



GCE AS Examiners' Report



GEOGRAPHY
AS
Summer 2024

Introduction

Our Principal Examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each component.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.edugas.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner Eduqas

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Executive Summary

The examination papers for Eduqas AS Geography in Summer 2024 presented a similar level of challenge to those seen in previous series. Although candidates are well-versed in the demands of the three different assessment objectives, there were some areas of the examined content which proved to be less familiar to candidates this year. Some candidates could not access questions successfully due to this lack of familiarity with specification-based terminology such as biotic processes, frost weathering and government policies.

Across both papers, responses to the geographical skills questions were variable in quality. It is essential that candidates are taught to identify overall patterns and trends in resources rather than describing them in a piecemeal manner. Knowledge and understanding of statistical skills e.g. Chi-square test, and when to utilise different methods of data presentation was patchy.

Detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding displayed via contemporary case studies was a strength in high-scoring responses across both papers. It is essential that candidates are encouraged to support their responses with place-based and appropriately selected case study examples. Many continue to write in a generic manner limiting the marks awarded. Some candidates did not convey any 'sense of place' in their responses. This was particularly true of Section A in Component 1 and of questions 1b and 2b in Component 2.

Section C of the Component 1 paper continues to elicit disappointing responses. Very few candidates are able to think synoptically and apply knowledge and understanding from across the specification to the given statement or question. The mean mark of 4.1 for this question was lower this year in comparison to Summer 2023. This should remain a key area of focus as candidates prepare for this examination.

In Section B of Component 2, many candidates seemed unfamiliar with the key terminology associated with the enquiry process (page 23 of the specification). Few were able to recognise the strengths and/or limitations of a given sampling strategy and evaluated data collection methods in response to question 5 rather than their methods of analysis.

There is evidence that candidates are aware of the differences between the command words and their impact on the AO requirements. Centres should continue to devote time to teaching the requirements and the skills of developing an AO2 argument to candidates as they prepare for the examination.

An additional area of concern is the illegibility of candidates' handwriting. It appeared that candidates had little experience of developing good quality, clear, legible handwriting, and in the selection of suitable writing instruments for their examination.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Accurately identifying trends and patterns in resources / Evaluating data presentation methods	AO3: DEVELOPING DATA ANALYSIS SKILLS	BLENDED LEARNING RESOURCE
Developing AO2 responses	AO2: DEVELOPING EVALUATIVE WRITING SKILLS	BLENDED LEARNING RESOURCE
Familiarity with the enquiry process	DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE SAMPLING STRATEGY	Fieldwork/NEA toolkit

EDUQAS AS GEOGRAPHY

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COMPONENT 1: CHANGING LANDSCAPES

Overview of the Component

- 44 candidates were entered for this paper this year and the outcomes were slightly lower than seen in previous years. The paper remained accessible across the ability range with only a small number of candidates leaving questions completely unanswered. Over half the candidates chose to answer questions on Glaciated Landscapes in Section A. Candidate outcomes were relatively higher on this option due to higher quality case study evidence provided and the increased accuracy of the knowledge and understanding seen. Question 2. performed particularly poorly with a mean mark of only 5.5.
- All items on the paper differentiated well and provided the opportunity for candidates 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 AO1, AO2 and AO3 requirements, as well as how to structure responses to higher-tariff questions effectively. However, the command 'analyse' in relation to resources proved to be challenging for some candidates as did understanding specific terminology such as 'periglacial' and 'liquefaction'.
- There was evidence of up-to-date case study examples in Section B, but this was lacking in the higher-tariff questions in Section A. Centres have successfully taught contemporary examples such as L'Aquila, Haiti, Japan and Christchurch. Overall, candidates use their examples well and can compare and evaluate successfully at the higher end. Use of evaluative language is evident in the strongest responses, but some candidates continue to find accessing the AO2 elements of these questions challenging.
- Responses to Question 8 continue to be disappointing with only a few candidates able to address the synoptic nature of this question. At the lower end, responses lack sophistication and synthesis of geographical ideas, concepts and issues. Candidates need to be able to apply knowledge from across the specification to meet the demands of this challenging question and not merely describe the resources provided. This is a key area of improvement for future series'.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Coastal Landscapes

