

November 2013 subject reports

SOCIAL & CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher Level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 27	28 - 37	38 - 48	49 - 60	61 - 72	73 - 100

Standard Level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 24	25 - 33	34 - 45	46 - 59	60 - 71	72 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 9	10 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 15	16 - 20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Similar to that of November 2012, half of the reports moderated featured appropriate and well-focused topics. However, a slightly higher proportion of candidates presented inappropriate topics.

Issue-based research issues far outnumbered context-based issues this session, although the two most successful reports were context-based. One dealt with the “social nature of room decoration” in a residential school; the other examined reciprocity among students from one school during a community service trip. Examples of successful issue-based reports included: a report considering to what extent the anonymity of gift-givers reflect on evaluation of gifts by their receivers; a report interpreting a political party as an “enclave group”, applying Mary Douglas’ “group versus grid” concept; and an imaginative report examining how “capitalist transactions” may underlie what appear to be affective relationships.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Identification of an issue or question

Presenting an appropriate and well-focused research question continues to be problematic for some candidates.

Criterion B: Research techniques

Most candidates achieved at least 2 marks for this criterion. Candidates were able to demonstrate at least a basic understanding of the role of research techniques in anthropological research. Details in describing research techniques and/or their application was often lacking.

Criterion C: Presentation of data

Most candidates achieved at least 2 marks for this criterion. As in past examination sessions, a lack of detail was the main reason why higher marks were not awarded. About a quarter of the samples moderated presented data inappropriately.

Criterion D: Interpretation and analysis of data

Although some slight improvement was noted in both candidate performance and the accuracy of teachers' assessments under this criterion, this criterion remains the one candidates have the most difficulty fulfilling. A third of the samples moderated did not present the analytical frameworks called for, although this represents a somewhat better performance than seen in recent examination sessions. There seems to be a greater awareness among candidates that ethnographic results need to be framed by theory, but what requires improvement is an appreciation of how theory successfully contributes to analysis. It remains the case that theory is usually introduced, but it is often too superficially described and applied to advance the analysis of data.

Criterion E: Ethical issues

Improvement over the November 2012 session was clearly seen. Over half the candidates offered substantial discussions of ethical issues, in particular informant privacy. Still, candidates rarely discussed issues such as positionality, reflexivity, and representation.

Criterion F: Anthropological insight and imagination

The majority of candidates received 2 marks or less for this criterion. Some indication of reflexive and critical thinking about the process of data gathering and interpreting is required for full marks for this criterion.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Choosing topics and defining research questions: Consultation between the teacher and candidates on the choice of context and issue for the research remains of high importance. The Teacher Support Materials (TSM) publication (accessible through the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC) home page for Social and Cultural Anthropology) may help teachers to assist candidates in focusing their research question. The TSM gives ideas on how to go about progressively delimiting research interests.
- Data presentation and analysis: Only a minority of candidates achieved a detailed and well-organized presentation of data, and centres were often overly generous in assessing data presentation. Given the constraints of the word limit it is very important that teachers and candidates work carefully with the marked and annotated sample reports presented in the TSM. As research and writing progress, regular class time could be devoted to preparing candidates for this component, as well as scheduling individual conferences. Guides to field research are available to acquaint candidates with the full range of research techniques, and a number of these are annotated on the Teacher Resource Exchange on the OCC.
- Application of concepts and theory: The TSM publication is also useful in helping teachers and candidates appreciate how theory can be made relevant to data analysis, even in a brief research report. Also, the Teacher Resource Exchange as well as the Social and Cultural Anthropology forum on the OCC frequently highlight resources and host discussions concerning the teaching of theory.
- Treatment of ethical issues: Teachers should discuss with candidates the various points concerning ethical practice covered in the subject guide and in the TSM. Also, time should be devoted to the concerns which have become increasingly important to anthropology over the past 40 years, namely issues dealing with positionality, reflexivity, and representation of individual informants and groups. It is furthermore impossible to critically read contemporary ethnography without taking these issues into account.
- Organization and format of the report: While there is no specific format for the HL IA report, it is advisable for teachers to produce a suggested format for candidates to raise awareness of the requirements reflected in the assessment criteria, and to encourage clarity of organization. Use of a table of contents, subheadings and a bibliography should form part of classroom preparation for this component. It should also be noted that appendices are for the presentation of ancillary material only, and should not be used for the presentation of basic data.
- Presentation of group work: While group work was not an issue this examination session, teachers should ensure that they clearly describe the circumstances of any group work undertaken. This should be done in a statement accompanying the 3/CS form. For guidelines on group work for the IA, please refer to the subject guide,

page 39. Teachers should ensure that data interpretation and analysis are each candidate's own work.

