OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

GCSE

Geography A

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J382**

OCR Report to Centres June 2015

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General Certificate of Secondary Education

Geography A (J382)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

A731/01 Contemporary themes in geography (Foundation Tier)

General Comments:

The level of challenge in the exam was deemed appropriate with a wide spread of marks, and many questions differentiated between high quality and low quality answers effectively. Candidates who scored highly were able to write fluently and coherently about a range of topics using specific details from case studies that they had learnt. They were very clear about their own energy issue, earthquake, local area and non-UK area and this allowed them to access higher marks in the levelled questions. The best answers were those that identified the command words in the questions, especially the difference between describe and explain, and then linked their answer to those words. Weaker answers tended to be generic, and could be any earthquake, local place or energy issue. These candidates were unclear about which case studies they had covered and were unable to write consistently and coherently about them.

Levelled questions were particularly poorly answered with many candidates struggling to get more than 2 marks. Reasons for this included a lack of specific detail, and that they struggle to develop an answer and change topic too quickly. To reach Level 3 it is best to take 1 idea and explain it as fully as possible rather than try to explain 3 or 4 ideas in a more basic fashion, ending up with a list like answer.

The exam was long and some candidates did not finish, appearing to give up towards the end of the paper. However, most candidates appear to have had enough time to finish the exam.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 1

Q1 (a) In general this question was well answered and candidates were able to identify the four phrases using the resource provided. Where candidates failed to gain four marks this was due to choosing phrases that they had learnt about an extreme environment without looking at the Resource. A small proportion of candidates did not understand the phrase "densely populated".

Q1 (bi) It was clear that a large proportion of candidates did not understand the word landscape. The candidates that did were able to provide correct answers. Wrong answers tended to refer to climate or altitude. Some candidates offered two answers that were too similar to each other and could only be awarded one mark.

Q1 (bii) There was a similarity with the previous question with a large proportion of the candidates misunderstanding the word climate. A lot of poorer answers focused on altitude and the lack of oxygen found at higher altitudes, so those candidates that understood the word 'climate' tended to score higher marks.

Q1 (c) The question discriminated well between those candidates who truly knew the process and those that tried to work it out from the information given. A lot of the candidates correctly identified that statement one fitted in the left hand box. A large number of candidates put statement four in the middle box, which meant that none of the remaining statements made sense in the right hand box.

Q1 (d) Many candidates were able to name at least one of the erosional processes (or freeze-thaw weathering). The quality of explanation of these processes was weak, and tended to use

generic statements about the land being broken up or being worn away without explaining or using more explicit geographical terms.

Q1 (e) Candidates were able to identify the correct answer for three of the four missing words. The main issue was the location of where the terminal moraine was located, at the top being used incorrectly.

Q1 (fi) This question was answered weakly with candidates in general not using the resource well-enough to help them generate ideas. The most common answers referred to the amount of water, but weren't able to develop the idea further. Some candidates gave two answers but only the first one was marked.

Q1 (fii) Many candidates were awarded full marks for this question. There were very few wrong answers although occasionally candidates only gave one answer or two very similar answers.

Q1 (g) It was clear that candidates had studied appropriate mountain areas with the Alps, Himalayas and Andes being the most popular study sites. The best answers focussed on the melting of ice and snow, before linking this to a reduction in the amount of tourists that visit the area and the subsequent impact on local people. Where candidates were not able to achieve full marks it was because they did not try to extend their answer fully and only gave one or two developments on the original idea.

Question 2

Q2 (ai) Most of the candidates used the resource well and linked it to their understanding of plate tectonics, with the most common answer on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. Some candidates seemed to think that there was a large gap between the plates in which earthquakes occur. Compass points were not always used accurately.

Q2 (bi) Many candidates knew the Richter Scale although there were many variations in spelling.

Q2 (bii) Few candidates knew the Mercalli Scale, with a large number of candidates repeating Richter Scale hoping to ensure that they achieved at least one mark over the two questions.

Q2 (ci) It was clear that most candidates knew of an earthquake that they had studied, with Japan, Nepal and Haiti being the most popular examples. Few candidates were able to name the month and the year that they occurred. A few candidates made guesses, but these often did not make sense when the next two questions were taken into account.

Q2 (cii) The word magnitude was not well understood which limited the ability of candidates to achieve the mark.

