



National
Qualifications

Geography

Assignment

General assessment information

This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the assignment Component of Higher Geography Course assessment.

It must be read in conjunction with the specific assessment task(s) for this component of Course assessment, which may only be downloaded from SQA's designated secure website by authorised personnel.

This edition: September 2015 (version 1.1)

The information in this publication may be reproduced to support SQA qualifications. This publication must not be reproduced for commercial or trade purposes. **This material is for use by assessors.**

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2015

Contents

Introduction	1
What this assessment covers	2
Assessment	3
General Marking Instructions	6

Introduction

This is the general assessment information for the Higher Geography assignment.

This Assignment is worth 30 marks out of a total of 90 marks. This is 33% of the overall marks for the Course assessment. The Course will be graded A-D.

Marks for all Course Components are added up to give a total Course assessment mark which is then used as the basis for grading decisions.

This is one of two Components of Course assessment. The other Component is a question paper.

This document describes the general requirements for the assessment of the assignment Component of this Course. It gives general information and instructions for assessors.

It must be read in conjunction with the assessment task for this Component of Course assessment.

Equality and inclusion

This Course assessment has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment in this Course is provided in the *Course Support Notes*.

What this assessment covers

This assessment contributes 33% of the total marks for the Course.

This assessment will assess the skills, knowledge and understanding specified for the assignment in the *Course Assessment Specification*. These are:

- ◆ identifying a geographical topic or issue
- ◆ carrying out research, which should include fieldwork where appropriate
- ◆ demonstrate knowledge of the suitability of the methods and/or reliability of the sources used
- ◆ processing and using a range of information gathered
- ◆ drawing on detailed knowledge and understanding of the topic or issue
- ◆ analysing information from a range of sources
- ◆ reaching a conclusion supported by a range of evidence on a geographical topic or issue
- ◆ communicating information

Assessment

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for this Component of the Added Value of this Course by means of an assignment.

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate challenge and application by requiring the candidate to draw on and apply skills, knowledge and understanding within the context of a geographical topic or issue. This may be related to areas they have studied in class if they wish, but they are free to research any appropriate geographical topic or issue.

Assessment overview

This assessment has a research stage and a production of evidence stage.

Candidates should identify a geographical topic or issue, carry out research, evaluate their research methods and sources, process and use information, show detailed knowledge and understanding of the topic or issue, analyse information, reach a well-supported conclusion and communicate information. Candidates should use the specified resources (Processed Information) collected during their research to support them in the production of evidence stage.

Assessors should provide reasonable guidance on the types of topic or issue which will enable candidates to meet all the requirements of this assignment. They may also guide candidates as to the likely availability and accessibility of resources for their chosen topic or issue.

Candidates should work on their research with minimum support from the assessor.

Assessment conditions

Assessors must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.

This assignment has two stages:

- ◆ A research stage which will include identifying a topic or issue, carrying out research and evaluating research methods/sources, processing and using information, analysing information from a range of sources, reaching a conclusion. This stage has been designed to be capable of completion over a notional period of eight hours in addition to any time involved in carrying out fieldwork and including preparation time for the production of evidence.
- ◆ A production of evidence stage which must be completed within one hour and 30 minutes.

Candidates should undertake the research stage at any appropriate point in the Course. This will normally be when they have developed the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding. Candidates should undertake the production of evidence stage in time to meet the submission date set by SQA.

During the research stage of this assessment, there are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access.

During the final production of evidence stage of the assessment, candidates should only have access to the specified resources (Processed Information) which will consist of material collected during the research stage of the assignment on up to two single-sided sheets of A4.

Candidates must undertake the production of evidence independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the production of evidence taking place. The term 'reasonable assistance' is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. If any candidates require more than what is deemed to be 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment or it may be that they have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

Reasonable assistance may be given on a generic basis to a class or group of candidates, eg advice on how to develop a project plan. It may also be given to candidates on an individual basis. When reasonable assistance is given on a one-to-one basis in the context of something the candidate has already produced or demonstrated, there is a danger that it becomes support for assessment and assessors need to be aware that this may be going beyond reasonable assistance.