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 15	16 - 20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As in previous years, the range and quality of work seen, varied widely in terms of both overall presentation and the extent of anthropological knowledge and understanding demonstrated. Requirements for this component seem to be generally understood, however the nature and purpose of the critique continues to be problematic for some centres, where it is more often used to present an analysis of the observation rather than a critique of the written report. A number of the samples moderated exceeded the word count. However, the majority of samples seen suggest that candidates are able to identify appropriate sites for the observation, if not to identify an issue to guide the observation, and their reports are usually quite successful. Similarly, the majority of the critiques were usually more or less effective in demonstrating the candidates' efforts to think more critically about their initial report.

Candidate performance against each criterion

As in previous examination sessions, candidates were often most successful on criterion A (the detail and organization of their observation report), and on criterion C (focus, assumptions and bias).

However with respect to criterion A. the report, while many were quite well detailed, some continue to use a simple chronological format which is not sufficient to produce a report that is "well organized". Less effective observation reports usually lacked detail and were more dependent on previous knowledge than specific observation, providing less detail overall.

Criterion B – the distinction between description and analysis, continues to present problems for many candidates if not all, and a good many samples seen made no, or minimal, reference to either, missing their own analytical inferences, such as classifying people by assumed roles such as employee or client. Where there was at least some incipient sense of the distinction, there was usually rather little discussion, and internal marks given for this criterion were quite often overgenerous.

With criterion C, candidates continue to be quite successful in terms of identifying personal biases and assumptions with regard to class, ethnicity and gender and provided some relevant examples. However, many continue to overlook ways in which these may also reflect sociological and ideological biases, such as their use of certain categories to describe people, as if these categories were natural.

Finally performance on criterion D continues to vary widely; at the lower end there was little evidence of anthropological concepts or understanding of some of the relevant

methodological issues, but other critiques were able to identify and apply relevant terms to their own written accounts quite thoughtfully.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

These remain very similar to previous examination sessions and need to be closely linked to ongoing classroom work with, and discussion of, the nature of ethnographic materials.

- Candidates need to understand why simple chronological notation of presenting data more or less in “raw” list form, does not constitute organization. They should be helped to identify more effective organizational strategies.
- The distinction between ethnographic description and analysis needs to be examined constantly in the classroom, if it is to be successfully recognized, and examined in the critique.
- More candidates this examination session recognized that some of their assumptions and biases had a social or cultural component and were not just personal opinion, this too should be an area of examination in terms of class ethnographies, as well as the candidates' own reports.
- Candidates should familiarize themselves with the guidelines and assessment criteria. They should be aware of the word limits and the consequences for exceeding these.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 7	8 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 14	15 - 20

PLEASE NOTE: That some of the comments from the standard level paper one report pages 17–20 are equally applicable here.

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

There were no specific areas of the examination which candidates appeared to find difficult. Some candidates did not distinguish between “Welsh” and “Welsh-speaking”, however many more candidates did recognize this distinction.

The weaker responses demonstrated a poor knowledge of theory, or failed to attempt to recognize the viewpoint of the anthropologist.

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

Almost all candidates had an ethnography to offer for purposes of comparison, and the majority also showed reasonable-to-good awareness of theory. Almost all candidates demonstrated that they had studied anthropology and produced responses that were not only written from a “common sense” perspective.

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

Question 1

The stronger responses explicitly stated and discussed one or more generalizations, making a clear link between these and the response itself. Weaker responses were descriptive, or simply repeated the text and did not show any evidence of the study of social and cultural anthropology. A good response to this question should use correct and relevant terminology from the discipline.

Question 2

Most responses were at least of a good standard and managed to invoke relevant theory and use it to discuss the paper’s subject matter. Many candidates were able to make a good case for identifying the viewpoint of the anthropologist. Weaker

responses simply stated a theory without demonstrating knowledge of it, and/or offered several different possible viewpoints without appropriate application.

Question 3

Generally this question was answered well, and a fair argument was made for the comparative material. Most candidates used a relevant ethnography, and identified it accurately. In the best responses, the comparison was done well and similarities and differences were discussed from an anthropological perspective rather than just on superficial grounds. Some responses did not link the comparison to an explicit symbol or object, limiting the marks which could be awarded.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates should be more explicit about the theories and concepts they use and demonstrate their understanding of them. If necessary this could be by giving a brief definition.
- Candidates should read the text and accompanying questions carefully. When addressing question 3, candidates should make sure that they compare the phenomena which they are instructed to.

