptive, failing to fully address the question.
- The description of patterns, including those shown on maps and diagrams, was often weak and generalized. Similarly, the drawing of an annotated diagram also proved a particular challenge.

The definition and understanding of geographical terms from the syllabus remains a significant problem. For example:

aquaculture, habitat restoration, weathering processes, sphere of influence, urban regeneration, formal and informal economic activities, patterns, vulnerability.

Poor quality of handwriting was an issue with some candidates, making responses very difficult to read.

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

Popular themes included Urban environments, Hazards and disasters, and Leisure, sport and tourism.

The best responses gave well-chosen, contemporary and detailed examples for the 10-mark questions. The judicious use of well chosen examples, together with an evaluation of the question and a considered conclusion allowed some candidates to achieve high grades. The best responses were also well-structured answers with an effective use of paragraphs.

The quality of graph interpretation continued to improve, and more candidates routinely included clear reference to the graphs and diagrams and include some quantification in their responses.

Candidates seemed to understand the structure behind the exam questions better than previously.

Candidates have learned to adapt the length of their answers in many cases to the points awarded. The structure of answers to the "2+2+2" questions is markedly better.

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

Question 1

(a) Posed few problems.

(b) A small number of candidates found it difficult to link a factor with flood. Many misunderstood basin shape and drainage density, or confused a river channel for a basin. There were some good responses on the influences of rock type and vegetation on flooding.

(c) A variety of river management case studies were used and most candidates were able to discuss a range of impacts, their merits and disadvantages. The weaker responses were limited by a single case study and sketchy detail.

Question 2

(a) There was a poor understanding of the characteristics of levées.

(b) Wetlands were generally well understood, together with the reasons for their protection.

(c) There were some good responses to multi-purpose schemes, their benefits and problems, and some effective use of case studies. Again, the weaker candidates wrote all they knew about a particular scheme, such as the Three Gorges Dam, with limited reference to the question.

Question 3

(a) This question proved challenging, with many unable to describe both size and location effectively.

(b) Quite a good knowledge and understanding of types and sources of coastal pollution.

(c) This question was generally poorly answered. Many candidates do not understand the meaning of the term “aquaculture”, choosing to write about overfishing, and there were few examples of habitat restoration. They also found it difficult to compare the conflicts. Some misinterpreted the question assuming there was a choice between aquaculture or habitat restoration in a region.

Question 4

This was not a popular question.

(a) Many found it difficult to describe the pattern of ocean salinity, although the best answers made effective use of quantitative information shown on the map.

(b) There were some very good, detailed responses to this question. Unfortunately, a minority confused La Niña with El Niño and the impacts were assigned to the wrong locations.

(c) Some good answers on oceans and carbon dioxide, and the better answers were well-structured. However, in general, this topic was not well understood.

Question 5

(a) Most candidates were able to correctly identify the two vegetation types, but many found it difficult to use map evidence to suggest why the area might be an extreme environment.

(b) This was poorly answered, with many confusing processes of weathering and erosion.

(c) This proved difficult for many candidates. Detailed knowledge of extreme environments was lacking, with some confusion between the Arctic and Antarctica. Many considered human impacts, rather than focussing on the natural environment. Some answers were not on extreme environments, for example the tropical rainforest.

Question 6

(a) Some candidates had difficulty identifying characteristics of an extreme environment, and many cited a region rather than a type of environment.

(b) Many candidates were able to describe the physical characteristics of semi-arid areas, but relatively few were able to show how these created a challenge for human activity.

(c) This proved to be a challenging question, and there were relatively few good responses.

Question 7

(a) Mostly accurate but very few scored the full 4 marks for this part as four valid statements were not made. Too many just listed countries (maximum 1 mark) and others could not name a country shown. Identification of patterns seemed to be a concept unfamiliar to many.

(b) This was quite well answered, but some candidates wrote about hurricanes as a tectonic process, or wrote about how the hazard was dealt with.

(c) This question elicited some excellent answers, with a discussion of a wide range of strategies. Weaker candidates were unable to show an understanding of the concept of vulnerability, and gave descriptive answers.