Q2 (ciii) The lack of specific detail candidates displayed was disappointing. Most were able to say that buildings fell down but few answers went beyond that. The best answers were able to talk about the destruction of the Fukushima nuclear power plant, Christchurch cathedral collapsing or the destruction of the National Palace in Port-au-Prince.

Q2 (d) To achieve full marks candidates need to outline one or two reasons for the variation in impacts between two earthquakes in different countries. Level 1 answers identified a few reasons but did not develop the ideas. Those answers that read like a list of reasons or were just a list of bullet points, attracted less marks.

Level 2 answers generally made comparisons between MEDCs and LEDCs and consisted of one or two sentences about each. The Level 3 answers knew their case studies in detail and

were able to use specific data to contrast two earthquakes that they had learnt about. Japan and Haiti were the two most popular examples of earthquakes contrasted, with building quality and type of plate tectonic forming the focus of the best answers. The highest scoring answers also tended to choose one idea and explain it fully rather than try to explain five or six ideas briefly.

Question 3

Q3 (a) This question was answered well. The best answers were based on a common product with Coltan mining, phone manufacturing and phone shops comprising the most common answers. The biggest issue candidates faced was trying to define secondary industry.

Q3 (bi) This question was well answered. Austria was the most popular wrong answer, and poor handwriting sometimes made Iceland look like Ireland.

Q3 (bii) The stem of this question makes it clear that data is needed to achieve both marks but a high proportion of students decided to ignore this instruction and limited their answer to one mark. When candidates did use data they did not always pick appropriate, contrasting data to highlight the point that they were trying to make.

Q3 (biii) This question was not well answered. A high proportion of candidates left it blank, offering no answer to the question. When an answer was offered the candidate did not suggest much of an explanation beyond the idea of a MEDC / LEDC.

Question 4

Q4 (a) Most candidates could name two renewable energy sources (some only managed one), with the most frequently quoted being wind power and solar power.

Q4 (b) This question was generally well answered with most candidates achieving one or two marks. The cost of renewable energy sources and the lack of suitable sites were the most common answers to the question. Some candidates lost marks because they repeated the same ideas but with different types of renewable energy source. Statements suggesting there is not enough space for solar panels and not enough space for wind turbines were only awarded 1 mark.

Q4 (c) In the stem of the question there is a list of non-renewable energy sources but this did not stop some candidates writing about renewable energy sources. A majority of candidates were restricted to Level 1 as they did not attempt to develop their answer. Disadvantages, such as climate change, had the potential to be developed in great detail but too often candidates changed topic and stated another disadvantage. Three or four disadvantages with no development were limited to Level 1. Level 2 answers were mostly unbalanced with the disadvantages better developed than the advantages. The best answers were well balanced and provided equal levels of development to both advantages and disadvantages.

Q4 (d) The resource was well used and candidates scored highly on this question. The main reason for a failure to reach four marks was candidates not using the resource as instructed or giving answers that were too similar in both the upper and lower box.

Q4 (e) This question was poorly answered. A large number of candidates failed to provide more than a generic energy issue that they had studied such as 'electricity' or 'fossil fuel reliance'. This made it harder for them to reach Level 2 as they needed some named groups to allow a description of how and why they were in conflict. The best candidates had clear and detailed knowledge of energy issues, such as fracking or nuclear power, and were able to explain the view of residents, environmentalists or potential pressure groups. Some candidates found it hard

to work out which organisations and residents were in conflict with; only a few candidates realised that it might be the government or power companies. Candidates could reach Level 3 by selecting one group on each side of the argument and then developing those ideas fully, rather than by trying to briefly explain the view of several groups on the same side of the argument.

Question 5

Q5 (a) The terms urban and rural were routinely confused. Some candidates chose rural and then described an urban area whilst some candidates chose urban and described a rural area. Some candidates decided that the presence of a school field in the NE corner of the map meant the area was rural.

Q5 (bi) Most candidates answered this correctly, although it seems some candidates confused land value and house prices.

Q5 (bii) This question was well answered but some candidates chose ideas that are so generic, such as roads, that they could be anywhere in a city rather than in the centre.

Q5 (c) Using the resource allowed candidates to gain the first mark, but most were not able to develop the idea more fully to gain the second mark. A number of candidates copied large chunks from the resource without any attempt to explain what it might mean.

