GEOGRAPHY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 28	29 - 40	41 - 51	52 - 61	62 - 72	73 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 14	15 - 28	29 - 40	41 - 51	52 - 62	63 - 73	74 - 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 interesting and impressive range of fieldwork investigations, mostly related to topics from part two of the syllabus. The most common topics selected for fieldwork were related to urban areas, coasts and rivers. Moderators report that more centres are undertaking perception studies, for example those related to flooding and earthquake hazards at the local scale.

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, in some cases

almost entirely, on secondary information; these did not meet the requirements for IA fieldwork and received correspondingly low marks.

As always, the variety of work submitted made for very interesting reading. Some of the topics chosen for investigation were very ambitious. In one case, for example, candidates compared river characteristics for two different seasons, which enabled them to incorporate temporal changes into their analyses.

It was encouraging to see more centres allowing candidates a choice of topic and/or hypotheses.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A – Fieldwork question and geographic content

Most reports had well focused aims (often with appropriate hypotheses) and the best candidates had linked the geographical context (such as bid rent in urban areas, Butler's model relating to tourism resorts, the 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 maps showing the research area and locations of fieldwork are included. Adding personalized annotations to locational maps allows candidates to demonstrate additional map skills and to give some background material in an easy-to-absorb way. This can be a very effective way to help set the scene and describe the geographic context. The best maps are very good indeed and the background theoretical context is sound.

Almost all candidates are now providing the source for any non-original maps or diagrams used in reports.

Almost all candidates did clearly state the area of the syllabus that was relevant to their fieldwork question. A small number of reports were submitted on topics that have only tangential relevance to the current syllabus; these invariably scored fewer marks for this criterion.

A small number of centres attempted fieldwork that proved too ambitious to complete successfully. The feasibility of fieldwork projects should be carefully considered before it is undertaken. In some cases, a pilot study may be needed to help reveal unexpected challenges and allow for the fieldwork topic or techniques to be modified.

Criterion B – Method(s) of investigation

In most cases, methods were not only described but well justified. There is no advantage to using a table to show all the methods since the words used in this fashion are either insufficient to add any real value to the study (this applies to short "label"-type notes in a table) or are lengthier and therefore do count towards the final word count.

Weaker reports included little or no justification for 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.

At the other end of the spectrum, some methods were exceptionally well thought-out and, in some cases, innovative.

Knowledge of sampling strategies, particularly the importance of sample size and how this can be decided, 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.

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.

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.

Statistical methods such as Spearman's Rank Correlation, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and Chi-squared were sometimes used on samples which were far too small for reliable results. Most candidates are now attempting to assess 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 show precisely the same data using several different methods (such as a pie chart and a histogram for identical data). Candidates should choose select the best method for their purpose, and justify their choice as needed.

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 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.

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

Criterion E – Conclusion

Most conclusions were generally consistent with results and analysis. Weaker candidates sometimes introduced new material into their conclusions 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. In some cases, the evaluation also considered how the original fieldwork question or hypothesis might be improved. There were more recommendations for improvements to method than for extensions.

Criterion G – Formal requirements

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

Almost all reports respected the 2,500 word limit, with most candidates writing 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.

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 which really belonged 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.

Appendices were usually used appropriately, i.e. only for material that was non-essential such as an example of a completed questionnaire. Centres are reminded that moderators are NOT required to read the appendix, so any diagrams or maps essential to the study MUST be included in the body of the report.

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 tightly focused fieldwork question. The emphasis should be on an analytical or scientific investigation rather than lengthy descriptive account
- 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 candidate'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 analyses a discussion of any anomalies encountered.