Further comments

It is pleasing to see an improvement in candidate preparation for the higher level paper 1. Teachers should be commended for their efforts in the teaching of the syllabus and for preparing candidates well for their assessment.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 21	22 - 25	26 - 30	31 - 44

General comments

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

A small minority of candidates produced just one essay, or a very short incomplete second essay on this component; a very small number of candidates wrote nothing at all. Weaker scripts lacked a sufficient range of ethnographies, or had no ethnographic material at all, or repeated the same information in both essays. One candidate used material from this session's paper 1 as the ethnography for an essay. A very small minority of candidates either failed to make clear which option they had chosen to answer on for the questions where alternatives were possible. Candidates sometimes ignored key words in a question, or focused on only one part of the question to the detriment of the rest.

Weaker scripts lacked appropriate theoretical knowledge, or used anthropological concepts in ways that were not best suited to the question or the ethnographic materials presented. For example, candidates tried to use functionalism in order to help explain contemporary processes such as globalization and appeared to lack any knowledge of relevant contemporary theories or concepts and this was a pity particularly in cases where the ethnographic material itself was detailed and interesting.

Often the same key areas of the programme as in past sessions continue to prove difficult for some candidates and these relate to sound definitions of central concepts and terms in questions; the ability to apply this knowledge to ethnographic data and to the question in a relevant manner; and the interweaving of relevant theory and ethnography. A significant proportion of candidates wrote a long opening paragraph setting out a theoretical position or describing the strengths and limitations of a particular anthropologist and then went on to ignore this completely when presenting the ethnographic data and actually answering the question. Such essays appeared to be composed of a memorized first section designed to fit any question and a second section that was supposed to answer the specific question on the examination paper. Inevitably such scripts did not appear integrated and entirely coherent.

A small number of candidates used material by journalists such as Hessler writing on China in the *National Geographic* or Fadiman's *The Spirit Catches You*. In these cases candidates did not critically evaluate the material using appropriate anthropological conceptual and theoretical material. Other candidates effectively used work by non-anthropologists such as Bending on the Penan and Ortman on Singaporean identity. In these cases the material was discussed and evaluated using appropriate anthropological approaches.

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

Some candidates produced extremely good work demonstrating detailed levels of knowledge. The very best scripts evaluated the theoretical advances and limitations of individual anthropologists in historical context and had a sound range and knowledge of relevant anthropological theory and concepts. One positive feature in this examination session was the small number of candidates who explicitly made comparative points not only ethnographically but also theoretically and conceptually.

However, some candidates were only able to show very elementary knowledge of anthropological theory and sometimes there was no evidence of having studied the requisite number of ethnographies in sufficient detail to do well on the paper. There appeared to be a number of candidates who were able to answer one question on the paper quite well but who then struggled to find a second question to answer to the same standard. In some cases candidates misread the ethnography they used and reproduced errors as a consequence. One example occurred with the material by Turton on the Mursi where some candidates stated that Mursi women today wear lip-plates because this was done in the past to avoid capture by slave traders. Turton makes very clear in his writing that this is nonsense and probably the product of ethnocentric false rationalizing by non-Mursi.

It was very pleasing, however, to note that more candidates are now including more recent ethnographic studies and more contemporary approaches to both theory and method. In this examination session it was clear that more candidates are attempting to meet assessment criteria D and E. However, some do this simply by adding a sentence on “change” somewhere towards the end of their scripts rather than integrating this knowledge into their answers in a more appropriate manner.

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

Question 1

This was a popular question with some very good responses dealing with nation building practices in Singapore in particular. Stronger answers were able to describe and define political organization and to link this explicitly with one of the options. Resistance and conflict were often used in a very similar fashion with better answers able to go beyond describing a situation of conflict or resistance to theorizing and explaining the terms often using Foucault, Scott or others to facilitate this. Comparisons were also successful when situations of micro-conflict were described in two different ethnographies and then discussed in terms of differing historical or other contexts. Weaker scripts tended not to answer both parts of the question (eg both political organization and one of the option terms) or remained at a very basic and superficial level of description with little or no analysis. An interesting ethnography to answer this question was Nakamura's *Deaf in Japan: Signing and the Politics of Identity*.