Q5 (d) A wide variety of locations were selected for the location of the supermarket with the most popular being close to the hotel or the service station. Some candidates chose a location that would have been too small for a supermarket but this was not penalised. Most candidates were able to think of three reasons why a supermarket might locate in their chosen location. The roads/ motorways and potential customers formed the basis for most answers. Some candidates decided that their location was unused but this cannot be determined from the map. Not all candidates were able to develop their answer fully and access all six marks.

Q5 (ei) A surprising number of candidates did not know where their location was. Only one mark was allowed for vague statements, such as next to or near. There is still confusion over compass directions. A disappointing number of candidates are still confusing their non-UK location and their local place, leading candidates to try to describe places such as Mumbai.

Q5 (eii) A high number of candidates supplied a generic list of land uses that could be from anywhere. Lists, such as trees, parks, houses, shops, gained a maximum of 1 mark. The best answers balanced both human and physical features and were able to give specific examples of human or physical features of their local place.

Q5 (f) The best answers knew of a specific development that would be occurring in the candidate's local area and knew how it might impact their location. Most answers however, tended to pick rather broad changes such as more immigrants, city centre shops closing or the building of more houses. These changes did not contain any place specific detail and instead focused on very generic answers that could have been anywhere in the country and showed no specific knowledge of their local area.

A731/02 Contemporary themes in geography (Higher Tier)

General Comments:

The paper generally differentiated well, almost all candidates attempted each question and 'no response' was rare. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar, was as one would expect from Higher Tier candidates awarded at either 2 or 3. Appropriate use of resources was made by most candidates, however some candidates were unable to "identify" from a given resource.

Case study questions which required extended, place specific writing were most often credited at Level 2. Most answers were sound in construction but few candidates were able to achieve the depth and development to get their answers into Level 3. Thus, Level 2 responses were common. The use of place specific references was rarely well-integrated into the context of the explanation. As such, most answers often contained large amounts of 'theoretical'/'generalised' responses. Where candidates have tried to use the same case study i.e. fracking, for up to three separate questions they have tended to penalise themselves.

Some candidates were able to provide really clear and effective responses when asked, for example, to "evaluate". To gain high marks candidates must become practiced at articulating 'to what extent' something has been effective or is sustainable.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 1

a)   Most candidates could identify at least one feature from the photograph. Some candidates referred to climatic features such as cold and snow rather than relating these to the landscape.

b)   Some candidates did not recognise that the question asked for references to both the landscape and the climate and therefore limited themselves by referring to only one or the other.

c)   Most candidates were able to identify and annotate key aspects of the water cycle and formation of relief rainfall. Some candidates focussed on describing the rain shadow / leeward side and water cycle, otherwise clear labelling and accurate responses were given on the whole.

d)   (i) Most candidates gained credit for recognising that terminal moraine was made up of boulders/rock which had been eroded from the mountain. Fewer candidates identified that it would be found at the 'end' or 'snout' of the glacier.
(ii) Many candidates concentrated on the physical processes of erosion which led to the material being accumulated – these processes were well understood. Fewer candidates could describe the actual formation of the terminal moraine.
(iii) Some candidates described a process of glaciation rather than a feature of glaciation. Where diagrams were drawn they mainly complimented the text given. Candidates who scored highly on this question were able to describe the appearance of the feature in addition to describing the processes which had led to its formation.

e)   Candidates were able to make good use of the photograph in their responses.

f) A majority of candidates correctly described a mountain area outside of the UK; use of the Andes region was popular. Most candidates could give a sound explanation of the possible future impacts of climate change on their named area. However, accurate reference to place specific detail was limited in a significant number of responses and some candidates referred to generic impacts of a warmer climate such as glacier melt and possible flooding. Some candidates also failed to read "future impacts" and limited themselves to current impacts.

Question 2

a) Most candidates were credited two marks for recognising that Iceland is on a plate boundary where the plates are moving apart. Fewer candidates were able to describe the associated tectonic activity resulting in earthquakes in this region.

b) (i) There were some misconceptions concerning the two earthquake measuring scales. Most candidates recognised that the Richter scale measure magnitude and the Mercalli scale reflected the amount of damage done, however some candidates incorrectly stated that the Richter scale only goes to 10.