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 relevant details of such elements as climate, soils, relief and communications, depending on the precise fieldwork question chosen
- ensure that the fieldwork study involves the collection of sufficient quantitative data

- describe, on the reverse of form 3/IA, the extent of any guidance given to candidates
- provide candidates with a checklist with details of the assessment criteria
- add comments to all reports (either on the report or as a separate matrix or mark sheet) 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 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 26	27 - 32	33 - 38	39 - 44	45 - 60

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 26	27 - 32	33 - 38	39 - 44	45 - 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 detailed and geographically located examples. Some candidates misread the questions, for example in answering 3(b), quite a few chose a factor that was not in the diagram. Only a handful could effectively analyse the changing patterns in oil production. Often generic answers were given in relation to questions on tropical rainforests when the question was more specifically about biodiversity. The longer section B essay questions seemed a little demanding for some candidates. There were some examples of very poor time management with the longer responses being short, rushed and poorly planned.

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

There were some zero marks for some of the questions but in general candidates had been well prepared for this examination. The vast majority of scripts demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding, and application and analysis of the four syllabus areas. The wording of the questions and the stimulus material presented few problems to most candidates. Populations in transition was well prepared, as was knowledge of the MDGs, especially in relation to progress being made. Many candidates seemed to be able to fit their responses neatly and concisely into the larger boxes provided and very few continued onto extra sheets.

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

Section A

Question 1

a) Most could see that this is a rapidly tapering, youthful population but a surprising number of candidates explained instead of described and/or did not recognize the chimney effect and instead referred to this pyramid as having a large economically active population, which is definitely does not.

b) On the whole well answered but with the weaker answers not understanding momentum.

c) Some excellent responses, using Japan, Australia, China, and the UK. On rare occasions examples were not well chosen and this impacted upon the quality of the response. Some candidates drifted away from economic consequences.

Question 2

a) On the whole correctly answered with quantification by most candidates.

b) Some very clear developed reasons here. Sometimes responses tended to be a bit vague though as candidates forgot that they were writing about why enrolment in primary schools has increased and not just a generic reason for progress in the MDGs as a whole.

c) These answers tended to be excellent if they were linked to a valid identified other MDG. Gender empowerment was very popular and answers were often detailed in explaining how education helps in the achievement of this goal. There were the odd responses where it was obvious that the candidates were not familiar with the MDG's. In several situations the answers contained a valid MDG but lacked extension.

Question 3

a) Human factor – deforestation – was very common. Candidates struggled more with identifying a physical factor, with some choosing another human induced factor.

b) On the whole well answered if "cattle ranching" or "introduction of alien species" was chosen with answers directly linked to biodiversity loss. Answers that referred to climate change or pollution tended to be very vague and not specific to loss of biodiversity in tropical rainforests. Unfortunately some candidates did not use a factor "given on the diagram" and as such could not score any marks in this answer.

c) The best candidates were able to explain three reasons why biodiversity in tropical rainforests should be preserved. However there were instances where candidates repeated similar points in the sub-parts of the question and could not be awarded further credit. Often the importance of biodiversity was not addressed and the answers lacked extension and development; it was also common for weaker candidates to concentrate on explanations for preserving tropical rainforests rather than the specific preservation of biodiversity within it.

Question 4

a) It was rare for this to be answered incorrectly.

b) Many candidates were able to suggest two reasons why some areas of the world are unlikely to depend entirely on renewable energy sources. The weaker candidates could only manage one basic reason and often failed to back this up with suitable extension and/or exemplification.

c) Of all the Section A questions this appeared to be the one that candidates struggled with the most. Weak candidates had great difficulty trying to analyse how the global pattern of oil production has changed in recent decades. In many cases production was confused with consumption and the changes in global pattern of oil production were not addressed. The best responses demonstrated very accurate and correct ideas with sound knowledge and understanding, for example details about OPEC and production statistics; relevant descriptions of the global pattern of oil production with strong sound analysis of change (such as geopolitical issues; peak oil scenarios; exploitation/new reserves e.g. tar sands; conservation/secondary extraction). Unfortunately, these responses were quite rare.

Section B

There seemed to be an even spread of choice over these three questions. Popularity appeared to decline in this order: 5, 7 and then 6.