Question 2

This was also a popular question with marriage and family structure the most selected options. Most candidates defined globalization appropriately though too often this was then set aside to concentrate on a change in marriage or family in the descriptive ethnographic section of the answer. Family structure was sometimes ignored and a looser idea of family in general employed in the answers which did not fully answer the question. Some interesting responses considered families divided by migration but in contact through remittances and modern technologies as a consequence of globalization. Biological reproduction was the least often chosen option and the least successfully answered. Candidates answering on this option often slipped into discussion of changing marriage forms (from polygamy to monogamy) or simply failed to address ideas, for example, of how different societies understand biological reproduction and how globalization has led to the meeting of very different explanations and understandings of this, or how new reproductive technologies have become localized in distinct and different ways as this particular new global technology has spread.

Question 3

Again a very popular question and one where the better answers clearly covered both required parts of the question. Many candidates chose to write on the changes to hunter-gatherer societies as they modified or gave up sharing practices and became incorporated into wage labour systems during the twentieth century. Others concentrated on the impact of tourism on indigenous populations, but as tourists are not migrants this was not always a convincing approach save when the people the tourists came to see were themselves the migrants discussed in the question. In this regard Bruner's work on the Massai was often used but not always successfully. The remittances sent by migrant labourers to families in countries of origin were discussed by a minority of candidates. Answers on colonial impacts on exchange systems varied with some candidates able to select relevant conceptual terms and theoretical models to explain the dramatic changes to colonized populations that resulted from colonization. Some interesting responses also included material on the Kabre on gift exchange and colonialism from Piot's *Remotely Global*.

Question 4

Many candidates chose to answer this question and often used material on the Ju/'hoansi to discuss how economic development, by which was meant sedentarization and wage labour practices, had altered, usually for the worse, the social and cultural life of the Ju/'hoansi. Others described colonial contexts and often included the example of Puerto Rico to show how contemporary former colonized populations continue to be marginalized even when living in a developed western country such as the USA. Political economy, Marxism and various colonial and post-colonial theories were those most often used to help interpret the ethnographies used for this question. Patel's *Working the Night Shift* was also used to good effect.

Question 5

No candidate chose the first option, genocide. Answers were split evenly between the two remaining options. Candidates with the strongest answers were those who were able to define symbolism effectively and then used this to show how symbolism helped participants, or anthropologists, understand the meaning and value of particular social practices. For many candidates the problem was in selecting an indigenous movement rather than simply a tribal or indigenous group. Some answers used Shepler's material on child soldiers in Sierra Leone.

Question 6

This was the most popular question on the examination paper and gender was by far the most popular option. The single most common weakness in answers on gender and inequality was that candidates most often described difference as inequality and were unable to do more than describe such differences in the form of a list in their answers. Better answers were able to locate inequality as a matter of value and not simply difference and to link this to power, agency and a range of other relevant concepts. The best answers were also able to describe and discuss relevant anthropological theories to help evaluate and interpret ethnographic materials, most often citing feminist but also Marxist theories. The scripts that focused on inequality and ethnicity sometimes failed to define ethnicity and so on occasions ended up describing class inequalities or even gendered inequalities rather than specifically ethnic ones. Popular ethnographies included Bourgois' *In Search of Respect* and Patel's work on call centres in India, *Working the Night Shift*. Some interesting answers drew on Jennaway's *Sisters and Lovers*, Martinez *Identity and Ritual in a Japanese Diving Village* and Piot's *Remotely Global*.

Question 7

Candidates wrote on all three options and those who wrote on class often used Bourgois' work on the Puerto Ricans in New York, while those who answered on leadership often chose to discuss the Swazi by Kuper and the Ju/'Hoansi were most often the group used to discuss egalitarianism. As might be expected the stronger scripts were able to define and then apply sound understandings of class, leadership and egalitarianism to their discussion and to demonstrate how economic changes, for example, had altered one of the option terms in a socially significant way.

Question 8

Candidates who were able to define ritual in relation to authority and legal systems often produced sound scripts. Several were able to cite Foucault in the context of power and authority, although this was used with variable levels of success. Authority was also often defined in terms of legitimacy and then discussed in terms of how legitimacy was performed in rituals viewed as traditional, or as of recent origin invented by a group in power hoping to reinforce and consolidate a position of authority. Few candidates chose the option on legal systems.

Question 9

Relatively few candidates answered this question and those who did tended to focus on the first option. However, some candidates simply wrote about the environment in general or discussed theories such as cultural ecology in relation to a particular ethnography and so failed to make their scripts directly relevant to the question. One essay discussed the Internet as a source for refugees in the diaspora to remain in contact, form virtual social bonds and maintain cultural knowledge including language competence.

