# GCE

# **GEOGRAPHY**

Unit 1 – Physical and Human Geography
Report on the Examination

2030
June 2014

Version: 1.0

**General**

There were some very good uses of information supplied in a variety of formats notably the map and hydrographs in Figure 1 and the tables given in 5 (b)(i), 7 (b)(i) and 8 (a)(i). Here, candidates maximised their use of materials and targeted their use to the question asked.  Precise and clear expression aids candidates in obtaining marks such as stating definitions precisely, articulating distributions or links clearly.  The description of landforms with the help of a sketch in 2 (b)(i) yielded some sound responses and some progress appears to be being made regarding describing distributions rather than location, when asked.  This was more apparent in question 6, than in question 2.

There is a need for candidates to engage with the question asked, de-constructing it and not answering a different question.  Thus, in 1(c), candidates referred to hard engineering strategies and a significant number discussed soft engineering in comparison to hard which was not answering this question.  Similarly, in 5(c), many candidates described the characteristics of two settlement areas rather than considering the ways in which population change affects the character of urban and rural areas. There was scope to use information on rural-urban settlements or rural villages in contrast to suburbs and inner city, but the information had to be crafted to answer the question asked, not just give a straightforward description of the characteristics.

Candidates should have a precise knowledge of key terms and be able to give accurate definitions Candidates should also have a clear awareness of basic geographical categories, such as physical and human; economic, social and political and be able to distinguish between them.

The use of text remains problematic with many candidates merely reiterating what is given in responses, rather than processing the information given and commenting on it. Command words should be known, understood and obeyed.  Thus, candidates should be taught the range of command words to expect and be given the definitions, so that they know how to deal with the different instructions.

Many candidates go onto additional sheets often where there is no real need. Statements on the additional pages frequently gain little credit.  Given the demands of time, candidates should be able to respond in the space provided. Candidates scoring highly usually write within the confines of the paper.  Certainly, time spent planning an answer, rather than launching into it and writing all that is known is a better strategy.  It is quality, not quantity that is important.  Candidates should seek to write legibly. It was noted that the standard of writing and quality of written communication has deteriorated overall.

## Section A

## Question 1 - Rivers, floods and management

The first two parts of this question were well done. There were clear contrasts as the command word was obeyed in (a)(i) and candidates addressed the expected components of the peak, lag time and rising and falling limbs, often supported by evidence. There was some drift to explanation which was pre-empting the next question and a few described the hydrographs separately. There is a need for accuracy in reading the data, quoting evidence and using the correct measurements. Thus, discharge had to be quoted in cumecs, not mm to be creditworthy.

The critical aspect of a good response in (a)(ii) was to make the link to the hydrographs. The best responses used the dominance of impermeable rock in the drainage basin of Austwick Beck and the presence of permeable rock in Clapham Beck effectively, noting the relative amounts of infiltration, the impact on surface flow and speed of transfer to the river. Relative amounts of woodland were also effectively used. Weaker answers noted the features but could not develop a sequence or were confused by the presence of impermeable rock in both drainage basins. The size and shape of the drainage basins could not be discerned from the information and so answers that sought to develop this aspect were not creditworthy.

Part (b) demanded the use of text and/or map to fulfil the command of 'comment on'. There was a requirement to use Figure 2 only and this instruction was disregarded by a significant number of candidates. Candidates should have been mindful of the question as Figure 2 was considered. Physical and human factors should have been selected and the information processed to note such points as the exceptional levels of rain, the comparison with 1974 and the management of the dam as a strategy for reducing the risk of flooding. A large number of candidates could describe the causes but did not progress to comment.

Many read part (c) as a question on hard, rather than soft engineering, and others saw it as a comparative account of hard and soft engineering. Thus, there is a real need for candidates to deconstruct the question and answer the question asked. There was a tendency for candidates to use a practised answer or answer a question that they would like to have seen. Often, where soft engineering was the focus, advantages and disadvantages were generalised. These answers looked at it being cheap and environmentally friendly in the context of both aesthetics and wildlife.