Question 8

This question was less popular for this theme.

(a) Scale was correctly identified and features described but, as in question 7, there was an absence of three valid statements to gain the full 3 marks.

(b) This was poorly answered; many candidates found it difficult to explain the occurrence of hurricanes, although they could identify locations, with most referring to the south-east USA.

(c) This question elicited a wide range of responses, from the excellent, considered and detailed, to the “all I know about two contrasting case studies” approach which hardly addressed the question. Weaker answers concentrated on why death rates or economic damage had been high in their examples and did not enter into any discussion or attempt to differentiate between levels of development in countries. A few good candidates referred to the costs of preparation for disasters as well as damage and responses.

Question 9

(a) Most candidates were able to interpret the graph and state the change in GNI.

(b) Relatively few were able to define the sphere of influence, and this was often not linked to sporting events.

(c) Good knowledge and understanding was generally shown, but weaker answers did not structure their response into changes before and during the games.

(d) Many answers were more about the growth and decline of traditional tourist locations, with some reference to the Butler Model, rather than giving reasons for the development of remote locations. Few had good supporting examples. “Remoteness” is a very subjective term in this context. There were some very superficial, historical answers such as “the invention of air travel”.

Question 10

(a) This posed few problems. Most identified correct location.

(b) This question was poorly answered. Although the factors were understood, there was limited linkage to distribution within an urban area.

(c) Again, often poorly answered. Many responses were descriptive, with limited understanding of urban regeneration; social aspects were often ignored.

Question 11

(a) The concept of fair trade was poorly understood, and there was some confusion between fair and free trade.

(b) Not well answered, with limited understanding, and free trade again to the fore.

(c) Most candidates did not appreciate the scope of the task, with most getting little further than describing the advantages of food miles. Few were able to challenge the statement, and examine other environmental impacts of agriculture.

Question 12

(a) There were few problems.

(b) Generally, well answered, with a good understanding of both terms and the benefits of HALE. Most failed to develop both indicators in sufficient depth. Weaker answers were descriptive and did not compare HALE with infant mortality rate.

(c) Some very good responses with detailed case studies, a well located region and disease and evaluation of the effectiveness of strategies. Responses tended to be on HIV/AIDS or Malaria although there were a few less successful answers on swine flu. In some cases, the choice of a region or country was a problem, with vague answers being given about sub-Saharan Africa. A surprising number used cures from the last century.

Question 13

(a) There were few problems.

(b) Usually well answered. Some were a bit general, but conceptually sound.

(c) This question proved to be a challenge to most candidates, and it was often poorly answered. There was limited understanding of formal and informal economic activities, some confusing formal/informal with professional/unskilled employment, and even less knowledge about their location patterns within urban areas. Many just wrote the advantages/disadvantages of the different economies. Answers did not look at patterns. This appears to be a neglected area of the syllabus and was probably the most difficult question on the paper for most.

Question 14

(a) Almost all correctly indicated 10 million. Most candidates used relevant processes, but not all developed their answers. Some used gentrification as a process.

(b) Many candidates found difficulty with drawing an annotated diagram, and many diagrams were poorly drawn and very simplistic. Some candidates drew pictures rather than systems diagrams. Others seemed to have never heard of a sustainable urban system.

(c) There were some excellent answers on urban climates, with detailed case studies. However, they did tend to be descriptive rather than examining the effects of human activity. Many candidates did not get beyond the urban heat island, and the nature of smog related pollution was often poorly understood. A large proportion of candidates wrote about how urban life can impact on climate change.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should ensure that candidates read the questions carefully, paying particular attention to the command terms. The five minutes' reading time should be used wisely, as too often candidates got half way through writing one question from an option before realising that that the other question was more suited to their learning.
- Some candidates wrote a full page for a 2 mark question. This is an issue that needs addressing.
- Candidates should be encouraged to structure their 10-mark answers carefully, and include an evaluation and a reasoned conclusion. Quite often candidates don not define the terms to begin with, which means that answers lack clarity and structure and possibly miss the point.
- Candidates should be able to accurately define key geographical terms.

- Candidates need to improve their skills of description of patterns or distributions, rather than merely listing locations.
- Teachers need to continue to emphasize the use of detailed specific case studies and practise how to use these to effectively answer questions.
- Candidates should be encouraged to keep to the point, and not wander off the question with marginally relevant and descriptive information.

Rubric infringements

Too many candidates attempted both questions in one option, or they answered one question from four or five options.

Higher level paper three

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

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

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

- Weaker candidates blurred the line between explaining and merely describing in part (a) of all three questions. The problem was most noticeable in the question on city landscapes. Many described the common elements of cityscapes but could offer little explanation other than “TNCs and globalization have caused it”.

- As in previous years, there is a tendency amongst many middle-ability candidates to fail to distinguish between economic interactions and more general ideas about “economic growth”. Thus, essays detailing the environmental impacts of global interactions often featured a range of case studies (eutrophication, oil spills and even nuclear meltdowns) whose relevance to the essay seemed marginal. Weak assertions such as “globalization has created a need for energy” (hence, it was frequently alleged, the Chernobyl incident) need be articulated far more carefully.

- Some candidates and centres, while grasping the need for synthetic writing, do not appear to have an equally good grasp of how to deconstruct the conceptual statements that form the part (b) essays (see the recommendations at end of this report). Essay statements are carefully constructed to allow counter-argument and nuanced argument. Those candidates who plan and map their synthetic content across a range of arguments are most likely to score higher marks.

- There is still widespread evidence of some woefully weak comprehension of contemporary economic geography, especially the changing global pattern of wealth, on varying scales. This is a very disappointing state of affairs, given the international mindedness of the centres that many attend. The spatial pattern of global interactions (subject guide: part 3, section 1) is still poorly understood by many, beyond an understanding of core and periphery at a fairly general level. The rapid pace of spatial change in these interactions in recent years is little acknowledged.

- The exact role and purpose of trading blocs (and thus the rationale for joining) is still a challenge for some candidates, despite the fact that most will have studied for their IB exams in a country that belongs to an MGO, such as the EU or NAFTA.

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

- Over the last three consecutive summer examinations, each successive cohort has had a better grasp of the synthetic requirement of the part (b) questions.

- Middle-ability candidates used their time well to provide a good balance when addressing discursive part (b) statements. This can compensate for a weak final evaluation to some degree.

- An appropriate balance was usually seen between part (a) and part (b) responses in terms of the time spent writing.

- Candidates understood the important role of TNCs in the global economy and were able to quote detailed examples of the various activities that named firms undertake. They were also aware of both the intentional and unintentional consequences of TNC activity in a variety of named locations.

- Candidates grasped well the role of ICT in encouraging cultural diffusion, as well as the spread of economic interactions globally.

- The ways in which cultural diffusion occurs were well understood by many, and confidently exemplified.

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

Question 1

(a) This topic is clearly taught very differently by different centres. Some regard McDonaldization as a form of imperialism (in the neo-colonial mould), whereas others see it as a more pervasive form of cultural diffusion (on the basis that no-one is forced to eat a Big Mac at gunpoint). Either political view is fine, provided it can be justified and argued. Some good answers linked the diffusion/imperialism distinction with inequalities in power (that is, they contrasted an essentially one-way exchange, imperialism, with a two-way exchange of culture, diffusion). Another popular interpretation involved analysing cultural imperialism as the way culture is “rolled out” globally by powerful TNCs, whereas cultural diffusion was explained as being the “grass roots” embracing of traits belonging to migrant/diaspora groups by the wider population. Again, this was a fine approach to take if it could be argued coherently. In conclusion, there was no definitive “right” answer here; rather, there was an entire spectrum of “right” answers. “Wrong” answers, in contrast to these, typically tended to be self-contradictory (that is, the actions of TNCs were described as being both imperialism *and* diffusion, with no actual distinction made).

(b) The subject guide (part 3, section 6) provides a teaching focus on geopolitical aspects of the loss of sovereignty (that is, the creation of MGOs) but also widens the geographical inquiry to encompass the power of TNCs. Thus, the cultural imperialism concept can be used in this wider context too, and many candidates made the connection. But it was a shame that some of those who chose this topic did not grasp the centrality of MGOs to the discussion at all, and knew little about the geopolitics of trade bloc membership and the mixed reaction of civil society. Some other weak

responses did not answer the question directly and instead wrote only about *how* loss of sovereignty happens, not *what* the "range of responses" to this then are. Thus, they could write about English language spreading globally and threatening other tongues but did not, for instance, examine the response of either the French or Chinese government to this (setting quotas for the amount of foreign-language music, or films, respectively). In contrast, the best answers were properly synthetic and covered all of the key themes. Some showed very good current affairs knowledge of events in Greece and the Eurozone, or of "resource nationalism" (another reaction) in South America.

Question 2

(a) Many candidates floundered over the term "outsourcing" even though it is clearly defined in the subject guide. Thankfully, the role of ICT was more successfully tackled. Thus, even if outsourcing was not fully understood, marks were picked up for analysing the key role of technology and the process of time–space compression. Those that attempted the question generally knew something about call centres in India, though it was often simply asserted technology had "made it happen" before writing at length about other factors (for example, the English language being spoken in India), which was not answering the question directly. The best answers addressed the stem phrase "the role of" and understood that an analysis of multiple roles would, logically, gain more marks. Thus, as well as Bangalore's success, they also explored how computer-aided just-in-time procurement allows TNC retailers, such as Tesco or Carrefour, to effectively liaise with Kenyan agribusinesses in their supply chain. Generally, it was good to see limited conceptual slippage between supply chain outsourcing and a TNC's own internal spatial division of labour (while the factors that drive the growth of both are similar, they are far from being the same thing).

(b) A lot of weak answers were seen here, as has already been commented on. These were of the "human impact" variety. Many candidates wrote about how economic activity frequently has adverse effects on the environment, but did no more than imply that there is some link with globalization. Many of the impacts written about could have happened in isolation from global interactions, such as acid rain on a country's own doorstep on account of its own power stations. The worst example of this is the common assertion that the USSR adopted nuclear power "because of globalization" and this led to the Chernobyl disaster. Similar problems arise with the use of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. Candidates do not link deep-sea oil exploration with globalization in a meaningful way, other than to tell us that BP is a TNC. One suggestion might be for candidates to at least note that *global economic growth and the spread of wealth (notably so amongst the middle classes of the BRIC nations) has hastened the approach of peak oil; thus energy TNCs are forced towards riskier deep ocean operations, or must make greater use of non-conventional fossil fuels (fracking).* Similar issues arise with the way deforestation, climate change, soil erosion and eutrophication are commonly handled whenever an "environment" question is set on paper three. Very general answers are commonplace that do not locate these impacts nor link them with the actions of recognizable global actors, such as TNCs. Very few candidates can name an actual agribusiness, such as Cargill.

Question 3

(a) There were some very descriptive answers seen, as commented on above. A commonly-made assertion was that TNCs "arrive" and transform the landscape. But why are TNCs arriving in Jakarta, Phnom Penh, Mumbai, Mombasa, Sao Paulo, and so on? Too many geography candidates are unable to meaningfully articulate why the world around us is changing. In strong answers, there was some recognition of the wealth growth amongst the new middle classes in global hubs such as Sao Paulo, attracting the interest of global capital. Good responses sometimes looked at the role of "re-branding" (modernizing the city, using cutting-edge architectural design) in order to attract further FDI (multiplier ideas). Some middle-ability candidates, however, lost focus on "major" world cities and wrote instead about small settlements (for example, "clone towns" in the UK, for which some credit could be gained provided the explanation was good and pertinent to the actual question set). Significant numbers wrote an inappropriate answer concerned with the Burgess concentric ring model, and asserted that this was a "universal" landscape (hence, they argued erroneously that all landscapes, from Tokyo to Illinois, must become the same in time, in strict line with Burgess's wishes).

(b) The general level of understanding in middle-ability responses to this question is also a cause for concern. Very few candidates seemed to show appropriate understanding of 21st century global economic geography. Not one single candidate, for instance, was seemingly aware that the McDonald's franchises in India are 50% native-owned. Instead, the entire cohort asserted that "all the profits go to the USA". Several more widely-used case studies suffered similarly from out-of-date, or just plain incorrect, content. Candidates had little or no knowledge of TNCs based in the BRIC or "Tiger" economies, such as Tata, Shanghai Electric or Samsung. Very few possessed up-to-date information about the world's emerging middle class, such as the 40 million-strong C class in Brazil, who have enjoyed significant gains in consumption since the 1990s (though not in citizenship, which has been the focus of the recent riots in Brazil). It is, of course, entirely appropriate for candidates to be concerned with continuing poverty in parts of Africa, and the role that TNCs may play in perpetuating this. It is also true that a minority of billionaires monopolize a huge chunk of the world's wealth, However, higher-level diploma geography candidates should surely recognize that there is more to the changing global pattern of wealth than this. One good starting point for updating content is this recent McKinsey report: http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/consumer_and_retail/capturing_the_worlds_emerging_middle_class

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

In making future teaching recommendations, we can distinguish between the delivery and acquisition of (i) geographical subject knowledge and (ii) the procedural knowledge candidates need to succeed in the examination.

Recommendations for future delivery of subject guide content (geographical subject knowledge)

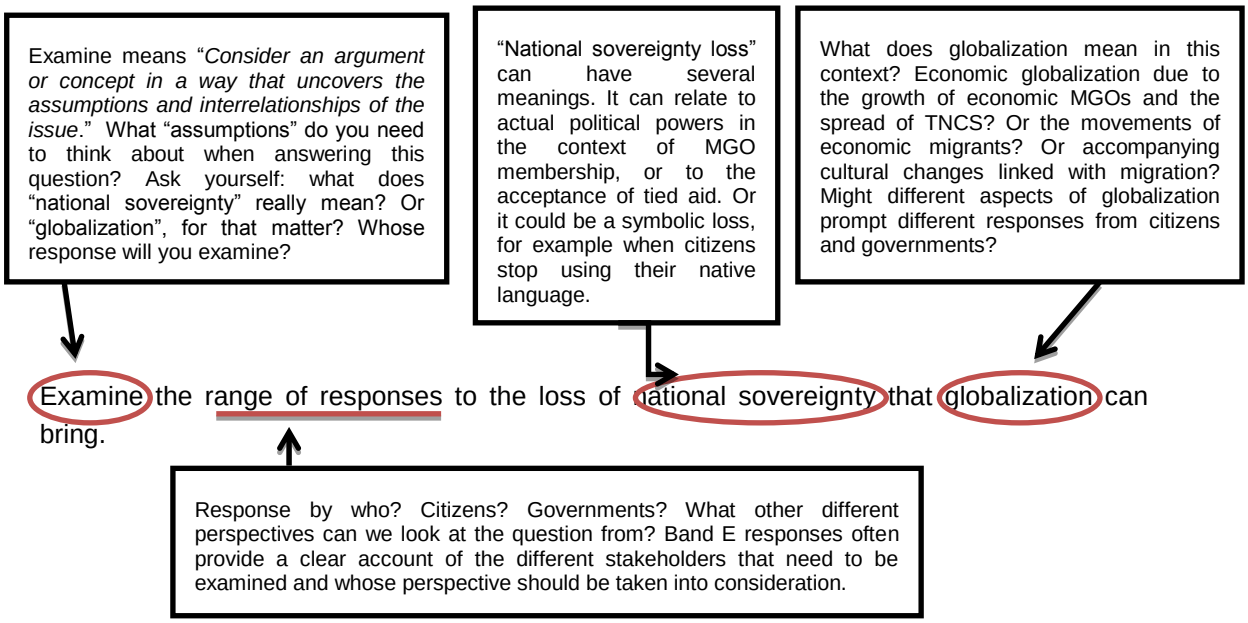
It is important that candidates are helped to gain an improved:

- understanding of contemporary shifts in wealth distribution
- understanding of (and ability to explain) why landscapes are changing
- ability to explicitly link specific global interactions with incidents of environmental harm
- grasp of geopolitics and what the concept of "sovereignty" means

The global interactions candidates study are extremely dynamic, and change is occurring rapidly. This makes the subject potentially very exciting, but candidates do need to stay abreast of current affairs and not rely just on standard texts written around 2009–10. The use of news items pertinent to the course should be integrated into teaching wherever possible (for example in 2013, growth in China is slackening, Brazil's middle classes are in uproar, TNCs are re-negotiating supply chain contracts in Bangladesh due to safety concerns, Qatar is flexing its muscles as a global superpower and there are endless reports to be read about fracking, including in *National Geographic*).

Recommendations for helping candidates gain procedural knowledge (essay writing)

Teachers might provide opportunities for classes to work collaboratively to "un-pack" part (b) questions as conceptual statements. Ability to do this, and plan content around it, is important.



The November 2012 subject report previously suggested that candidates work collaboratively to provide a proper evaluative conclusion to discursive essays taken from past papers. This advice is repeated here for centres entering candidates for the May examination series. In addition to understanding the assessment requirement to provide a synthetic response, candidates are also expected to have some grasp of what is expected of them in regard to making a final summative assessment of the statement, or in providing ongoing evaluation.

"Unsubstantiated evaluation" remains the most common reason why many candidates cannot progress from band D to band E in their essay answers.

The following table shows edited summaries from band C/D responses (unsubstantiated/assertive evaluation) and band E responses (substantiated evaluation) for May 2013 questions.

Unsubstantiated/assertive final evaluation	Proper substantiated final evaluation (grounded in conceptual thinking or evidence-based reasoning)
Question 1(b)	
So at the end of the day, there are negative and positive responses of loss of sovereignty. On the positive side, some people say it is a good thing to belong to an organization like the EU as it gives you strength globally, but other people see it as a worry that countries lose their independence and that TNCs make cultures everywhere the same.	In conclusion, there are a wide range of responses from actors at different scales, including citizens, businesses and governments. The response depends on the nature of the MGO too (as the EU demands greater ceding of sovereignty from its members than, say, NAFTA). For many people, the response is complex (both positive and negative). Thus, many people in the EU enjoy the benefits of travel and cheap shopping in a free market; yet they worry too about loss of control over their currency and immigration. For them, the EU is a mixed blessing.
Question 2(b)	
Nowadays, it is not always the case that environmental harm always follows from global interactions. Global interactions have caused climate change and deforestation but global interactions have also helped Greenpeace spread their message, which can help the environment. So it is a bit of both really.	On balance, it has become clear that almost all global interactions have some kind of environmental footprint and impact in some way on climate, ecosystems or water security. But some interactions, such as online trading, clearly bring fewer catastrophic local impacts than other types of interaction like commodity movements, including the devastating oil spills that occur along the world's major energy pathways. It is also the case that the "shrinking world" effect is helping citizens to campaign in social media for positive change and to spread the word about problems like overfishing.
Question 3(b)	
So all in all, I agree that the world's wealth is mainly in the hands of MEDCs and TNCs, leaving billions in poverty. However, it is true that a few countries in the semi-periphery	In conclusion, geographical patterns of wealth have become far more complex than the statement suggests. Many countries have become emerging economies in recent decades, and in these countries wealth has spread to many people. China in particular

like China have managed to become rich too as a result of globalization.	has seen half a billion people raised out of dollar a day poverty since 1978. Yet while countries like Nigeria also show growing GDP per capita, the distribution of wealth within these countries is very uneven. Global interactions have often allowed elite groups to collude with TNCs to share oil and mineral wealth between them, but to exclude many indigenous people.