Question 5

There were some really quite excellent discussions of the ways in which the consumption of one or more resources can be reduced. Fossil fuels, water and even fish stocks were included. At the top end the work included sophisticated analysis of various methods of conservation, waste reduction, recycling and substitution. Candidates were able to illustrate their work with case studies at different scales and from various parts of the world. The weaker candidates often wrote very short answers with little knowledge and/or understanding and which were largely superficial or of only marginal relevance usually in relation to alternative energies. These responses were characterized by having no or irrelevant examples and case studies with very little application. It was clear that important aspects of the question had been ignored.

Question 6

At the top end the answers were very good indeed with the best candidates demonstrating a thorough knowledge and understating of disparities in wealth and development. Case studies at various scales were used well. There were wide and varied discussions which included analysis and evaluation of different strategies (micro finance, debt relief, Aid and Trade) designed to help reduce disparities. The question was open, which is good, but it was evident a number could not decide where to go.

Question 7

This question was popular and produced some quite excellent discussions on how gender issues hinder development. Some candidates also identified other factors as obstacles to development. In many of the good answers, examples and case studies were well chosen but occasionally generalized. There was plenty of evidence that the best candidates had very sound knowledge and understanding of gender inequalities in culture, status, education, employment, politics, legal rights and land tenure. Many responses had specific geographical examples to support their ideas/evaluations/analysis. In weaker answers the “obstacle to development” was often ignored. Most looked mainly at the causes of gender inequality and in some cases how it could be addressed.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates need to read and re-read the questions carefully before answering the questions. They also need to be familiar with the command terms to get appropriate marks. It is recommended that as much of the content as possible is taught through appropriate examples and case studies preferably chosen from a limited number of countries (between three and five) of contrasting levels of development.

Further comments

Time management needs attention. Often candidates wrote answers that were well beyond what was needed in section A. 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 candidate in terms of the detail/length required for full marks. Spending too much time on section A often resulted in a rushed and unplanned essay. As one can see all of the essay questions were quite challenging and needed some thought and planning to be answered effectively.

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 - 22	23 - 28	29 - 34	35 - 40	41 - 60

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 23	24 - 27	28 - 40

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

In general, knowledge of the new syllabus was quite sound. Answers incorporated many different relevant and detailed case studies. Several scripts had rubric infringements at both higher and standard level. At higher level, one candidate attempted three questions, two of which were on the same theme. Several candidates answered 5 or 6 questions, attempting both questions on their chosen themes. At standard level several candidates answered four questions usually involving two from the same theme.

The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrated

The best responses were enhanced by well-chosen, contemporary and detailed examples. A few candidates failed to include any examples or factual details.

The interpretation of command terms continues to improve.

Many candidates have been well trained in the skills of graph interpretation, but the skills of producing annotated diagrams remain weak, though there were signs of improvement at Standard Level with regard to the hydrograph in question two. Relevant and well-drawn sketch maps remain a rarity.

Knowledge of physical geography processes (especially in questions 3–6 inclusive) was relatively weak at both levels.

More candidates are realizing that by challenging the statements they are asked to discuss, they offer both sides of an argument, resulting in stronger responses and well formulated conclusions. At standard level, evaluations, when asked for, were often very brief.

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

Most popular questions at higher level were from optional themes D (Hazards and disasters), E (Leisure, sport and tourism) and G (Urban environments), followed by F (Food and health).

At standard level the most popular sections were: Urban environments, Leisure, sport and tourism, Hazards and disasters, and Freshwater – issues and conflicts.

Optional Theme A: Freshwater – issues and conflicts

Question 1

This was a popular question.

Knowledge and understanding was reasonable for part (a) though at standard level strategies were often identified but not well described with regard to their functioning.

Part (b) proved harder, with few recognizing importance of “probability”. Although human activities were identified, answers rarely explained fully how they might affect flooding.

Many discussions in part (c) were strong on eutrophication, but less convincing on salinization or other impacts, so that at both levels arguments tended to unbalanced. Weaker candidates tended to write about water pollution in general.

Question 2

Part (a) was (mostly) excellent at both levels; though a few higher level centres erroneously offered climate graphs rather than hydrographs.

Links to forecasting in part (b) were often tenuous with few references to speed of flood onset, height, duration or return period.

The approach to part (c) was usually sound, with some truly outstanding responses using detailed case studies and accurate supporting data.

Optional Theme B: Oceans and their coastal margins

Question three was more frequently answered at both levels.

Question 3

Most candidates were able to describe changes in salinity very well in part (a) and able to explain oceanic conveyor belts in part (b)(i). Answers to (b)(ii) were much less secure and many candidates confused oceanic conveyor belts with surface currents.

Discussions in part (c) were often strong, and virtually all answers included an accurate description of how El Niño works, showing a welcome improvement in the understanding of the event. At standard level the effects were often confined to the west coast of South America and effects in the western Pacific were ignored, but answers were, in most cases, accurate and relevant.

Question 4

Responses to this question were very weak at both levels, with most gaining more marks for part (b) than for part (a). Examples used in (c) were not always valid. For instance, the Trafigura event did not involve "waste disposal in oceans", nor could an accidental oil spill from a rig explosion really be considered as "waste disposal", so that a number of responses simply examined ocean pollution from any source.

Optional Theme C: Extreme environments

This theme was equally unpopular at both higher and standard level.

Question 5

Most candidates could identify sand dunes in part (a)(i) but at standard level, few were able to accurately state two processes of wind transport in (a)(ii) and in part (b) very few answers adequately explained the occurrence of flash floods.

Responses to part (c) were generally relevant, but the "challenges" were often poorly covered and many answers simply discussed the advantages and disadvantages of tourism in extreme environments without directly referring to challenges and opportunities afforded by the environment chosen.

Question 6

In part (a) most candidates were able to define glacial and periglacial environments. In part (b) most were able to describe how glaciers retreat but why they retreat was less clearly explained.

Basic knowledge and understanding of the opportunities for human activity in glacial and periglacial areas was often lacking in part (c). Some answers saw "glacial" as synonymous with "polar" and completely ignored the numerous opportunities for human activity in the Alpine-type glacial areas of the world.

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

Questions 7 and 8 were approximately equal in popularity at both levels, though marks for question 8 tended to be higher than those for question 7.

Question 7

Part (a) was usually well done. The weakest area was part (b) where, at both levels, very few offered a good description of the actual global distribution. In part (c) responses tended to focus on only limited aspects of the question, and concentrate for example only on short term strategies, ignoring longer term ones. At standard level, responses frequently described strategies without evaluating their success. Detail was often missing, for example "build earthquake-resistant buildings" was often stated as a strategy but without any detail as to how this could be achieved. Many candidates still believe that with current technology, earthquakes can be predicted and populations evacuated before they occur.

Question 8

The most common scale chosen in part (a) was the Richter scale, though few candidates at standard level were able to describe how it relates to earthquake strength. Many candidates who chose hurricanes were unable to refer to the Saffir–Simpson scale and simply referred to wind speeds. Part (b) was generally well done with a wide range of reasons, though weaker responses failed to refer to the actual risk that faced the inhabitants.

Responses to part (c) were much stronger on economic factors than physical factors, with a surprising number of answers failing to mention that the consequences might depend on the category of the hurricane, its speed of movement, height of the storm surge and the type of coastline at landfall. Equally, the term "severity" was often interpreted in a very narrow sense with candidates apparently not realizing that such terms include a perceptual component (what is severe to one person is not to another).

There were however many excellent case studies included at both levels.

Optional Theme E: Leisure, sport and tourism

Question 9 was much more popular than question 10 at both levels.

Question 9

Part (a) was answered well by the majority of candidates but in part (b) too many answers focused more on the players than the supporters, though many had good reasons for changes in size of the sphere of influence.

In part (c), the benefits of international sporting events to anyone other than locals (such as major corporations, national economy, etc.) were often totally ignored. Answers were generally stronger on the benefits for the local people but often did not consider longer-term effects beyond the event itself.