Question 10

Relatively few candidates chose this question and those who did and were able to discuss ordered systems of ideas relating to morality rather than just simply stating that something was good or bad or had become better or worse in a global era tended to achieve good marks. Some interesting answers discussed concepts of childhood in Vietnam contrasting western understandings with local ones as in Burr's *Vietnam's Children* which outlines how international NGOs assume a universal notion of childhood and individualism which may not be appropriate in the Vietnamese context.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Key terms used in questions must be defined and applied to the ethnographies discussed in the essay.
- When a question has options to choose from the candidate must make clear which option has been chosen. The candidate must refrain from writing on the other options.
- Candidates should seek to achieve a balance between conceptual development and theoretical exposition and analysis. This works best when the concepts are closely linked to ethnographic material so that candidates can see how the concepts help to explain the descriptive materials they read. One way to achieve this is to give candidates work by anthropologists (and not journalists) to study.
- Candidates should be strongly encouraged to answer all parts of a question and not to only write on the one part that they know more about.

Higher level paper three

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 1	2 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 20

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

The most common difficulty continues to be connecting the three key components of this paper: theoretical perspectives, theoretical schools of thought and ethnography, which quite often means that relevance to the question is only weakly established. Rather often, description of schools of thought are recognized as a necessary component, but once briefly summarized, sometimes in relation to a theoretical perspective, these are put aside as if of no further relevance. Consequently, connections between theory or theoretical perspectives and ethnography remain rather artificial or mechanical, rather than the result of a genuine inquiry. Another limitation common to many responses, also noted last year, is the lack of attention to context in reference to theoretical schools or ethnography. It also seemed that for some candidates, their knowledge of theory and/or ethnography is quite limited and/or out of date: for example it is troubling to see candidates claim that evolutionary theory could help in understanding a social issue. In terms of the examination itself, too many candidates are not paying sufficient attention to the requirements and/or wording of the question, and seem to have some difficulty in recognizing which questions might best fit their particular theoretical and ethnographic knowledge and understanding. More specific limitations included some clearly memorized introductions and continued reference to fundamental theoretical issues rather than theoretical perspectives, which sometimes led to lack of close focus in terms of the question.

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

Despite the limitations noted above, it was encouraging to see some very strong and thoughtful scripts this session, if still in small numbers, for four of the five questions. It was clear that most candidates had some general understanding of the requirements of the paper, as well as some knowledge of relevant theory/theoretical schools, theoretical perspectives and ethnography. It was also good to see reference to some more current ethnographic materials, including Piot's study of the Kabre in northern Togo (1999), Bending's work with the Penan in Malaysia (2006) and Jennaway's work in Bali (2002). The challenge of this paper is for candidates to be able to think and write with and about theoretical perspectives and schools of thought in relation to ethnography, to demonstrate an understanding of some of the ways in which perspectives and schools shape ethnography. As noted above, rather often the application of perspectives and/or of schools of thought to ethnography seems somewhat forced, suggesting that they have been studied in isolation rather than together. Thus the challenge for the teacher is to find ways to integrate the teaching of theoretical perspectives

and schools of thought with ethnography, making the choice of course ethnographies particularly important.

While it is encouraging to see that most candidates are able to offer some kind of description of some perspectives and schools of thought, in some cases this still appears to be learned or memorized rather than well understood, which makes application to ethnography difficult.

Again, classroom integration in terms of teaching all three components could make a difference here.

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

Question 1

Candidate responses ranged from very strong to barely satisfactory. A few demonstrated detailed knowledge and sound understanding of relevant perspectives, theory (either structural functionalism and postmodernism or functionalism and practice theory) and ethnography, as well as strong, even critical, comparative skills. At the other end, responses showed a little knowledge but less understanding of perspectives and theory, and made only minimal or no reference to ethnography. At the middle, one response was quite well focused in terms of theory (evolutionism and cultural materialism) and ethnography, but demonstrated limited knowledge of relevant perspectives.

Question 2

Most responses examined agency in relation to political economy or structural functionalism. Discussions of structural functionalism were more often more effective: one excellent essay compared the approaches of Radcliffe-Brown and Parsons, referencing both Durkheim and Weber. Responses that focused on political economy, while usually able to describe the theory in general terms were less successful in their discussion of the role of agency, and applications to ethnography were less effective. While knowledge and understanding of feminist theory was very variable, the link between agency and ethnography was quite well developed in relation to very different cases (Bourgeois' *In Search of Respect*, Patel's *Working the Night Shift*, and Orther's *Life and Death on Mount Everest*). In the least successful responses, candidates often referenced more than one school of thought, sometimes to one not given in the question, and lacked focus and/or relevance.