The better responses offered some support and related this to specific soft engineering strategies such as flood plain zoning, river restoration and warnings. There was some effective use of case study material and engagement with the command to 'discuss', but clear focus on this aspect was rare and description of the advantages and disadvantages was the norm, rather than trying to weigh up the different aspects.

**Question 2 - Cold environments**

In part (a) there was a focus on both distribution and the map provided. Thus, candidates used the categories in the key to consider the spread, noting that periglacial areas were confined to the Northern Hemisphere and alpine environments were along the west coast of the Americas for example. Many focussed, wrongly, on location, stating where cold environments were found and often without referring to Figure 3.

In part (b)(i) a large number of candidates identified two landforms, offered some description and clearly related their statements to what was visible in Figure 4. These candidates were able to score all 4 marks. Reference to the pointed pyramidal peaks and the steep, winding ridges of the arêtes was worthy of 3 marks.

The explanation of the formation of a glacial trough in (b)(ii) was disappointing. Often, explanation was partial noting the transformation of the river valley into the wider, deeper and steeper glacial trough. Frequently, processes were not mentioned, or appeared without a relevant context as to how they resulted in the U-shaped valley. Many drifted to related features such as corries, hanging valleys or ribbon lakes; some mentioned drumlins and moraine in the hope there might be some points that were correct. There is a need for candidates to know the clear and complete sequence of formation of landforms identified on the specification and the role of the processes responsible.

In Part (c) many struggled to get to grips with the traditional and more recent developments and did not differentiate between them. Often, only one aspect was addressed and this in a descriptive way, rather than considering the links to sustainability. The best responses used the case studies to make points in an analytical and discursive way as demanded by the question. The Trans-Alaskan Pipeline featured frequently and although somewhat dated, was used to make some good points. The Alaska White Mountain National Recreation Area proved a useful case study for some candidates.

**Question 3 - Coastal environments**

In part (a) candidates sought to use the information and note the ways in which features such as the wind strength and the distance it had travelled could determine whether the waves were destructive or constructive. They then considered the impact of the wave type on the resultant processes such as the importance of erosion with regard to destructive waves. There was a need to process the information and use it as a stimulus, not just write out the words without any amendment, or indeed understanding. The question demanded links to be identified. Some aspects, such as wave refraction and the role of the tides were poorly understood.

A large proportion of candidates reached 3 or 4 marks in (b)(i). The direction of longshore drift was often clearly stated and the reason for this was explained. A significant number noted the impact of piers, the changing direction at Beachy Head and the circular movement at Selsey Bill. A few believed 'back eddy' to be a place and there was some confusion with regard to the direction of the prevailing wind.

Responses to (b)(ii) were often descriptive with a limited amount of basic explanation, such as waves being absorbed by the beach. The best responses developed a clearer sequence regarding how the coast was protected. Some used case studies to illustrate and others looked at protecting areas of sand dunes from people.

There were two components to address in part (c) namely the description of the selected landforms and then the explanation. Naming a spit or a bar does not constitute description. Examiners will only credit words or diagrams used to convey the appearance of the landforms selected. Often, explanation was the stronger component. Where candidates addressed sand dunes, there was often significant drift into vegetation succession which goes beyond the formation of the landform.

The best responses clearly stated the appearance of the landforms and gave a clear, sequential explanation linked to specific processes often doing two (or maybe three) landforms, rather than trying to work their way through all those named in the question. The discriminator here was the description. Few appeared to understand the processes responsible for salt marsh formation and the link to the tidal range indicating a need to select landforms carefully. Some referred to deltas deemed to be fluvial rather than a coastal landform and not given in the list within the question.

**Question 4 - Hot desert environments and their margins**

Few candidates obtained 3 or 4 marks in (a)(i) as many disregarded the end of the question which stated 'shown in Figure 7'. Many launched into a description of Las Vegas using their own knowledge of its many hotels with casinos and swimming pools. These candidates possibly gained 1 mark for noting the skyscrapers. A significant proportion discussed issues with water, sustainability and reasons for its development, none of which addressed the question asked. Better responses sought to describe what was visible and noted the different designs, the sprawling nature of the city, the presence of open spaces and indicating their location.

