



External Assessment Report 2012

Subject(s)	Geography
Level(s)	Standard Grade

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

The overall standard of candidates' performance was high, especially at Credit level. At General level performance was affected by a number of factors. Firstly, many candidates obtained a grade 2 as opposed to a grade 3. This removed a large percentage of Candidates from the upper end of the general scale. Secondly, because of a lack of ability of to produce extended written answers, many candidates were unable to achieve a grade 4. Performance at Foundation was highly commendable, especially at grade 5.

In the Credit paper some candidates had difficulty with a small number of questions. For example, Question 1d (problems caused by the landscape for road engineers). Many candidates mistook the symbol for tunnels in the map key. Similarly in Question 4, a significant number of candidates were unfamiliar with the concept of a 'Marine National Park' and this was reflected in their responses to the question. A number of candidates lost marks in Question 3a 'differences in weather conditions' due to the fact that they tried to explain the differences, rather than simply describe them as the question asked them to do. However candidates produced good quality answers to other questions, such as Question 1e 'land use zones', Question 2 'Processes involved in corrie formation' and Question 5 'Sites for Housing Developments'.

At General level there was a good response to the Ordnance Survey map question particularly Question 1c (especially if they chose to discuss 'Crieff as a tourist centre'). There were similarly good responses to Question 1d 'site for a whisky distillery'; Questions 4a and 4b 'Climate for Iraklion, Greece; Question 8 'hedgerow removal'; and Question 12 'Types of Aid'.

Unfortunately, misreading Question 3 'problems caused by an Arctic air mass', a number of candidates discussed the weather rather than the problems caused by the weather. This subsequently cost them marks. The map of world population distribution (a pictograph) in Question 9 seemed to confuse a number of candidates. On reflection this might have been avoided had a second map showing physical regions such as deserts etc been added. Many candidates referred to birth and death rates instead of linking distribution to physical features.

Performance at Foundation level was very good, especially in questions where candidates chose from a selection of given answers. A number of questions such as Question 1b provided headroom for candidates who were able to provide a measure of extended writing in their answers.

These issues were discussed in detail at the Grade Boundary meeting and were taken into consideration when setting the boundaries.

At Credit level and General level the standard of literacy appeared to have improved considerably from previous years, according to markers reports.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Credit level candidates performed well in most questions, especially in Questions 1a (describing features of a river and its valley); 1b (industrial location); 1c (land use zones in a settlement); Question 2 (processes in corrie formation); Question 5 (sites for housing developments); Question 8 (effects of Shetland's changing population); and Question 10 (benefits of Fair Trade).

At General level candidates performed well in the ordnance survey map question, especially in answering those questions noted earlier in this report. Candidates also performed well in Question 4 (climate); Question 7 (location of high-tech firms); Question 8 (hedgerow removal) and Question 12 (Types of aid).

At Foundation level candidates performed best in the ordnance survey question, particularly in those questions which were multiple choice. They also gave good answers to Questions 2a (features of a river) and 2b (features of a waterfall); Question 3 (weather map); Question 5a and 5b (site of Kelso); Question 8 (population pyramids); Question 11a and 11b (Aid).

Areas which candidates found demanding

At Credit level candidates found some difficulty with the following questions for a variety of reasons, which were referred to in the first section of this report.

These included Question 1d (problems facing road engineers); Question 3a (differences in weather conditions); Question 4 (Marine National Park).

At General level the following questions were demanding for a number of candidates: Question 2 (glaciated lowland landscape); Question 3a (problems caused by an Arctic Maritime air mass); Question 6 (land use zones in Perth — depending on the choice of zone); Question 9 (world population distribution).

At Foundation level some candidates found it difficult to respond to questions that required extended written answers. However, this is more of a problem of writing ability rather than knowledge of the subject. This is demonstrated by the good response to multiple choice questions in both KU and ES questions.

At Credit level candidates performed better in Knowledge and Understanding than in Enquiry Skills questions.

At General level the response to both elements was similar in each case.

Foundation candidates responded well to both elements.

As in previous years, the overall response to Gathering and Processing techniques questions was mixed, especially at Credit and General levels. A significant number of candidates have difficulty in identifying appropriate alternative processing techniques and giving appropriate reasons for their choice.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

At credit and general levels quite a number of candidates do not take sufficient time to read the rubric of the question. 'Describe' and 'Explain' remains a problem for candidates. This has been noted in previous reports.

Direct lifting of material provided in resources can cost candidates marks. Candidates can use resource material as a basis for their answers, but there has to be an element of added value. Candidates have to demonstrate awareness that straight lifting without further elaboration does not gain marks.

Lists of features in answers will reduce the number of marks that candidates can obtain. Again, additional comments are required to provide the element of added value.

In the techniques questions, especially in processing technique questions, marks will be forfeited for rote answers and answers that repeat the same justifications. For example, many answers will repeat the phrase 'colour enhances the technique' in relation to a number of techniques. This is credited only once. Similarly references to 'allows comparison' should not be repeated.

Statistical information: update on Courses

STANDARD GRADE

Number of resulted entries in 2011	16445
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Number of resulted entries in 2012	15966
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Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of overall awards

Grade 1	27.1%
Grade 2	23.8%
Grade 3	18.3%
Grade 4	11.5%
Grade 5	11.7%
Grade 6	6.0%
Grade 7	1.6%
No award	0.0%

Grade boundaries for each assessable element in the subject included in the report

Assessable Element	Credit Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		General Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		Foundation Max Mark	Grade Boundaries	
		1	2		3	4		5	6
KU	32	22	16	28	12	8	24	17	12
ES	48	30	21	42	22	17	36	21	14