 (ii) Where candidates had shown a clear understanding in part (i) then they achieved maximum marks here. Most candidates commented that they thought the Richter scale was more accurate, but there was little development of the comparison beyond that.

c) (i) A significant number of candidates did not always indicate that they were aware of the differences between short term and long term impacts. Several candidates stated "damage to homes" or "people died" as examples of long term impacts. Many candidates were accurate in reflecting the impacts of place specific earthquakes, most typically in Haiti or Japan.

(ii) Several candidates wrote quite extensively about specific strategies which had been employed following the named earthquake from part (i). However, there were fewer candidates who successfully evaluated the extent to which these strategies had been successful in dealing with the aftermath of the event. Centres should focus on developing candidates skills regarding articulating 'to what extent' something has been successful or sustainable.

Question 3

3ai) Many candidates named examples of primary industries rather than providing a definition of the term.

3aii) This question was successfully completed by almost all candidates.

3aiii) Most candidates were able to describe the relationship accurately with the use of figures from the graph. However significantly fewer could offer an explanation for the pattern. Many candidates who attempted an explanation wrote about numbers employed in each industry rather than linking to the value of products from agriculture as opposed to secondary or tertiary industries.

3b) This was the most successfully answered extended writing question. Most candidates had studied a mobile phone company and were able to write with accuracy about the associated jobs in primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary industries with place specific examples.

3c) Most candidates were able to identify some of the issues around setting up renewable energy provision in a country. Most responses focussed on cost, efficiency and the lack of appropriate physical conditions to make renewable energy viable. Some candidates used specific examples form their own knowledge to demonstrate understanding of the issue.

3d) Most candidates stated that an ethical consumer would have concerns about impacts on the environment but very few candidates were able to write specifically about the types of concerns people might have. Too many candidates are still using 'pollution' as a generic term, and many are concerned about the impact on 'workers' in general, which suggests the candidates were thinking more about the Fairtrade route rather than ethically sound energy production.

3e) Candidates' choice of 'service' was instrumental in responding successfully to this question. Candidates who had studied specific tourist locations were able to detail place specific impacts on both people and the environment with great fluency. Candidates who had studied energy provision to the consumer as a service were less able to articulate how the provision of the service impacted people and the environment. Many candidates who wrote about an energy provider tended to focus on the impacts of the extraction of gas or coal rather than the impacts of the provision of a service.

Question 4

4a) Most candidates were able to select a disadvantage from the text, though fewer were able to explain the disadvantage either in terms of what caused it or in terms of why it was a disadvantage.

4b) Candidates demonstrated some confusion in understanding the difference between supply and demand. A common misconception was that if supply falls then demand must increase as a consequence. Most candidates were able to identify changes in supply, including exhausting domestic gas reserves and reducing reliance on foreign imports, but significantly fewer candidates could explain likely changes in demand for gas as a source of energy.

4c) Fracking was the most popular choice of case study. Most candidates developed their responses to reach Level 2 but were unable to provide comprehensive detail to reach Level 3. Some of the candidates relied on the text from the resource and were unable to add any further detail from their own knowledge. Some candidates did not recognise the need to reflect on how the issue might develop in the future. Candidates who focussed on the extraction of fossil fuels wrote generically and lacked the comprehensive detail need for Level 3.

Question 5

5ai) Many candidates understood the term 'land use' and were able to correctly identify features from the resource.

5aii) Candidates' definitions were largely based around the idea of 'central' and 'business'. Most commonly candidates referred to 'shops and offices' which were found in the 'city centre'.

5aiii) There were a significant number of candidates who wrongly identified this area as being part of the CBD. Most candidates who correctly identified it as being in a suburban location were able to give examples of land use which justified their decision and compared the two areas as part of their explanation.

5b) Answered well by most candidates.

5c) Some candidates were able to describe a change which was currently happening, or proposed, in their area, but were unable to describe the likely impacts of that change. Other candidates wrote about a generic change such as 'more houses will be built' and could then list a series of consequences of there being more houses in the area. Many candidates were unable to provide place specific detail to access Level 3 marks,and some candidates wrote about changes that had happened in recent years rather than in the future.

