GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

GEOGRAPHY
AS

SUMMER 2022

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COMPONENT 1: CHANGING LANDSCAPES

General Comments

The paper was accessible across the ability range with very little evidence of questions being left unanswered. Slightly more candidates opted to answer the glacial option in Section A and although questions on both options performed similarly, candidate outcomes were higher on the coastal option due to higher quality case study evidence. All items on the paper differentiated well and provided the opportunity for candidates to display the ability to appropriately apply their knowledge and understanding of the specification content. There was evidence that candidates have been instructed well on the differences between the command words and their impact on the assesment criteria (AO1, AO2 and AO3) requirements, however 'analyse' proved to be challenging for some candidates. Candidates had access to Advance Information for this unit in order to focus the revision process.

There was frequent use of dated case study examples, especially in Section B, Tectonic Hazards. Centres should be aware that examples taught should be contemporary (21st Century) and applied to the question.

Lastly Q7 proved difficult for some candidates who failed to identify the synoptic nature of this question, responses lacked sophistication and synthesis of geographical ideas, concepts and issues from the resources provided. Centres need to focus on preparing students well for this question and not a simple description of the resources. Candidates need to be able to apply knowledge from across the specification to meet the demands of this challenging question.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Changing Landscapes

Q.1 **(a)** Most candidates were able to identify the 'triangle' in question but could not use co-ordinates or scale effectively to gain marks. There was some confusion over the 'triangle' versus the location of 'coral'. Use of compass directions was not specific enough in some cases to gain marks.

(b) Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of a factor that contributes to the development of coral reefs. Some candidates discussed more than one factor which led to a lack of depth and detail to their answer.

(c) Some candidates made appropriate named, case study choices to gain AO1 marks but some lacked depth and detail. Coastal protection methods were incorrectly used by some candidates as a method of conservation but these were not well linked to the question e.g. not allowing groynes up drift of a spit to prevent erosion of the landscape would have been acceptable. Candidates who scored highly were able to demonstrate detailed and accurate knowledge of the purpose and nature of a conservation method e.g. replanting sand dunes, and assess the impact the method was having on the coastal landscape with evidence.

Q.2 **(a)** A number of candidates failed to address the command word 'analyse' and as a result merely described the resource, but did 'use' the resource whilst doing so. Candidates who achieved well were able to spot trends in the resource and make overview comments about the relationship between mean sediment size and beach slope angle.

(b) Those candidates who scored highly on the question provided some judgement on the importance of the length of fetch in determining the distribution of erosional coastal landscape systems. At the lower end candidates merely stated a range of factors affecting erosion with little development of a named example. It as pleasing to see some candidates grasping the interdependent nature of factors affecting erosion rates.

Q.3 **(a)** Most candidates were able to answer this question well, using the resource to describe the location of the ice sheet. Similar to Q.1(a) some compass directions were used incorrectly but scale was effectively utilised.

(b) Many candidates demonstrated a thorough understanding of the differences between cold and warm based glaciers. The more successful answers were looking to address the command word throughout and some made use of a detailed conclusion. The ability to discuss and made example assisted candidates to develop depth to their answers. Some responses utilised annotated diagrams which supported their answer effectively.

(c) Most candidates were able to show knowledge of glacial system inputs, stores, transfers and outputs; effectively linking snowfall to the rest of the system. Some chose to utilise annotated diagrams which added clarity to their discussion and supported their answer effectively. There was a lack of named case study examples by some candidates as well as poor linkage to timescales by some.

Q.4 **(a)** Similarly to Q.2(a) the command word 'analyse' proved challenging for some candidates, this resulted in a 'description' of the resource. Candidates who scored highly were able to make use of the resource and provide overview comments on the relationship between mean particle size and scree slope angle. Some candidates drifted into explanation which was not creditworthy.