Question 3

This was the most popular question but unfortunately it was not usually well done because so often "a social issue" was never clearly identified, leaving the relevance of the ethnographic materials and sometimes the whole response unclear. Many candidates had difficulty in putting all of the pieces together: most demonstrated some descriptive knowledge of the perspective, and were able to link this to some theory, but application to ethnographic material, and to the larger question was

problematic. However, where “a social issue” was clearly identified, candidates were more successful and several were excellent in their integration of relevant theory, perspectives and ethnographic knowledge. Perspectives selected were most often conflict-centred and/or diachronic, and social issues identified included inequality, poverty, the drug economy, globalization, the retention of cultural identity, the relation between the individual and society, competition between individuals, migration, cultural change and human organs trafficking.

Question 4

Only one candidate chose this question and contrasted the role of a universalistic perspective in structural functionalism and psychological functionalism.

Question 5

A number of responses were quite effective, most often using detailed knowledge of Lee’s Ju/Hoansi ethnography to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of his materialist approach in relation to cultural ecology.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- The challenge of this paper is for candidates to be able to think and write with and about theoretical perspectives and schools of thought in relation to ethnography, to demonstrate an understanding of some of the ways in which perspectives and schools shape ethnography. As noted above, rather often the application of perspectives and/or of schools of thought to ethnography seems somewhat artificial, suggesting that they have been studied in isolation rather than together. Thus, the challenge for the teacher is to find ways to integrate the teaching of theoretical perspectives and schools of thought with ethnography, making the choice of course ethnographies studied in the classroom particularly important.
- While it is encouraging to see that most candidates are able to offer some kind of description of some theoretical perspectives and schools of thought, in some cases this still appears to be learned or memorized rather than well understood, which makes application to ethnography difficult. Again, classroom integration in terms of teaching all three components could be of great help to candidates.
- Teachers need to make sure that candidates have some familiarity with current schools of thought and their application to ethnography: this has improved over the past few examination sessions but still needs consideration in some centres.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 20

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

Overall, the majority of candidates were able to demonstrate a general understanding of the text. In this case, an extract which analyses the construction of group identity through a conflict between the Welsh and English communities - triggered when the Welsh authorities called for the extermination of badgers in West Wales. The extract shows the complexity of the topic where ethnic, symbolic and economic factors are at play.

Some answers remained on a descriptive level or were quite dependent on the text. Some candidates appeared unaware that they should be using their own words to demonstrate an understanding of the anthropological concepts involved. Not many candidates attempted to define or discuss key concepts (eg culture, language, ethnicity, group identity) relevant to the questions. Thus many answers were more descriptive than analytical leading, in many cases, to limited arguments and rather superficial comparisons.

Some candidates did not fully contextualize their comparative ethnographic materials. Quite often a candidate would only mention a very generic reference to a group of people, without any identification in terms of place, author or historical context. A publication date for ethnography is not necessarily what is meant by ethnographic contextualization, but the description of the historical context of the ethnographic account.

A small number of candidates were unable to complete all the questions on the paper. In particular, question 3 was sometimes left unfinished, or so brief as to be too short to gain a good mark.

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

In terms of areas of the programme, many candidates appeared to be familiar with anthropological concepts and issues related to the extract chosen. Themes of social reproduction, agency, culture and meaning are areas of study covered by many centres, though in terms of conceptualization, ethnicity and processes of identity construction were often treated very generally. Thus, the range of achievement was generally related to the ability to discuss and apply specifically, anthropological concepts and approaches and to develop answers that were analytical and anthropologically informed.

It is pleasing to see that many candidates were able to make informed statements about the viewpoint of the anthropologist, giving evidence of teachers preparing candidates in this aspect. The performance of some new centres was quite encouraging, suggesting that good teaching programmes are in place. It is encouraging to read a good range of well-structured answers drawing on several updated contemporary ethnographies across the candidate cohort. These candidates showed an ability to produce convincing comparisons supported by relevant, fully contextualized ethnographies.

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

Question 1

Most candidates seemed capable of identifying relevant points/examples, but generalizations were limited. The more successful responses presented relevant generalizations and examples, but others were rather dependent on the text itself. Many candidates were able to identify the conflict and the interests at stake, and some recognized that the views on the extermination of badgers are complex and not dependent on any single factor such as ethnic or linguistic identity, demonstrating good anthropological understanding.

Weaker responses relied heavily upon the text and quoted answers rather than summarized in the candidates' own words. A small number of answers were composed almost entirely of quotations from the set text. A few candidates introduced a comparative ethnography in this question, which is not required.

Question 2

Stronger answers provided detailed analysis on how language is one relevant factor amongst a number of others contributing to identity construction in West Wales - including ethnicity (English or Welsh) and residence (urban or rural).

