



External Assessment Report 2011

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| Subject | Geography |
| Level | 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 performance of candidates, especially at Credit and General levels, did not quite match those of candidates in previous years. There has been a significant drop in the number of candidates presented for Standard Grade Geography from previous years.

At Credit level, the paper contained a number of questions which were accompanied by detailed resources. Many candidates simply lifted statements from these resources without additional comments. At this level, candidates can forfeit marks by indulging in 'straight lifts'; this has been indicated in previous external assessment reports. Due to the number of questions where lifting could occur in answers, it was decided at the preparation meeting for the Markers' meeting to amend the marking instructions to state that no marks should be awarded for straight lifts. This was a departure from instructions issued in previous examinations. However, this was taken into account when setting the marks for the grade boundaries so as not to overly penalise candidates.

Areas in which candidates performed well

At Credit level, the questions in which candidates performed best included the following:

- ◆ Question 1 (e) (using map evidence to evaluate the location of a caravan and camping site)
- ◆ Question 5 (a) (identifying a suitable location for buying a house from a choice of three properties shown on a model of city zones)
- ◆ Question 8 (a popular question on assessing industrial location in which candidates normally perform well)

At General level, candidates performed best in:

- ◆ Question 2 (identifying the upper course of a river valley from a given resource) and
- ◆ Question 5 (a) (completing a diagram from given information).

At Foundation level, candidates performed well in:

- ◆ Question 1 (g) (identifying services in a village from the Ordnance Survey map)
- ◆ Question 3 (identifying upland glacial features from a diagram)
- ◆ Question 4 (a) (i) (identifying a weather instrument) and Question 4 (b) (identifying the best location for a wind vane)
- ◆ Question 14 (identifying advantages and disadvantages of multinational companies)

Most candidates managed to answer all of the questions set in this paper.

Areas which candidates found demanding

At Credit level the questions which candidates found most difficult included:

- ◆ Question 1 (a) (matching glaciated upland features to given grid references)
- ◆ Question 9 (a) (explaining population changes in Kenya) — Many candidates chose to refer to birth and death rates instead of rural/urban migration.
- ◆ Question 10 (explaining the link between GDP and the number of births per women) — Many candidates described the link rather than explain it.
- ◆ Question 11 (advantages and disadvantages of membership of the EU) — Many candidates simply made straight lifts from the resource without added comment.

At General level, candidates found the following questions difficult:

- ◆ Question 1 (c) (using map evidence to assess possibilities of expanding Durham into a selected area identified on the Ordnance Survey map)
- ◆ Question 1 (e) (assessing the qualities of a given site for a new development)
- ◆ Question 8 (a) (identifying gathering techniques to find out the effects of the closure of a mill)
- ◆ Question 10 (a) (explaining how trade patterns can cause problems for developing countries)
- ◆ Question 10 (b) (identifying appropriate techniques for showing given information)

However, there was significant variation in the performances of candidates in these questions depending on the level of presentation.

At Foundation level, candidates found difficulty with Question 1(c) (assessing the suitability of an identified area on the Ordnance Survey map as a location for a nature reserve) — Many candidates were unsure of the term 'nature reserve'.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

General

As in previous years, the main reasons why candidates forfeited marks included either misreading instructions in the stem of the question, particularly in relation to 'describe' or 'explain', or using straight lifts from provided resources without adding value to the answer by making additional appropriate comment.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Standard Grade

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| Number of resulted entries in 2010 | 16,895 |
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| Number of resulted entries in 2011 | 16,445 |
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Statistical Information: performance of candidates

Distribution of overall awards

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| Grade 1 | 27.2% |
| Grade 2 | 23.3% |
| Grade 3 | 15.4% |
| Grade 4 | 11.3% |
| Grade 5 | 13.4% |
| Grade 6 | 7.2% |
| Grade 7 | 2.1% |
| 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 | 21 | 13 | 28 | 18 | 14 | 24 | 17 | 12 |
| ES | 48 | 33 | 23 | 42 | 22 | 17 | 36 | 24 | 17 |
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