(b) Most candidates were able to present evidence to demonstrate that the relationship between ice thickness and the range of factors affecting rates of glacial erosion. Those that scored highly were able to provide some judgment on the importance of ice thickness relative to other erosional factors. The interrelated nature of relationships was clear in some candidates responses e.g. ice thickness impacting on the presence of meltwater and glacier velocity. The best responses supported their points well with detailed exemplification from named case studies for their discussions along with a substantive conclusion.

Section B: Tectonic Hazards

Q.5 **(a)** Mostly answered well with students understanding the demands of the resource and command word. Some merely described instead of comparing the two profiles as well as the odd mixing up of the axis e.g. the Tsunami covered a small area and the eruption a wide area etc.

(b) A well-answered question with students using the resource well to infer likely impacts on people and the built environment of the tectonic event. Some strayed into purely environmental with a lack of linkage to the question e.g. trees burning (producing poor air quality and respiratory issues for people OR wildfires posing a threat to property etc.). However candidates should be reminded to specifically use the resource to support their answer and subsequently enter the higher mark band. Some very good geography witnessed without specific reference to the resource which was frustrating.

(c) **(i)** Some candidates failed to show their workings.

(ii) This question was answered well with a minority not showing their workings.

(iii) Candidates were successfully able to outline one disadvantage. A small number of candidates identified more than one which was not credited.

(iv) A small number of candidates fully analysed the relationship whereas most described the resource. Some candidates identified the lower the magnitude the higher the frequency of earthquakes which was credited. Centres need to prepare students to correctly interpret the command word ‘analyse’ to allow more sophisticated answers linking, in this case, frequency and magnitude in some way.

(d) Overall this was not a well-answered question with most candidates opting to ‘describe’ 4 different plate boundaries. The question demanded a greater level of knowledge and understanding and supporting evidence was weak. Many failed to reference the role of convection currents or the more recent theory of gravitational sliding as a mechanism in driving plate movement. Some candidates approached the question through annotated diagram which was acceptable.

(e) Generally speaking a well-answered question. There is some misunderstanding around what mitigation really means and many candidates exhibiting and imbalance in their answer and lacking in synoptic links. Most candidates were able to identify ‘risks’ with named case study examples which added depth to their discussion. The most successful answers developed a balance argument as to whether prediction or mitigation, as part of the hazard management cycle were the most effective and why. Some also considered the level of economic development and linked this well to the question i.e. how far risks can be mitigated through the investment in technology etc. A very small number of candidates did not focus on volcanic activity. Most drew a conclusion and it is clear that centres have prepared students well in this respect.

Q.6 **(a)** A well-answered question with most opting to compare two named case studies that they have studied. Candidates used their knowledge and understanding to examine 'risk' and how it varies from place to place. Many candidates used the recent volcanic activity in Iceland and a starting point to their examination of level of economic development as well as the nature of the place (rural) and nature of the eruption. Better responses referenced the social and political factors that influenced the level of risk to the population. However it was disappointing to see centres still teaching dated case study material such as Nevado Del Ruiz.

(b) This question saw more variability in the quality of answers with some students misinterpreting the question and discussing volcanoes. There was also evidence of students confusing impact with response which made it difficult to score highly due to the foci of the question being on the effectiveness of the responses e.g. disaster aid. There was also a tendency to list a variety of responses in an unsophisticated way and failed to evaluate the effectiveness of said responses.

Those that scored more highly compared two recent events, such as Christchurch and Haiti and addressed both short- and long-term responses with some accuracy and detail. Recognition that long-term responses in LICs were absent due to low GDP and significant drop off in aid as international interest wanes (Haiti) significantly hampered recovery times, was a common thread. The most successful candidates recognised that effective management of a seismic event is multi layered at a variety of scales.

Section C: 21st Century Challenges

Q.7 Most candidates were able to relate to the resource material and generate a discussion around the impact human innovation can have on a place. Some candidates were able to develop an sound argument that 'change' can be both positive and negative and use examples they have studied to support their argument. At the lower end there was limited understanding of the way in which innovation and investment can minimise negative impacts of change in places. Few candidates were able to generate a truly synoptic answer which links knowledge and understanding from across the specification.

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COMPONENT 2: CHANGING PLACES

General Comments

The paper was accessible across the ability range with limited evidence of questions being omitted; however, many candidates found some of the skills questions challenging. The paper differentiated well, and all questions and their constituent parts gave the required characteristic of providing the opportunity to the most able to demonstrate some excellent knowledge and understanding of the specification, but also being accessible to those of lower ability. Candidates had access to Advance Information for Section A of this unit in order to focus the revision process. Section B was adapted and 'own fieldwork' questions removed. The remainder of Section B was adapted to provide candidates with an option to answer the set fieldwork questions in a familiar context. As a result of these adaptations, the duration of the examination was 1 hour.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Changing Places

Q.1 **(a)** **(i)** It was pleasing to see many candidates accurately describing the trends in the data and scoring full marks. However, some candidates did not appreciate the South West as a region within England and this distorted their grasp of the trend shown. Many candidates used data accurately and perceptively to support their answer.

(ii) This question was generally poorly answered by candidates who generally restricted themselves by identifying that impacts of decline on local people were poverty and / or people moving away. Candidates were then unable to develop this impact with any sophistication and thus the mean mark for this question were relatively low.

(b) Most candidates were able to address this question through detail relating to one urban place; better candidates compared two urban places and in doing so, accessed marks for 'examination'; the 'examine' element was usually achieved via recognising scale of decline or scale (size) of urban area. The impacts were generally around deindustrialisation (to include poverty and deprivation) with a resultant negative multiplier effect. Pleasingly, some candidates recognised both disadvantages and advantages of decline and in doing so, addressed the AO2 requirement to examine. Few candidates considered decline of central urban places which is explicit within focus box 2.1.5.

Q.2 **(a)** **(i)** Most candidates used the resources effectively to produce coherent answers to the question. Some were able to elaborate how these changes would lead to regeneration, making good use of different parts of the images.

(ii) This question resulted in polarised marks, as where candidates were able to demonstrate accurate numerical skills, they typically scored full marks. It was disappointing to note how few candidates were able to accurately calculate percentage change.

(b) Candidates were familiar with the context of the question; most chose to focus on urban rebranding (or lack thereof). The highest scoring answers were those which focused on a specific place, and details of the failed scheme were outlined.

(c) This question is drawn from the opening bullet point of focus box 2.1.1; it was disappointing that so few candidates had a grasp of cultural characteristics much beyond presence (or absence) of take-away food offerings and presence (or absence) of religious buildings. Very few had a real grasp of 'culture' *per se*, and therefore struggled to discuss the significance of cultural characteristics. Some candidates were able to quote data relating to % ethnicity / religion of their home place, which was pleasing to see, but they were unable to match this will corresponding data relating to a contrasting places. Too many candidates defaulted to comparing their home place with a global city "e.g. London", "e.g. New York" without being able to provide any specific information. Where candidates struggled to engage with the focus of the question (i.e. cultural characteristics), they subsequently struggled to fully engage with discussion beyond scale of place providing greater range of food / religious worship opportunities.

Section B: Fieldwork Investigation in Physical and Human Geography

Question 3: Changing Places

Q.3 **(a)** **(i)** Some candidates were able to suggest research questions that were appropriate to gentrification; however others asked questions that were answerable with 'yes/no' answers or 'before / after'.

(ii) Even where candidates had not scored marks in 3a) (i), credit was awarded ffor those who could evaluate knowledge and understanding gained through field observation and / or of the impacts of gentrification within a specific location.

(b) **(i)** It was encouraging to read that many candidates have a good grasp of the concept of risk: most approached this from a safety perspective, but some adopted a pragmatic view, suggesting that poor sampling or unreliable data might have a negative effect on the outcome(s) of the investigation.

(ii) Where candidates had scored in 3b) (i), most were able to provide creditable answers suggesting how to mitigate risk.

(c) **(i)** Some candidates successfully identified a method of primary data suitable for supporting an investigation into gentrification. Several were able to describe (but not name) a method of data collection, meanwhile others suggested a method of secondary data.

(ii) This answer produced polarised responses: some candidates were able to suggest confidently how their suggested primary data would support their investigation.

(d) **(i)** Most candidates successfully answered this question.

(ii) Relatively few candidates were able to answer this question; some who arrived at the correct answer did not show transparent workings out and therefore did not score full marks.

(iii) Even where candidates did not score/answer the previous question, many used the data to arrive at an answer to this question and so accessed marks.

Question 4: Coastal Landscapes

Q.4 **(a)** **(i)** Very few candidates attempted this question, of those who did: some candidates were able to suggest research questions that were appropriate to wave characteristics.

(ii) Even where candidates had not scored marks in 4a) (i), credit was awarded for those who could evaluate knowledge and understanding gained through field observation and/or of the impacts of wave characteristics on a specific location.

(i) It was encouraging to read that many candidates have a good grasp of the concept of risk: most approached this from a safety perspective, but some adopted a pragmatic view, suggesting that poor sampling or unreliable data might have a negative effect on the outcome(s) of the investigation.

(b) **(ii)** Where candidates had scored in 3b) (i), most were able to provide creditable answers suggesting how to mitigate risk.

(c) **(i)** Some candidates successfully identified a method of primary data suitable for supporting an investigation into gentrification. Several were able to describe (but not name) a method of data collection, meanwhile others suggested a method of secondary data.

(ii) This answer produced polarised responses: some candidates were able to suggest confidently how their suggested primary data would support their investigation.

(d) **(i)** Most candidates successfully answered this question.

(ii) Relatively few candidates were able to answer this question; some who arrived at the correct answer did not show transparent workings out and therefore did not score full marks.

(iii) Even where candidates did not score/answer the previous question, many used the data to arrive at an answer to this question and so accessed marks.

Question 5: Glacial Landscapes

Q.5 (a) (i) Very few candidates attempted this question, of those who did: some candidates were able to suggest research questions that were appropriate to characteristics of glacial deposits.

(ii) Even where candidates had not scored marks in 5a) (i), credit was awarded for those who could evaluate knowledge and understanding gained through field observation and / or of the characteristics of glacial deposits at a specific location.

(b) (i) It was encouraging to read that many candidates have a good grasp of the concept of risk: most approached this from a safety perspective, but some adopted a pragmatic view, suggesting that poor sampling or unreliable data might have a negative effect on the outcome(s) of the investigation.

(ii) Where candidates had scored in 3b) (i), most were able to provide creditable answers suggesting how to mitigate risk.

(c) (i) Some candidates successfully identified a method of primary data suitable for supporting an investigation into gentrification. Several were able to describe (but not name) a method of data collection, meanwhile others suggested a method of secondary data.

(ii) This answer produced polarised responses: some candidates were able to suggest confidently how their suggested primary data would support their investigation.

(d) (i) Most candidates successfully answered this question.

(ii) Relatively few candidates were able to answer this question; some who arrived at the correct answer did not show transparent workings out and therefore did not score full marks.

(iii) Even where candidates did not score/answer the previous question, many used the data to arrive at an answer to this question and so accessed marks.

Summary of key points

- Centres should continue to focus on the requirements of Appendix A: geographical skills in the specification. It was disappointing to see how many candidates were unable to calculate a percentage change.
- Centres should ensure that students have a confident grasp of the characteristics of both their home and contrasting places.
- With greater opportunities for fieldwork likely in 2022-23, centres and candidates should focus on building confident understanding of the six stages of the geographical enquiry process so that this may be applied in the asssessment.

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