Some candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of relevant concepts, but many responses were only descriptive, and demonstrated limited understanding of relevant anthropological issues and concepts.

It was very pleasing to see that there was a more comprehensive attempt across the candidate body to include the viewpoint of the anthropologist in response to this question. Some answers discussed it in terms of emic/etic distinctions; others were able to make reference to how a conceptual approach (eg symbolic) framed the anthropologist's analysis.

A few candidates introduced a comparative ethnography in this question, which was not required.

Question 3

Many candidates were able to produce good responses to this question. The majority structured their answers as a comparison and at least attempted to introduce a comparative ethnography. Candidates who did particularly well on this question often did so because they were focused and chose well contextualized and relevant comparative ethnographies.

It was encouraging to see that many centres are incorporating more contemporary materials into their readings which provided opportunities for relevant discussions and comparisons as well as more classic ones. Popular ethnographies chosen were Bourgois' *In Search of Respect*, Okely's *The Traveller-Gypsies*, Lee's *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi*, Weiner's *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea*, Andrew Strathern's *The Rope of Moka*, Nakamura's *Deaf in Japan: Signing and the Politics of Identity*. More classic choices such as Clifford Geertz' *Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight* or G. Lienhardt's *Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka* also produced successful comparisons. All of the above provided relevant materials for comparison.

A small proportion of candidates referred to past paper 1 texts, often without naming the ethnographer or accurately locating the people referred to as an ethnographic case study for comparison. While material from past paper 1s are clearly helpful in the preparation of candidates for the examinations, these extracts should not be the only material used by candidates as their ethnographic texts.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- In terms of examination skills, candidates should be reminded to read the questions carefully and structure their answers accordingly. Practice with previous paper 1s and markschemes is critical to this goal. Candidates should be encouraged to be explicit in demonstrating their understanding of concepts by, for example, defining the terms used. Candidates should make sure they are actually answering the questions, and be aware that question 1 is usually descriptive and question 2 more analytical.
- Teachers need to help candidates clarify key question terms, to make sure that answers are relevant and closely focused; again, practice with previous texts should be helpful here.
- In question 1, candidates need to use their own words rather than rely heavily on quotations. Candidates are expected to go beyond simple description and develop some generalizations that are relevant to the terms of the question and can be linked to relevant points and examples given in the text.
- In question 2, in order to gain full marks, candidates should be encouraged to work on developing their analytical skills so that they can move beyond merely offering descriptive responses.

- In question 3, candidates should learn to present a comparative ethnography in terms of author, place, and historical context. Many candidates were unable to achieve more than four marks for this question because they seemed unaware of the need to present the ethnography in full detail.
- Overall, candidates should be able to discuss and develop a conceptual understanding of the ethnographic materials they read. It is this conceptual framework that will enable them to discuss the ethnographic materials more effectively and critically.
- Finally, in terms of ethnographic materials, it is important that teachers try to ensure that candidates are familiar with some contemporary ethnographic works. The opportunity to read more recent ethnographies in addition to classic older material will enable candidates to cover many areas of the programme more thoroughly.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 19	20 - 26	27 - 32	33 - 44

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

Many candidates are continuing to not provide specific definitions or much explicit discussion of key anthropological concepts, resulting in responses that are more descriptive than analytical (criterion A). Where there is some evidence of conceptual knowledge and understanding, this too is quite often presented as a stand-alone item, and not connected to other materials (criterion A). As noted last year, this is also apparent with comparisons which are more often implicit than explicit and systematic (criterion C). It was also apparent that many candidates are not demonstrating detailed knowledge of more than two societies (criterion E), nor a good understanding of processes of change and transformation (criterion D) which is disappointing. Also although the presentation of specific ethnographic knowledge was often more successful, some materials continue to be misrepresented or problematic as in the case of David Turton's account of the Mursi of Ethiopia and Brenner's account of Javanese women in Indonesia respectively. In terms of areas of the programme, it seems that some aspects of political organization and particular effects of globalization, as well as the role of modern technologies and moral systems in a global age are less familiar to many candidates as these questions were infrequently chosen, perhaps also reflecting a lack of relevant ethnographic knowledge in these areas.

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

Some candidates, though still relatively few in number, are able to demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of key anthropological concepts and relevant ethnography, as well as strong comparative and analytical skills across a range of different questions. Some of the best responses seen this session included discussions of inequality in relation to gender or ethnicity, the consequences of economic development, the role of economic and/or cultural factors in class or leadership, the impact of globalization on family structures and moral systems in a global age. Many responses continue to demonstrate quite detailed ethnographic knowledge, even if this is not always current or used as effectively as it might be in terms of responding to specific questions. It continues to be encouraging to see more contemporary ethnography being used.