- Q.1 (a)** A smaller number of candidates attempted this question than its glacial counterpart and many showed some understanding of the coastal system as a whole. The demands of the question required candidates to identify the links between the different parts of the system and some struggled to make these links. Those that scored highly were able to articulate that a coastal system is dynamic and interconnected. Examples were used effectively by some to exemplify how one part influenced another. For example, increased sedimentation may alter coastal landforms, influencing the pattern of sediment transfers, in turn altering the shape and size of landforms.
- (b)** In the responses seen there was strong knowledge and understanding of the different types of waves (constructive and destructive) and of beach profiles, but most were a little limited in terms of assessing how one affects the other. There was also a lack of discussion around the extent to which the strength of waves can vary over time and in different places.
- Q.2 (a)** A number of candidates failed to address the command word 'analyse' and as a result merely described the resource. Candidates who achieved marks in band 3 were able to identify the patterns shown.
- (b)** Those few candidates who scored highly on this question provided a balanced discussion around the role of biotic processes and other factors (such as human activity) on a selected mangrove coastline or coral reef. A judgement supported by specific examples and a substantiated conclusion was necessary to access band 3 and it was pleasing to see a wide range of examples used, such as the Great Barrier Reef.

At the lower end, many candidates merely stated a range of 'other' factors affecting mangroves or coral reefs with little detail on biotic processes or development of named examples.

Section A: Glaciated Landscapes

Q.3 (a) Responses were similar to Q.1(a) in so much as there was an ability to describe parts of the glacial system, but responses lacked depth with regards to the links between the different parts. Those that scored highly were able to articulate that a glacial system is dynamic and interconnected. Examples were used effectively by some to exemplify how one part influenced another. For example, snow accumulates and undergoes deformation which in turns transforms into glacial ice. This ice then flows (gravity) downslope (basal sliding) creating movement.

(b) A question which proved challenging for many candidates with some opting not to answer at all. There was evidence of some developed knowledge and understanding of the processes of frost weathering and mass movement, but often the landforms chosen were not periglacial e.g. corries, arêtes, erratics etc., or were not landforms produced influenced by frost weathering or mass movement processes. Landforms such as ice wedges (although periglacial) form due to the expansion and contraction of ground ice. A number of candidates conflated these ground ice features with those directly influenced by frost weathering or mass movement. As a consequence, marks were often limited for AO1 and the subsequent evaluation.

The more successful answers addressed the command word directly and some candidates made use of detailed conclusions and evidence. Appropriate landforms chosen included nivation hollows and scree slopes, but some candidates could not apply their knowledge and understanding sufficiently to assess the role of the processes which were the main focus of the question (both individually and in relation to each other).

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 overall pattern of loss over time. Wide use of the resource was mostly seen but some candidates drifted into explanation, which was not creditworthy.

(b) The majority of candidates were able to present evidence to demonstrate that human activity as well as physical processes influence glacial landscapes in a variety of ways. Candidates could argue in either direction in relation to the set question, but some found it challenging to link the activity or process to the influence on an actual glacial landscape, leading to vague statements such as 'building on the glacier' etc.

Those that scored highly were able to provide some judgments on the extent of the influence of human activities and physical processes. The strongest responses supported their points well with detailed exemplification from named case studies along with a substantiated conclusion.

Section B: Tectonic Hazards

- Q.5** (a) This question was answered well by many with students able to identify a suitable graphical technique to present the data. Most opted for a bar graph/chart.
- (a) (ii) A mostly well answered question with candidates confidently able to articulate that using a bar graph/chart, for example, would allow for comparisons and make patterns clearly identifiable.
- (a) (iii) Some candidates failed to show their workings which limited them to 1 mark.
- (a) (vi) This question was answered well with only a minority inaccurate. Some did not understand the disadvantage of not using all of the data presented.
- (a) (v) Mostly answered correctly but some candidates opted for 'mean' which is not a measure of dispersion.
- Q.6** (a) In general a well answered question. To access the top of band 3 candidates needed to quote an event and the number of deaths as well as the overall trend. Some candidates drifted into explanation which was not creditworthy.
- (b) This was a question that candidates found accessible, and it is clear centres have taught this well. To access the top of band 3 it was necessary to demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding that was well linked to the hazards selected.
- Q.7** (a) This was another mostly well answered question. Some misunderstanding of the meaning of 'effusive' and 'explosive' was evident in the lowest scoring answers and some candidates lacked evidence to support assertions. As a result of the lack of AO1 detail there was a lack of depth to the examination of how the hazard, impacts, and therefore risk, varies according to the type of eruption. There were some well chosen case study examples to exemplify points, and this was necessary to access the higher bands. Most drew a conclusion (although not necessary in response to the command 'examine') and it is clear that centres have prepared students well in this respect.
- (b) The focus of most responses was a discussion on hazards at local and global scales. Though not necessary for a high-scoring answer, most did not consider the national scale. Centres should be aware of the difference between hazards and impacts. Many candidates drifted into a discussion of impacts rather than focusing on the hazards themselves and there was a lack of cited examples to exemplify knowledge and understanding. As a result, their assessment of whether earthquake activity only generates hazards at the local scale was not developed. To access the higher bands candidates needed to sustain a clear discussion offering secure judgements with a substantiated conclusion.
Those that scored more highly compared several earthquake events, such as Türkiye and China, and addressed both short-, and long-term responses with some accuracy and detail. It was pleasing to see some very recent examples being cited e.g. Türkiye-Syria 2023.