A732/01 Geographical skills (Foundation Tier)

General Comments:

The second skills paper for this specification was well received and considerable improvement was noted compared with the previous paper, with almost all candidates making a good attempt at it. Whilst there were some candidates who appeared to show sufficient ability to have merited being entered for the higher tier this number was relatively small, suggesting that most were correctly entered for this tier.

The map extract, and other source materials provided, tested a wide variety of skills. It was felt that the examination was wholly appropriate for foundation level and there was consequently a wide range of performance. It was clear that high performing candidates spent time reading the questions and studied the resources with care.

In general candidates could handle basic skills, including mapwork, though common errors and difficulties experienced are identified in the comments on individual questions. Centres appear to have incorporated these skills into schemes of work, which is good practice. It is good practice to revisit them wherever possible, using Ordnance Survey maps where appropriate.

In those questions which offered an opportunity to do so many candidates attempted to develop their answers. As brief, simplistic responses gain little credit candidates should extend their answers if possible, using map evidence where appropriate. The space available and mark allocations provide clear guidance as to the amount of detail required.

Key Points:
• practise the different skills involved, especially the Ordnance Survey map skills listed in the specification, along with other skills involving the use of a variety of geographical resources. In particular practise Ordnance Survey map skills using extracts at 1:25 000 and 1:50 000 scales.
• where completion and/or interpretation of graphs, maps and other diagrams is required this should be done with care and accuracy.
• read the questions carefully and ensure that the instructions are clearly followed. Candidates need to be familiar with how to respond to the command words commonly used.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No. 1

(a) (i) Many candidates correctly identified Motorway X as the M1 though a common error was to give other names or features from that part of the map, such as Tibshelf, Huthwaite or Woodend.

(ii) and (iii) Most candidates correctly identified the two settlements, though Huthwaite and Sutton-in-Ashfield proved significant distracters for those who did not study the sketch map and Ordnance Survey map extract with enough care.

(b) (i) A printing error in the paper resulted in the final figure of the reference 5657 appearing as superscript, so it looked like 565 to the power of 7. Whilst there was no conclusive proof that the error had disadvantaged the candidates it was possible for candidates to wrongly locate another alternative farm (Ling Farm) using the first two figures of the grid reference – indeed this was a

common error. Therefore it was decided to award 1 mark to each candidate for this question (i.e. those with zero will get 1 mark, those with 1 mark get that one mark, but nothing on top).

(ii) Most candidates used the key correctly and identified the coniferous woodland.

(iii) The correct feature, the golf course, was identified by most candidates at the 6 figure reference given. The observatory and the clubhouse (CH) were common incorrect answers as they were also located in the same grid square.

Question No. 2

(a) (i) and (ii) Most candidates could read the line graph and were successful in correctly answering both parts. A small number, who didn`t study the lines with enough care, wrongly selected `energy and water` or `agriculture and fishing` in (ii).

(iii) This was well answered, most candidates scoring three or four marks. The most common error by candidates was to omit the final answer, not selecting anything from the last line.

(b) (i) The question asked about manufacturing industry and many candidates correctly identified two of metal goods, textiles and footwear from the extract provided. Others did not read the text carefully with reference to the question and identified other industries such as coal mining.

(ii) Many candidates made the basic correct point about 'competition from abroad' but did not elaborate and explain this as required to gain a second mark. Others wrongly wrote about coal mines.

(iii) There were many good explanations, with most candidates giving at least one correct idea. The few answers about mechanization were not accepted as the answer needed to be derived from the extract. As in (ii) some candidates had not read the question properly and wrongly wrote about factories rather than coal mines.

Question No. 3

(a) (i) The skill being tested here was the ability to make observations from the photographs in order to describe three features of Castlewood Business Park. Successful candidates were able to refer to the actual buildings (eg two storey, modern, flat/gently sloping roof, loading bays, small windows, white/grey colour etc) or the surroundings which could be seen (eg car parking space, trees, street lighting etc). Many candidates wrote wrongly about features of location rather than features of the business park itself, suggesting they had used the Ordnance Survey extract rather than the photographs. This skill needs practising – candidates should practice describing what can be seen and not be afraid to state the obvious.

(ii) Most candidates matched the beginnings and endings correctly, scoring one or both marks.