Part (a)(ii) was much better done with a large number of candidates gaining 3 or 4 marks. Many picked out key trends, indicating features such as the significant fluctuation between late 1930's into the early 1950's, the two peaks either side of 1960 and the decline since the late 1990's. Some made use of drought and average levels. Weaker responses noted single years, rather than changes and laboured points made over short time periods where change was limited.

In part (a)(iii) there was limited support offered and an emphasis on description of developments. There was some drift to poorer areas of the world. The better answers offered some specific case study support. There were some very good cases studies on southern Spain that focussed on water availability and explicitly assessed the command 'to what extent'.

In part (b) many candidates tried to consider all the landforms in the list which diluted the depth. Focussing on a narrower range, perhaps one landform linked to erosion and one to deposition, provided a more astute strategy here. There was some confusion between yardangs and zeugen and many candidates defined the landform and identified the processes responsible. Better answers sought to develop the formation of the landforms and addressed the role of the wind indicated in the question. There was, at times, an explicit evaluation of the role of the wind in landforms formation.

**Section B**

**Question 5 - Population change**

Only a small proportion of candidates were awarded both marks in (a)(i). Terms such as 'infant mortality rate' should be well known to candidates. Most noted the deaths before the first birthday, but struggled with the 'rate' aspect, requiring per1000 live births per year. There is a need to have a precise knowledge of key terms.

A good number of candidates gained 2 or 3 marks in part (a)(ii), recognising the variation of the infant mortality rate between countries at different levels of development and what it implied with regard to healthcare, levels of doctors/nurses, the spread and prevalence of infectious diseases. Clarity of expression was an issue for some candidates and what was written was not always clear enough to justify marks being awarded.

Part (b)(i) was relatively well done with a large proportion of candidates gaining 3 or 4 marks. In this context, candidates considered the changes in the life expectancy of males and females in different areas. London was the focus for some. However, change had to be identified not separate descriptions of pattern in a single year. Some were unable to identify clusters of areas with similar characteristics and limited clarity regarding location, use of compass points limited the marks of some.

In part (b)(ii) there was some clear drift to economic and for a significant number a misunderstanding of the term 'implications', with candidates considering causes rather than outcomes of an ageing population. Very few addressed the gender implications of the changes and many noted the need for care, leisure facilities and the grey vote. Better Level 2 responses sought greater precision in their answers and addressed both elements. Answers noted the type of care needed for physical problems like hip replacements and mental problems such as dementia. The political power of older people willing to vote and exert an influence on decisions made and the raising of the retirement age were also noted. There was some drift to the grey pound.

Part (c) came from the specification indicating 'the ways natural population change and migration change affect the character of rural and urban areas', not the subsequent settlement case studies section. It was possible to craft an answer from this, but many candidates just described the characteristics of an urban and rural area, without even specifying the type of urban or rural area that was being referred to.

Better responses sought to indicate the type of area that was being considered, the type of change and then considered whether the positives did outweigh the negatives. The best answers had some case study support and used clearly different areas such as squatter settlements, multicultural inner city areas, rural urban fringe locations or declining rural settlements. The question demanded some careful planning, focussing on a limited number of ideas in the time available. Too many just launched into an answer without real thought or sense of direction. This resulted in disappointing responses with only a small proportion of candidates accessing Level 3.

**Question 6 - Food supply issues**

In part (a) a large proportion of candidates scored 3 or 4 marks. This was well answered and the concept of trends was well understood with candidates frequently noting the discrepancy between the two lines and possible reasons for this. Most did comment, as commanded by the question.

In part (b)(i) there was some confusion with 'environmental sustainability'. Many recognised the idea of conservation or protection with a high number of candidates getting 1 mark. Fewer candidates could elaborate by noting specific aspects such as subsidies.