- (c) This question saw more variability in the quality of answers. Candidates lacked balance in their discussion of the relative importance of 'other factors' when compared to the quality of governance.

The majority of candidates appreciated that this was a complex statement to address and different tectonic events (at different scales) as well as other factors such as location, population density and level of development all have a role to play. Only a few could appreciate the role of space and time as part of their discussion and how government quality can vary over time and across a country e.g. within India and China. Most candidates took a comparative case study approach, e.g. Christchurch compared to Haiti or Türkiye, which was effective when well supported with AO1 detail.

Section C: 21st Century Challenges

- Q.8** Most candidates were able to relate to the resource material and generate a discussion around their interpretation of the various processes that can influence places over time. Some candidates were able to develop a sound argument that processes can be both a positive and negative influence in the present and the past. Strong answers incorporated examples studied to support their argument. At the lower end, there was limited understanding of the way in which present day processes influence places compared to the past and focused on lifting from the resources in a simplistic way. These responses failed to apply knowledge and understanding gleaned from other parts of the specification. Few candidates were able to generate a truly synoptic answer and this final question at the end of this paper continues to generate disappointing outcomes. The mean mark this year was at 4.1, which is down slightly on the mean mark of 5 seen in Summer 2023.

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COMPONENT 2: CHANGING PLACES

Overview of the Component

46 candidates were entered for this paper this year and the outcomes were slightly lower than seen in previous years. The paper was exactly comparable to previous papers (with the exception of the Summer 2021 paper which was subject to Advanced Information being published).

- The paper differentiated effectively with substantial numbers of candidates displaying both knowledge and conceptual understanding (AO1) combined with some skills of analysis, evaluation and synthesis (AO2). There were significant numbers of weaker candidates who found some questions very challenging and experienced considerable difficulties with structuring their answers and applying their learning to fit the question set.
- This paper proved to be accessible to most candidates with extremely few rubric errors, however several candidates omitted numerous questions and there were several common misinterpretations of questions:
 - Question 2b – writing about globalisation’s decline in secondary employment in urban areas
 - Question 2c – writing about the challenges associated with counter-urbanisation and second home ownership as if they were one and the same thing
 - Question 3b – writing about the anticipated questionnaire results rather than the sampling strategy
 - Question 3c – writing about quantitative data rather than qualitative data
 - Question 5 – writing about data collection methods rather than data analysis methods.
- Similar to Component 1 Section A, there was little place knowledge evidenced in answers (particularly to those questions requiring extended writing: Questions 1b and 2c). This is a key area for improvement in future series’.
- Candidates are to be encouraged to use the mark tariff for individual questions to guide their answers and to be sure to adhere to the command to ‘show your working’ on those questions requiring mathematical calculations.
- An area of concern was the illegibility of candidates’ handwriting. It appeared that candidates had little experience of developing good quality, clear, legible handwriting, and in the selection of suitable pens.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1 (a) (i)** Some candidates were able to make very good use of the resource to suggest strategies for urban redevelopment; unfortunately, a large minority of candidates simply copied from the resource without adhering to the command word.
- (a) (ii)** Most candidates scored both marks on this question with a small minority of calculation errors. Candidates should be reminded that they should both bring into and use a calculator in the examination.
- (a) (iii)** This question draws its wording directly from the specification. Some candidates appeared unfamiliar with any of the phrases used and therefore struggled to access the concept being tested. Many were unable to link the ideas of 'rising affluence' with 'entertainment expansion' any further than 'more disposable income means more money to spend on leisure and entertainment'. Candidates are to be encouraged to use the specification to help structure their revision.
- Q.1 (b)** In this question, some candidates appeared largely unfamiliar with the concept of 'government policies' and / or the consequences thereof, particularly applied to areas of associated deindustrialised places. This is a key element of the specification. The best candidates were able to critique policies such as 'Levelling Up' or the 'Build Back Better High Street' frequently associated with Mary Portas. There were very few examples of where policies had had impact (be that positive or negative). Significantly, relatively few candidates accessed beyond the highest band for AO2, as they had not engaged with the command to 'examine'. At the very basic level, centres might encourage candidates to examine in terms of positive or negative and short and long term.
- Q.2 (a)** All candidates were able to gain some marks for this question, however very few identified the absence of pattern (or uneven pattern) depicted by the map. Weaker students simply lifted names of places from the map alongside their % of workforce at risk of job loss. This is a skill that appears frequently across both papers at AS, as well as at A-level (Components 1 and 2) and candidates are encouraged to master this skill.
- (b)** Many candidates were comfortable with this area of the specification and offered an explanation focusing on mechanisation of agriculture or importing food from overseas. Candidates are to be reminded that 'primary employment' is not limited to agriculture – but includes fishing, forestry, mining and quarrying - and that there are EU government policies that have led to a post productive countryside in the UK (and elsewhere).

- (c) Whilst candidates were clearly familiar with the two concepts being examined here – counter-urbanisation and second home ownership – many were unable to recognise the challenges that applied to one and not the other, rather they treated them as a homogenous pair. For instance, digital exclusion is more of a challenge to those who have moved from cities and work from home, whereas second home ownership is a real issue for accessing the housing market in rural areas associated with tourism. As outlined with regard to Question 1(b), the lack of any place reference combined with the absence of ‘assessment’ (the steer for AO2 marks) severely depressed marks for even the most competent of candidates.

Q.3 (a) (i) Most candidates who attempted this question scored 3 marks.

(a) (ii) and (iii) It was apparent that candidates were unfamiliar with this statistical technique, and this precluded access to these relatively straightforward marks.

(a) (iv) and (v) In learning how to execute the Chi-squared test, it is to be expected that candidates are also familiar with how to display the data in order to aid analysis. A limited number of candidates were able to access marks for these two questions; perhaps an area for further attention during next academic year.

(b) Where candidates were familiar with the concept of ‘sampling strategy’, this question offered a relatively low level of challenge. Unfortunately, many candidates overlooked the term ‘sampling strategy’, instead attempting to suggest what answers these two groups of residents would have provided to the questionnaire.

(c) Again, where candidates were familiar with the concept of qualitative data (as opposed to quantitative data) this question proved straightforward. There was some confusion amongst candidates as to the nature of such data, and this precluded a significant minority from accessing marks in Bands 2 and 3.

Q.4 Candidates appeared familiar with the rubric of question 4 examining physical geography fieldwork and all successfully engaged with this area of the paper. Better candidates were able to recognise the open-natured aspect of this question and interpreted this in outlining their new-found understanding of theory, methods, sampling, data presentation or data analysis. Weaker candidates did not appear to engage with the question and simply described what they had either seen or done. As in other questions with a mark tariff of 10, relatively few candidates addressed the AO2 command to ‘assess’ which carried half of the available marks here.

Q.5 It was disappointing to note that this question scored very poorly in comparison to previous years with the mean mark over 3 marks lower than in Summer 2023; this is largely because candidates wrote about their methods of data collection rather than the data analysis. Candidates could almost have pre-prepared answers ready for questions such as this in which one aspect of the enquiry process is being examined. This is a very similar style of question to one which candidates will have done at GCSE and centres could be encouraged to suggest that candidates transfer the skills from their GCSE fieldwork paper.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 02922 404 281

Email: GCEGeography@edugas.co.uk

Qualification webpage: https://www.edugas.co.uk/qualifications/geography-as-a-level/#tab_keydocuments

See other useful contacts here: [Useful Contacts | Edugas](#)

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