(b) Many candidates scored at least two marks for correct reference to close proximity of the motorways and airports to Mansfield. Fewer references were made to Mansfield`s central location or its location not too far from large cities. Indeed many candidates wrongly suggested it is near to the coast and therefore close to a port. Careful reference to the scale would have suggested that this is not the case; however candidates who referred to the motorway links to ports were credited. **Question No. 4**

(a) (i) Whilst the correct answer, South East, was the most common one there were significant numbers of candidates who chose the wrong alternative with the opposite direction, north west being the most common wrong answer.

(ii) Most candidates used the key well to identify correct services, the post office, public house, school or church/place of worship. Some referred to other features, typically farms close to Rainworth, or services in other settlements.

(b) (i) Whilst some candidates correctly selected 3.5km, many candidates chose 3.0 km, an under-estimate. Possibly they measured `as the crow flies` or through the village rather than along the by-pass.

(ii) This discriminated well. There were some excellent accurate attempts and most were sufficiently within tolerance for at least one mark. Common errors were to extend the by-pass much too far to the north or not join it correctly to the two roundabouts. Some completely omitted the task.

(c) (i) Here the focus was on land use. Most, but not all, candidates seemed familiar with the term but some described the actual roads or the traffic using them instead. Many candidates observed the photographs well and recognised the contrast between the rural land use (eg woodland/forest) around the by-pass and the built up areas close to the original route.

(ii) Whilst a small number of candidates appeared not to understand the word width most were able to make a valid comparison. The answer needed to be comparative, so it was sufficient to answer that the by-pass was wider, alternatively candidates could state that the by-pass was a dual carriageway compared with the single road through the village.

(d) (i) There were some perceptive answers referring to the need to decrease traffic in the village for the benefit of the residents and/or speed up the journey for passing motorists by avoiding the village. Some candidates were able to develop these ideas and score high marks. Other candidates seemed to have little understanding of the purpose of a by-pass and gave vague ideas (eg it is safer) or incorrect ones (eg to speed up the journey from Rainworth to Mansfield).

(ii) A challenging question where some candidates impressively looked carefully at the map evidence and were able to suggest correctly why building the by-pass to the south would have been difficult. Map evidence suggests that the village extends further to the south so the route would have to be longer to avoid it or it would generate conflict over changes in land use, including the possible demolition of properties. Others appeared to look for any evidence on the map and assume this was significant, the small lake or the wind generators for example, which would have been unlikely to have significant impacts on the choice of route.

(e) (i) and (ii) Most candidates seemed familiar with this type of diagram and both parts were generally well answered. Some however lacked the required precision so were out of tolerance.

(iii) Most candidates achieved a mark for recognising that traffic flow had been reduced but fewer backed this up using evidence from Fig. 7.

(iv) This was a good discriminator with a widespread mark distribution. Answers which were developed, including an advantage and a disadvantage, and referring to both people and the natural environment achieved Level 3. This was commonly done by developing the positive impacts on villagers (or motorists passing by) of less traffic and the negative impact on the natural environment of loss of woodland, though a range of other valid ideas was seen. Weaker responses tended to be either brief and simplistic or vague in their reference to effects, whilst some candidates referred to people only, not the natural environment, or either advantages or disadvantages rather than both.

A few answers appeared generic in the sense that they referred to ideas such as loss of farmland, destruction of properties and increased noise from traffic. Map evidence suggests that there is little validity in such ideas.

A732/02 Geographical skills (Higher Tier)

General Comments:

The second skills paper for this specification was well received and considerable improvement was noted compared to the previous paper. It was considered appropriate for the ability range of the candidates and achieved full differentiation, though most candidates did shown some grasp of the techniques necessary for interpretation and analysis of data.

Not surprisingly the most perceptive and well prepared candidates performed extremely well across the whole paper and some excellent geography was seen. Such candidates extended their answers wherever possible, using map evidence where appropriate.

Indeed the bulk of candidates seemed to be familiar to some extent with handling the geographical data which was presented to them and could handle most of the skills involved. Most candidates attempted all questions, but whilst they appeared to be correctly entered for the Higher Tier, a significant minority struggled throughout and provided little or no evidence that they were genuine Higher Tier candidates, showing limited ability to develop their answers or answer with sufficient accuracy, clarity or understanding.

As always, marks were lost through candidates not reading the questions carefully. The need to read and interpret questions correctly should be stressed to candidates.