Question 10

Part (a) proved tricky for a few candidates who failed to grasp the month-on-month comparisons. Many omitted to specify a location for part (b), but many good reasons were offered.

Answers to part (c) were mostly weak (with a few truly notable exceptions at both levels), with too much reliance on a very limited number of activities and limited examples. Some candidates read "near the city centre" as "near the city" and included rural activities. The weaker answers tended to simply describe the locations of facilities without any form of balanced argument in relation to the question.

Optional Theme F: The geography of food and health

Question 12 was more popular than 11 at higher level (but marks were slightly lower). At standard level question 11 was more popular

Question 11

Part (a)(i) was usually well done, though some answers wrongly used "calories" as a measure of health. Part (a)(ii) was also well done though some responses lacked references to places on the map even if they were able to describe the basic pattern of the disease. Part (b) was less well done and responses often referred to diseases that are not water-borne.

There were some strong answers to part (c) at higher level and at both levels a number of candidates were unsure of the precise meaning of *poverty* or *food insecurity*. Some answers

did not look at other possible causes of food insecurity. At standard level the responses were generally weak and many candidates descended into a stereotyped, blanket account as to why *"*Africa*"* has famines and poor diet, once again treating the entire continent as a single country.

Question 12

Parts (a)(i) and (ii) were generally well done, as was part (b).

Answers to part (c) were better on "total food production" than on "food production per person"; some candidates wrote about "food availability" which is a different concept, or uneven distribution, which was invalid. Some answers did not appreciate that the graph used index values and thought they could compare the two lines in a quantitative way.

In part (d), there were some interesting answers, which were generally along the right lines. These usually examined the effects of lack of food leading to undernourishment or the availability of excess food leading to dietary problems and obesity. A surprising number of answers showed a lack of awareness of the diseases caused by poor diet related to food availability.

Optional Theme G: Urban environments

Question 13 was more popular at both levels, but question 14 usually gained higher marks.

Question 13

Part (a) was usually well answered though the most common error was not to refer to places named on the map. Part (b) was usually disappointing, with few able to concentrate on "pattern".

Most answers simply explained the existence of squatter settlements without referring to areas of high and low deprivation and their relative locations in a city in a low-income country. There were some good answers to part (c), though, at both levels, many were overly descriptive and had only very limited evaluation. Frequently, relevant strategies were detailed without saying how they related to sustainability.

Question 14

Part (a) was often poorly done at both levels and surprisingly few gained full marks, but (b) was generally better, though many answers did not make clear the relationship between a circular system and the ecological footprint due to weak understanding of the latter term.

Answers to part (c) tended to be mediocre, with many weaker responses choosing to discuss only rural–urban migration and ignoring movements such as counter-urbanization, suburbanization and their impacts.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Ensure definitions of key geographical terms are well understood (e.g. eutrophication, ecological footprint, food insecurity, sphere of influence, disaster).
- Improve how candidates describe and analyse data in all forms (maps, tables and graphs).
- Develop the skills associated with annotating diagrams.

- Make sure that candidates understand command terms.
- Encourage candidates to break down essay questions into parts so that they see all aspects of a question and do not omit part of the answer.
- Help candidates to ensure that they demonstrate their discursive writing abilities by including alternative viewpoints where relevant and where the command term encourages it.
- Work at increasing the confidence of candidates to tackle questions involving topographic and other maps.
- Use up-to-date case studies and remind them to include specific locations and event dates in examination answers.
- Give practice in describing patterns on maps and, in particular, referring to named places/areas on the map when describing a pattern.

Higher level paper three

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 25

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

- There was a worrying lack of familiarity with the concepts examined in part (a) of the questions in all three questions. The first 10 marks are, by design, meant to be easily accessible for well-revised and well-taught candidates. However, this assumes that candidates have become familiar with the key concepts included in the guide.
- Poorly-prepared candidates did not understand the nature of the part (b) assessments, sometimes writing their essay around a single topic, typically the Dani tribe's twentieth century voyage towards modernity.
- In some cases candidates answered either part (a) or part (b), but not both.
- While historical context has merit, in some questions, notably 3(b), it sometimes led to detailed but less relevant responses in the context of globalization in recent times.
- Financial flows and the importance of trading groups remains a weakly understood area.
- Some candidates relied heavily on their personal feelings or beliefs, writing un-evidenced, often digressive, responses.