In the research stage of this assignment reasonable assistance may include:

- ◆ directing candidates to the instructions for candidates
- ◆ clarifying instructions/requirements of the task
- ◆ advising candidates on the choice of topic or issue
- ◆ advising candidates on possible sources of information
- ◆ arranging visits to enable gathering of evidence
- ◆ interim progress checks

In preparing for the production of evidence stage of this assignment, reasonable assistance may include:

- ◆ advising candidates of the nature and volume of specified resources which may be used to support the production of evidence

At any stage, reasonable assistance does not include:

- ◆ providing the topic or issue for the candidate
- ◆ directing candidates to specific resources to be used
- ◆ providing model answers
- ◆ providing detailed feedback on drafts, including marking

The **research stage** will be conducted under some supervision and control. This means that although candidates may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, assessors should put in place processes for monitoring progress and ensuring that the work is the candidate's own and that plagiarism has not taken place.

Assessors should put in place mechanisms to authenticate that the research is the candidate's own work, for example:

- ◆ interim progress meetings with candidates
- ◆ questioning
- ◆ candidate's record of activity/progress
- ◆ assessor observation

Group work approaches are acceptable as part of the research stage. However, there must be clear evidence for each candidate to show that the candidate has met the evidence requirements.

The **production of evidence stage** will be conducted under a high degree of supervision. This means that:

- ◆ candidates must be in direct sight of the assessor (or other responsible person) during the period of the assessment
- ◆ candidates must not communicate with each other
- ◆ candidates should only have access to the specified resources (Processed Information)

Evidence to be gathered

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

- ◆ candidate assignment evidence produced under a high degree of supervision
- ◆ specified resources (Processed Information) which are limited to two single-sided sheets of A4

General Marking Instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following general Marking Instructions are addressed to the marker. They will also be helpful for those preparing learners for Course assessment.

The assessment task will be set and externally marked by SQA and conducted in centres under the conditions specified by SQA.

General marking principles for Higher Geography assignment

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles that will be applied when marking candidate responses in this assignment. These principles must be read in conjunction with the detailed Marking Instructions which identify the key features required in candidate responses.

- a) Marks for each candidate response must always be assigned in line with these general marking principles and the detailed Marking Instructions for this assignment.
- b) Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding: they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.
- c) Principal Assessors will provide guidance on marking specific candidate responses which are not covered by either the principles or detailed Marking Instructions.
- d) The purpose of the Geography Processed Information is to support candidates in presenting the findings of their research and applying their skills, knowledge and understanding. It will not be marked. However, it may assist in the marking of the assignment by enabling clarification of points which the candidate has made in the presentation of their evidence, and may allow markers to gain an insight into what the candidate intended.

Candidates can structure their assignment evidence in a variety of ways.

Candidates may demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways and at different points in their assignment evidence. Markers should credit relevant and appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding wherever it is demonstrated.

In presenting their findings, candidates should show the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

A. Carrying out research on a geographical topic or issue

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways **up to a maximum of 6 marks.**

B. Use of and reference to Processed Information

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways up to a maximum of 4 marks. Marks should not be awarded for direct copying from the Processed Information.

C. Drawing on knowledge and understanding of the geographical topic or issue

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways up to a maximum of 6 marks.

D. Analysing information

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways up to a maximum of 8 marks.

E. Reaching an overall conclusion, supported by a range of evidence

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways up to a maximum of 2 marks.

F. Communicating information

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways up to a maximum of 4 marks.

Specified resources to be taken into assessment

Candidates may take Processed Information collected during the research phase into the production of evidence stage.

This evidence should consist of no more than two single-sided sheets of A4. Candidates should be encouraged to process, annotate or highlight information on their resources before the production of evidence stage.

This Processed Information must be submitted to SQA along with the evidence produced during the final production of evidence stage.

The nature of the resources taken into the production of evidence stage may include, for example: evidence or data from primary or secondary research; bullet points and headings; mind maps; statistical, graphical or numerical data; data collected from fieldwork; summary notes/quotes from sources; information extracted from maps; survey results; interview questions and/or answers; questionnaire and/or results; details of internet search engine results; newspaper article or extracts; summary notes taken from a visit or talk; or summary notes taken from a written or audio-visual source.

The information may be processed by, for example: the annotation of photographs; the production of sketches, diagrams, cross-sections, transects, etc; the production of graphs, charts, statistical tables, etc, from data; the selection of information from interviews or articles.

Administrative information

Published: September 2015 (version 1.1)

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Marking Instructions updated. Use of Processed Information clarified.	Qualifications Manager	September 2015

Security and confidentiality

This document can be used by practitioners in SQA-approved centres for the assessment of National Courses and not for any other purpose.

Copyright

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for assessment purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged. If it needs to be reproduced for any purpose other than assessment, it is the centre's responsibility to obtain copyright clearance.

Re-use for alternative purposes without the necessary copyright clearance may constitute copyright infringement.

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2015