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

Question 1

Only a small number of candidates chose this question, and all but one focused on the relevance of political organization to resistance. While most were able to draw on knowledge of relevant ethnography, this was sometimes problematic (Brenner's account of Javanese women in Indonesia) and there was little explicit conceptualization or discussion of political organization. However one response was much more successful, demonstrating quite detailed knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts and ethnography, as well as analytical and comparative skills.

Question 2

There were very few responses to this question, focusing on globalization and marriage. All of the responses struggled with both definitions and ethnographic detail - or family structures, which was much more effective, using Bourgois' *In Search of Respect* and Strathern and Stewart's *Arrow Talk*.

Question 3

There were only a few responses to this question. The best response gave a detailed account of colonization and the Tiv of Nigeria which was both comparative and analytical.

Question 4

Only a small number of responses were effective in terms of demonstrating knowledge and understanding of both concepts and ethnography, as well as some comparative and analytical skills. The other responses mostly treated "economic development" as somehow self evident and provided quite limited ethnographic support that was at best generally relevant.

Question 5

Most of the small number of candidates who chose this question were able to demonstrate some knowledge of symbolism and revitalization movements. Those working with Conklin's materials about the Kayapo and Brenner's about Javanese women in Indonesia were more often relevant than those working with Volkman's account of the Toraja, Indonesia or Turton's account of the Mursi of Ethiopia which continues to be misrepresented.

Question 6

This was the most popular question chosen by half of the candidates. Most candidates focused on inequality and gender. Only a very small number provided clear conceptualization and discussion of both concepts, as well as detailed comparative ethnographic support. Others were sometimes able to demonstrate some knowledge of relevant arguments about gender inequality but did not link these to ethnography. Most other responses confused difference with inequality, and focused on this in their descriptions. Those that focused on inequality and ethnicity

provided conceptual definition and discussion, however most were more successful in providing some relevant ethnographic description and sometimes comparisons.

Question 7

Candidates responded to all three options with most focused on the role of social and economic factors in relation to leadership or egalitarianism. However the most successful response focused on class, working with Nakamura's 2006 materials on the *Deaf in Japan* and Bending's work with the Penan in Malaysia. One other response using Lee's materials on the Ju/'hoansi focused on egalitarianism was also quite effective. Otherwise responses lacked conceptualization but were usually able to demonstrate some knowledge of relevant ethnography, although this was not always the case.

Question 8

Only a few responses were both conceptually and ethnographically informed, usually in response to ritual in relation to structures of authority. More often ritual was described but not always in ways that were relevant to the question.

Question 9

There was only one response which did not address the question, examining modern technology (snowmobiles) but without any relation to the chosen option of environmentalist movements.

Question 10

There was just one response, but this time more effectively focused in terms of the question about moral systems in a global age, using Bourgois' account of Puerto Ricans in New York City and colonization in Papua New Guinea.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- As stated in the November 2012 subject report, the key to effective responses is the candidates' knowledge and understanding of anthropological concepts given in the question that can then be applied to relevant ethnographic materials to establish a framework for both analysis and comparison. Ethnographic description alone, however well detailed and essential, is not sufficient. How to balance and connect these two key components needs to be examined and constantly reinforced and practiced in the classroom.
- It is also essential that candidates are familiar with and confident in their knowledge and understanding of detailed ethnographic materials to support and illustrate more general arguments or claims. It perhaps needs to be emphasized that short extracts, including previous paper 1 texts (eg Turton's account of the Mursi and Brenner's of Javanese women), or summaries provided in some general textbooks, are rarely

sufficient in themselves to provide the kind of detailed understanding required. They may be useful as a starting point for inquiry or to complement or supplement other ethnographies but cannot be substituted for them. Both Turton's and Brenner's full length articles are accessible online.

- Candidates also need to understand that comparisons (internal and/or external) need to be systematic and made explicit in every essay, whether or not the question is formally comparative. Classroom discussion and frequent practice will be useful here.
- Finally, it is important that candidates are familiar with, and understand, assessment criteria D and E, requiring demonstrated knowledge of processes of change and transformation as well as detailed knowledge of at least three societies across both essays. It is recommended that teachers find ways to include these criteria in their own assessment practices.

Further comments

Teachers are encouraged to use the opportunity they have to provide feedback on the examination. Only one response was received this examination session which was very disappointing.