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

Any generalization is tentatively made, given the context of a small cohort (just over 500 entries) and the fact that levels of preparation clearly varied very greatly from centre to centre.

Well-prepared candidates were familiar with key concepts and measures such as cultural imperialism, loss of sovereignty and globalization indices. They were also well versed in designing a synthetic response that properly drew on diverse knowledge and understanding of a variety of global interactions.

Many candidates were able to discuss, with relevant examples, environmental change in the modern world. They showed understanding of the complexities of cross-border pollution events. Similarly, cultural aspects of globalization seems to be an area where candidates are rapidly gaining confidence. Popular cultural themes for candidates, as in the summer, were:

- cultural imperialism (generally linked with tourism, TNCs or English language internet)
- glocalization (though generally with McDonald's as the rather pedestrian example cited)
- landscapes (in the context of world cities and the homogenization of "corporate" architecture and "financescapes").

The overall impact of the internet on global interactions was appreciated by candidates. African candidates often made effective reference to the ways in which mobile technology is transforming the way business is conducted across their continent.

Very few candidates appeared to experience any serious time issues.

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

Question 1

a) Some good answers chose the EU to exemplify loss of sovereignty in many policy areas, including currency, human rights, immigration and other important aspects of governance. Pleasingly, details of the recent Eurozone crisis appeared in some scripts, with impressive analysis of the outcome for Greece that tackled head-on the issue of loss of sovereignty.

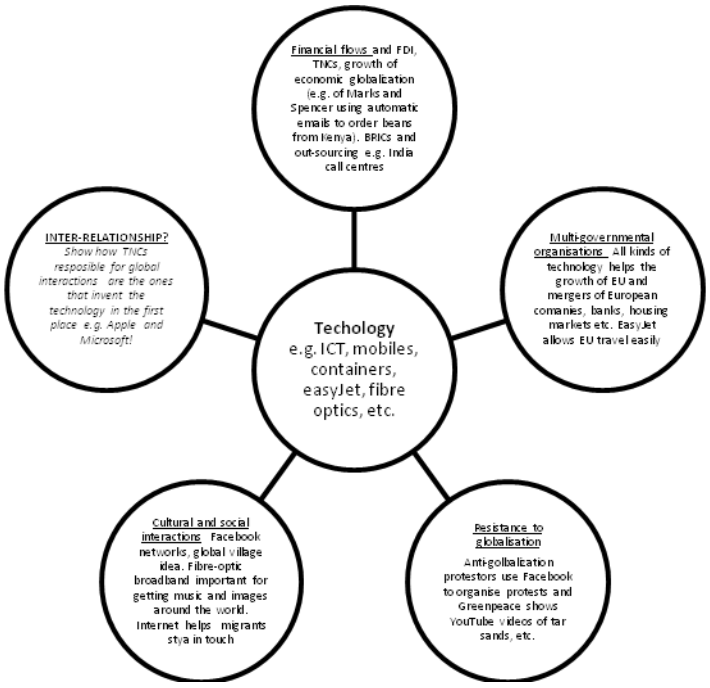
   Another successful approach was to choose the IMF as the chosen example and provide details of how the acceptance of structural adjustment programmes has represented a partial loss of sovereignty for nations like Tanzania for whom the receipt of much-needed loans has been conditional upon privatization of infrastructure and services (and all under the tutelage of EU-based consultancy firms).

   Several examples were seen of very poorly prepared candidates writing about TNCs rather than MGOs; why they did not simply choose a different question is unclear.

b) Some excellent, wide-ranging answers thoughtfully examined how technology had led to, or accelerated, a range of global interactions. Candidates who understood the nature of the paper three assessment were able to plan a wide-ranging response that considered, in turn, political, economic, social and cultural interactions (showing in each case how ICT or containers and cheap flights assisted with global-scale processes and interactions). In contrast, some weaker responses merely listed (often for several pages) a timeline, or catalogue, of technologies before asserting that these all contributed to, or constituted, a shrinking world. While this showed good general knowledge of technology and gadgets, it was hardly the best way to tackle a synthetic geography assignment and tended to be a self-limiting approach.

Very, very few grasped the "interrelationship" suggested by the question. This ideally required some acknowledgement that technologies do not come "from nowhere" but are rather the outcome of powerful global actors actively seeking time–space compression in an attempt to increase product sales, turnover times, break into new markets and undertake corporate mergers. The role played by the research and development units of TNC headquarters (part of the international division of labour) was not appreciated. Thus the reciprocal profit motive that drives the technical creativity of TNCs such as Apple, Microsoft and Google was almost entirely neglected.

The illustration below is based upon a plan for one of the few Band E responses to this question that was seen by examiners.



Question 2

a) This question produced a disappointing set of responses on the whole. Too many candidates merely asserted, wrongly, that a simplistic MEDC–LEDC divide still exists. There was next to no acknowledgement of globally important hubs such as Mumbai or Sao Paulo or other key settlements in emerging economies (or peripheral "LEDCs" as they were portrayed in most accounts, despite the BRIC group's key role in driving global GDP growth today). Overall, the cohort showed poor understanding of contemporary economic geography and the global pattern of hub regions.

The use of the word "hub" in the guide, and in this question, ought to be a clear signal to centres that the core–periphery literature dating from the 1970s is not, in itself, sufficient background reading for the current global interactions course. Candidates who relied exclusively on this out-dated framework found themselves erroneously describing a global system within which a global periphery that includes China and India continues to provide raw materials for the manufacturing firms found in developed countries. Examiners were left wondering whether, in other contexts, such candidates would be able to explain the rise of the Asian tigers and BRIC economies, or the de-industrialization of the old global core.

Thus a widespread lack of familiarity with the concept of emerging economies as new global hubs (which must surely come from examining the latest KOF or Kearney indices) was seen. There was little mention of the activities of the world's financial hubs (which have triggered the global economic turndown that now surrounds us).

The concept of scale was clearly the biggest problem. There was a lack of comprehension that world cities in middle-income and low-income nations can nonetheless be global hubs. Effective teaching about globalization and global interactions needs to move beyond the nation state as the only frame of reference for patterns of wealth and connectivity.

b) Outsourcing is clearly defined in the guide. Many themes pertaining both to foreign direct investment and also outsourcing, such as financial flows, transboundary pollution and the factors encouraging the growth of multi-governmental organizations are scattered through the guide. Good candidates who were familiar with the synthetic nature of the part (b) essay mode of assessment rose to the occasion. The best answers came complete with plans that included positive and negative (or short term and long term) impacts, sub-divided into themed consequences such as economic *[Guide 2/3])*, environmental *[Guide 4]*, political *[Guide 6]*, social *[Guide 7]*.

Well-informed candidates were thus able to highlight how global networks of outsourcing have helped drive the trend towards regional trade bloc integration. Elsewhere, outsourcing was seen a factor that can be responsible for poor health and safety standards (some asserted, perhaps correctly, that this was the cause of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill); outsourcing of back office functions to India was a popular theme, whose consequences were seen as being both positive (rising incomes) and sometimes negative (long and unsociable hours for call centre workers).

Some discussed the social reaction / anti-globalization movements against outsourcing (linked with deindustrialization, e.g. of US manufacturing hubs). A few even argued that outsourcing has introduced new kinds of geographical risks for TNCs who find their supply chains disrupted by recent hazards such as Thai floods, Japan's tsunami and Icelandic ash clouds. This is a truly synthetic theme and one that future candidates could be encouraged to explore further.