Responses to (b)(ii) were poor with only a small number getting into level 2. Even if specific policies were known, such as buffer zones, there was often no attempt to link the measure to either the level or nature of food production. There was some confusion with CAP here.

The description of the pattern in part (c) led to a large number of candidates scoring well in this question. There appeared to be some improvement in addressing 'pattern' here. Successful candidates used the key and noted accurately groupings or clusters of countries. This is the key to success, rather than describing the location of individual occurrences, unless cited as an exception. Thus, some noted the highest number of kcal being in North America and Western Europe, with the exception of the country on the north east coast of South America.

In part (d) some candidates merely described the strategy per se without linking to food production which was critical. There was some confusion with Green Revolution, GM crops and land consolidation. The best made clear links to food production and included case study material to support points made.

**Question 7 - Energy Issues**

In part (a)(i) candidates scored 1 mark for identifying the idea of countries working together. Some candidates simply repeated the word co-operation so did not convey the necessary understanding. There was a need here to go beyond a definition of 'geopolitics'. Fewer candidates developed the basic statement by elaborating how countries might work together via trade, ensuring energy security.

The use of the text in Figure 12 proved to be the key discriminator in (a)(ii). Many candidates described BP share prices or the events, showing some limited awareness of the conflict being illustrated. Only a small proportion of candidates indicated an explicit link between the information and conflict in world affairs. Some candidates used negative/conflicting language to convey the different perspectives adopted by different world leaders and other interest groups.

In part (b)(i), candidates generally addressed both command words and trends were clearly identified, supported and commented upon via reasons for the changes or changes in relative importance. Thus, a high number of candidates gained 3 or 4 marks. Many quoted a number of accurate figures, but only one mark was usually available for the use of such evidence as the question was primarily about the trends themselves.

In part (b)(ii) many candidates noted the limited reliability, efficiency and cost of the technology allowing them to gain good credit. There was some drift to advantages.

There were various ways to approach part (c). Some looked at the development of different types of cars/buses; others focussed on various schemes to deter people from using cars such as congestion charging or encouraging people to use public transport, such as Park and Ride and car

sharing. However, many did not make the link to sustainability or had limited support for points made. This and the fact that a significant proportion did not address the command of 'to what extent' meant that only a very small number of candidates gained Level 3.

**Question 8 - Health Issues**

Part (a)(i) was well answered. Candidates getting 2 marks were often descriptive in their responses, rather than focusing on the command to 'comment on'. Comment could have related to the individual aspects or looking at the two components simultaneously. Some used the Leeds average effectively as a base for comparison and noted exceptions. Reasons for differences, often cross referencing the two elements of the table were frequent comments.

Responses to (a)(ii) were often superficial and there was some drift to a national scale. Many focussed on the need for provision, rather than access to facilities and there was a limited application of local case study material. Some candidates considered limited mobility of older people and screenings for specific illnesses which reflected particular sexes or age groups.

As with earlier definitions, precision was critical in (b)(i). Those candidates who scored both marks usually indicated an accurate BMI and some qualification linked to what this is or reference to abnormal or excessive fat accumulation. A large proportion of candidates gained 1 mark giving an indication of the need to know key terms.

In part (b)(ii) there was an attempt to locate places in categories, going beyond the highest rates being in Wales, but seeing also the significance of the North East of England. There is a need to be accurate in areas specified and not to be too general. It is not true that the North of England has the highest rates, nor that East Anglia has the lowest rates. The best candidates understood the meaning of distribution and answered accordingly. Others, again, looked at pattern but drifted from the command to explanation.

In part (c) many candidates did focus on two countries, although a minority did not address the need for them to be at different levels of development and looked at USA and UK. These were common examples, along with Cuba, France, Tanzania, Botswana, Ethiopia and some up-to-date information on China. Some looked at healthcare and disregarded the need to consider approaches to healthcare. Weaker responses drifted to healthcare issues such as HIV/AIDS and CHD. The best concentrated on the healthcare approach and considered the relevant advantages and disadvantages often in a contrasting way.

## Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.

## Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator