



Higher
Course Assessment
Specification



Higher Geography Course Assessment Specification (C733 76)

Valid from August 2014

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Assessment Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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Course outline

Course title:	Higher Geography
SCQF level:	6 (24 SCQF credit points)
Course code:	C733 76
Course assessment code:	X733 76

The purpose of the Course Assessment Specification is to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the Course assessment and the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed.

Course assessment structure

Component 1 — question paper	60 marks
Component 2 — assignment	30 marks
Total marks	90 marks

This Course includes six SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course.

Equality and inclusion

This *Course Assessment Specification* 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 learners 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 of this Course is provided in the *Course Support Notes*.

Assessment

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all of the Units as well as the Course assessment. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

Course assessment

SQA will produce and give instructions for the production and conduct of Course assessments based on the information provided in this document.

Added value

The purpose of the Course assessment is to assess added value of the Course as well as confirming attainment in the Course and providing a grade. The added value for the Course will address the key purposes and aims of the Course, as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge, or application.

In this Course assessment, added value will focus on the following:

- ◆ breadth — drawing on knowledge and skills from across the Course
- ◆ challenge — requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
- ◆ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This added value consists of:

- ◆ Drawing on, extending and applying the skills, knowledge and understanding the learner has acquired during the Course. This will be assessed by a question paper and an assignment. Over the Course assessment there will be broad parity between the assessment of skills and knowledge and understanding.
- ◆ Demonstrating breadth of skills, knowledge and understanding from across the Units of the Course in the question paper. This will sample knowledge and understanding from across all three Units of the Course and will require the application of skills.
- ◆ Demonstrating challenge and application related to an appropriate geographical topic or issue in the assignment.

Grading

Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

The Course assessment is graded A–D. The grade is determined on the basis of the total mark for all Course assessments together.

A learner's overall grade will be determined by their performance across the Course assessment.

Grade description for C

For the award of Grade C, learners will have demonstrated successful performance in all of the Units of the Course. In the Course assessment, learners will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course.

Grade description for A

For the award of Grade A, learners will have demonstrated successful performance in all of the Units of the Course. In the Course assessment, learners will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course.

Credit

To take account of the extended range of learning and teaching approaches, remediation, consolidation of learning and integration needed for preparation for external assessment, six SCQF credit points are available in Courses at National 5 and Higher, and eight SCQF credit points in Courses at Advanced Higher. These points will be awarded when a grade D or better is achieved.

Structure and coverage of the Course assessment

The Course assessment will consist of two Components: a question paper and an assignment.

Component 1 — question paper

The purpose of this question paper is to demonstrate application of skills and breadth of knowledge and understanding from across the three Units of the Course.

This question paper will give learners an opportunity to demonstrate the following higher-order cognitive skills and knowledge and understanding from the mandatory content of the Course:

- ◆ using a wide range of geographical skills and techniques
- ◆ describing, explaining, evaluating and analysing complex geographical issues, using knowledge and understanding which is factual and theoretical, of the physical and human processes and interactions at work within geographical contexts on a local, regional and global scale

The question paper will have 60 marks (66% of the total mark).

This question paper has four Sections.

Section 1: Physical Environments will have 15 marks. This Section will be made up of extended response questions requiring the learner to draw on the knowledge and understanding and skills acquired during the Course. Questions will draw on the knowledge and understanding and skills described in the further mandatory information on Course coverage Section. Candidates will answer all questions in this Section.

Section 2: Human Environments will have 15 marks. This Section will be made up of extended response questions requiring the learner to draw on the knowledge and understanding and skills acquired during the Course. Questions will draw on the knowledge and understanding and skills described in the further mandatory information on Course coverage Section. Candidates will answer all questions in this Section.

Section 3: Global Issues will have 20 marks. This Section will be made up of extended questions requiring the learner to draw on the knowledge and understanding and skills acquired during the Course. Questions will draw on the knowledge and understanding and skills described in the further mandatory information on Course coverage Section. Candidates must answer questions from two out of five options. Within each of the chosen options candidates must answer all questions. Each question will be out of 10 marks.

Section 4: Application of Geographical Skills will have 10 marks. This Section will be made up of an extended response question requiring the learner to apply geographical skills acquired during the Course. The skills assessed in the question paper will include mapping skills and the use of numerical/graphical information. All candidates will answer this question.

The question paper Component of the Course assessment will have a greater emphasis on the assessment of knowledge and understanding than the Assignment. The other marks will be awarded for the demonstration of skills.

Component 2 — assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate challenge and application by demonstrating skills, knowledge and understanding within the context of a geographical topic or issue.

This assignment will give learners an opportunity to demonstrate the following higher-order cognitive skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ identifying a geographical topic or issue
- ◆ carrying out research, which should include fieldwork where appropriate
- ◆ demonstrating 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

The assignment will have 30 marks (33% of the total mark).

The assignment Component of the Course assessment will have a greater emphasis on the assessment of skills than the question paper. The other marks will be awarded for the demonstration of knowledge and understanding.

Setting, conducting and marking of assessment

Question paper

This question paper will be set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. Learners will complete this question paper in 2 hours and 15 minutes.

Controlled assessment — assignment

This assignment is:

- ◆ set by centres within SQA guidelines
- ◆ conducted under a high level of supervision and control

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking

All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

Setting the assessment

Learners will have an open choice of topic or issue to be researched.

Conducting the assessment

The production of evidence for assessment will be conducted:

- ◆ within 1 hour and 30 minutes
- ◆ with the use of specified resources
- ◆ in time to meet a submission date set by SQA
- ◆ independently by the learner
- ◆ when the learner is ready

Further mandatory information on Course coverage

Course assessment will involve sampling from the following geographical skills, knowledge and understanding. The skills of describing, explaining, evaluating and analysing complex geographical issues, using knowledge and understanding which is factual and theoretical, of the physical and human processes and interactions at work within geographical contexts on a local, regional and global scale will be assessed through the Course Assessment.

The information on mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding below should not be seen as a recommended teaching order, nor as a guide to teaching and learning approaches. The question paper will sample from the geographical skills, knowledge and understanding below but this should not be seen as a guide to the format of the question paper.

Geographical skills (Higher)	
The following skills will be assessed in the Course assessment in contexts drawn from across the Course:	
Mapping skills:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ interpretation and analysis ◆ using maps, which may include Ordnance Survey maps where appropriate, in association with photographs, field sketches, cross sections/transects 	
Research skills including fieldwork skills:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ gathering ◆ processing ◆ interpreting ◆ evaluating 	
The use of numerical and graphical information which may be presented in the following ways:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ statistical ◆ graphical ◆ tabular 	

Geography: Physical Environments	
Learners will develop and apply geographical skills and knowledge and understanding of physical environments. Learners will develop and apply knowledge and understanding of the processes and interactions at work within physical environments on a local, regional and global scale.	
Atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ global heat budget ◆ redistribution of energy by atmospheric and oceanic circulation ◆ cause, characteristics and impact of the Intertropical Convergence Zone
Hydrosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ hydrological cycle within a drainage basin ◆ interpretation of hydrographs
Lithosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ formation of erosion and depositional features in glaciated and coastal landscapes ◆ rural land use conflicts and their management related to glaciated and coastal landscapes
Biosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ properties and formation processes of podzol, brown earth and gley soils

Geography: Human Environments	
Learners will develop and apply geographical skills and knowledge and understanding of human environments. Learners will develop and apply knowledge and understanding of the processes and interactions at work within urban and rural environments in developed and developing countries.	
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ methods and problems of data collection ◆ consequences of population structure ◆ causes and impacts of forced and voluntary migration
Rural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the impact and management of rural land degradation related to a rainforest or semi-arid area
Urban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the need for management of recent urban change (housing and transport) in a developed and in a developing world city ◆ the management strategies employed ◆ the impact of the management strategies

Geography: Global Issues	
Learners will develop and apply geographical skills and knowledge and understanding of global geographical issues. Learners will develop and apply knowledge and understanding of significant global geographical issues which demonstrate the interaction of physical and human factors and evaluate strategies adopted in the management of these issues. An appreciation of sustainable development should permeate the global issues studied. Learners should study two out of the five global issues.	
River basin management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ physical characteristics of a selected river basin ◆ need for water management ◆ selection and development of sites ◆ consequences of water control projects
Development and health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ validity of development indicators ◆ differences in levels of development between developing countries ◆ a water-related disease: causes, impact, management ◆ primary healthcare strategies
Global climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ physical and human causes ◆ local and global effects ◆ management strategies and their limitations
Trade, aid and geopolitics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ world trade patterns ◆ causes of inequalities in trade ◆ impact of world trade patterns ◆ aid and other strategies to reduce trade inequalities and their impact
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ global distribution of energy resources ◆ reasons for increase in demand for energy in both developed and developing countries ◆ effectiveness of renewable and non-renewable approaches to meeting energy demands and their suitability within different countries

Administrative information

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History of changes to Course Assessment Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
C733 76	1.1	<p>Added further detail on the format of the question paper.</p> <p>Revised and re-ordered skills, knowledge and understanding in the assignment.</p> <p>Added bullet point in 'Lithosphere' Section of Physical Environments (moved from Human Environments).</p> <p>Deleted phrase 'within the developing world' from bullet point in 'Rural' Section of Human Environments.</p> <p>Specified 'housing and transport' as contexts in 'Urban' Section of Human Environments.</p> <p>Replaced 'water-borne' with 'water-related' in 'Development and Health' Section of Global Issues.</p> <p>Clarified role of aid in 'Trade, Aid and Geopolitics' Section of Global Issues.</p>	Qualifications Development Manager	April 2014
C733 76	1.2	Removal of synthesis from mandatory skills.	Qualifications Manager	April 2015

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