In contrast, weaker candidates were uncertain as to the exact nature of outsourcing and were clearly not able to differentiate between outsourcing and FDI (for instance, when discussing the relocation of US manufacturing to the Mexican *maquiladoras*). If a good range of consequences were developed, however, such candidates were still allowed to achieve a sound mark.

Question 3

a) A checklist for an appropriate example of a transboundary pollution event has three boxes to tick. Candidates should ask:

- *Is it an example of human-induced pollution, such as sulphur emissions?*
- *Is the example transboundary?* (While many used the recent BP Gulf of Mexico oil spill, few were able to describe any legitimate transboundary effects.)
- *Can they describe their case study as an "event" – something of a clearly stated duration?* (This might be single event such as a nuclear accident, but could be a longer-duration event such as Kuwaiti oil fires, or even acid rain

during the1970s or possibly ozone depletion in the early 1980s. Whereas "global warming" since 1750 is hard to justify as an "event".)

The examples that worked best were Chernobyl (although this is a slightly antiquated example, its effects are still felt today) and the far more recent Japanese tsunami (which quickly became a transboundary event, with nuclear radiation detected on the US Pacific coast within two weeks of the explosion).

A few more sketch maps would have been useful here, as some case studies were poorly located and the spatial extent of the pollution weakly understood. Amongst weaker candidates, the interpretation of "consequences" tended to be quite limited and almost entirely short-term and overwhelmingly negative, even for events that actually led to substantial improvements in practice, regulations and legislation.

b) The provocative statement forced weaker candidates to attempt some sort of evaluation and to therefore present conflicting evidence, which was pleasing to see. The most popular themes were the modernization of indigenous peoples and the glocalization concept. Urban landscapes were sometimes included too. A few tackled diaspora but not many. Given that this is a geography exam, there was a disappointing lack of attention to scale. What is happening at a planetary level (loss of languages, etc.) is very different from what happens at a local scale in world cities / global hubs, where diversity has never been greater or richer in many cases.

Overly-historical accounts should be discouraged, as the focus is meant to be contemporary globalization (which is widely accepted as either a post-war or even post-1980s phenomenon). The best responses were synthetic and covered five or six themes; in contrast, many weaker answers devoted two pages to the trials and tribulations of the Dani tribe and one page to the contents of McDonald's menus, resulting in a mediocre performance overall.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

The following hallmarks of quality answers are worth discussing with candidates as part of their preparatory work**:**

- *Synthesis:* Teachers can insist that weaker candidates always devise a synthetic plan for their part (b) essays. A spider diagram linking different strands of the global interactions course to the essay title can be an effective way of making sure the AO3 requirement for synthesis is met (see example given above for question one).
- *Contemporary:* Candidates are best-off avoiding antiquated case studies that are poor examples of contemporary globalization. Accounts of the activities of Christian missionaries in Asia and Africa in the early 1900s, while providing some interesting colonial/historical background to modern globalization, can hardly be said to exemplify its present-day workings as satisfactorily as a well-chosen twenty-first century case study.
- *Concepts:* Ensure that candidates fully understand the meanings of key terms (e.g. cultural imperialism, homogenization, network, outsourcing, MGO, financial flows, transboundary). It is sound practice to provide a brief definition of each key term as it is introduced in the essay. This helps examiners understand the candidate's intended scope of usage for each important term. Make sure that the candidates are familiar with the wording of the guide, from which future part (a) questions especially will be derived.

- *Scale:* Help candidates develop a sense of scale, especially in relation to global hubs and the concept of a global periphery (get them to examine global internet connectivity maps, focusing on linkages both between and within countries, to assist with this).
- *Evidence:* Remind candidates that statements and arguments must be based on solid facts, examples, details, names, locations and supporting evidence. Unsupported statements are never likely to gain the highest marks.
- *Power:* Include some debates in lessons, with candidates asked to represent vested interest groups and powerful actors, so that their responses move beyond the superficial.
- *Perspectives:* Encourage candidates to consider different ways of answering the question. Weaker responses generally lack any mention of alternative viewpoints, and fail to explore all aspects of the question. Help candidates recognize 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.