Centres now appear to be covering most of the skills required for an assessment of this type, and seem to have incorporated them into schemes of work. Ordnance Survey maps particularly should be used whenever possible, in order to increase familiarity with these specific skills.

Key Points:
• practise the different skills involved using of a variety of geographical resources. In particular practise Ordnance Survey map skills using extracts at 1:25 000 and 1:50 000 scales.
• where completion and/or interpretation of graphs, maps and other diagrams is required this should be done with care and accuracy.
• read the questions carefully and ensure that the instructions are clearly followed. Candidates need to be familiar with how to respond to the command words commonly used and develop answers in an appropriate way wherever possible.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No. 1

(a) (i)   Generally this was well answered. A few candidates missed the mark by writing 'Ling Farm' or 'Copt Hill Farm' which were both in an adjacent grid square.

(ii)   Generally well answered, most candidates identifying the hospital or the abbreviation from the map which was accepted.

(iii)   Generally well answered although a significant number lost the mark by writing 'Observatory' or 'Club House', which were also located in the same grid square, and some did not write out the full meaning of the symbol from the key (e.g. Golf).

(b)   This question differentiated well. Most candidates managed to see the decrease/increase in manufacturing/tertiary but others did not read off the relevant statistics with sufficient precision. Candidates also lost marks for just giving statistics without units (%) and some used approximations which weren't accurate enough. For example `above 80%`..

(c)   This question also differentiated successfully between candidates. Most candidates were able to score some marks with simple responses such as the closure of mines and the decrease in manufacturing in the region. In addition the more perceptive candidates used the terms associated with employment structure (primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary) to score high marks. The weakest candidates struggled to go further than recognising that the region had suffered from unemployment in the 1980's and that this had been partially reversed by the introduction of new jobs in the region in later years, answers which did not relate in any way to employment structure as required.

Question No. 2

(a) (i)   Few candidates described anything about the actual buildings as required, yet their location, surroundings and associated features like car parks were commonly described. When candidates did write anything about the buildings it was often little more than the modernity of them which was identified. Few referred to the obvious things like colour, building materials, height etc. Therefore answers were on the whole disappointing. If the candidates had read the question more carefully, they could have easily scored all three marks but instead many appeared to do a quick scan of the question, then the photograph, and then either wrote about the location of business parks or the surroundings.

(ii)   This was another question which successfully differentiated. It gave the opportunity for candidates to display a variety of map skills as well as their ability to understand and explain the term 'location'. The best answers used compass directions and distances accurately, measured from specified places or other named features. Marks were lost by not distinguishing between settlements like Sutton in Ashfield and Kirkby in Ashfield, or not indicating from where in the settlement they were measuring. Candidates also struggled with directions from a linear feature such as the M1 where it is necessary to identify distance/direction from a specific point like Junction 28. The weakest candidates simply wrote that the business park was 'near a road', 'on the out skirts of town' etc, without any sense of place. Some candidates didn't appear to read the question properly and explained the location of the business park, many repeating themselves in the next question
.
(iii)   This question was generally well answered and many candidates were able to use the map successfully to interpret and explain why it was a good site for a business park. Many correctly commented on a variety of relevant ideas, such as its accessibility, explaining its importance to both workers and delivery lorries, the flat land and the large amount of space available. Relatively few referred to the edge of town location and the space available or likely cost of land. Some just listed nearby roads and settlements without identifying how they benefitted the business park and some wrongly focussed on the word 'park', ignoring the word 'business' and writing about it as if it were a leisure park or shopping centre.

(b)   Generally answers to this question were impressive and showed a good understanding of the significance of proximity to the motorway network and airport, and to some extent the central location of Mansfield. Perceptive candidates were able to comment on the disadvantage of an inland location, particularly one which is not close to the economic hubs of London and mainland Europe. Common errors from weaker candidates included a perception that ports were nearby and suggestions that motorways and airports would be a disadvantage 'because of noise and other pollution'. Similarly some candidates viewed nearby cities as 'competition', and therefore a disadvantage.

Question No. 3

(a) (i)   Generally this was well answered. Marks were rarely lost, but if they were, it was usually for giving the opposite compass direction (North West) or writing a mixed up version of East South East (eg East East South).

(ii)   This question tested the candidates' ability to use the key to correctly identify a service and to give an accurate 6 figure grid reference. Generally answers were impressive, most identifying a service, and the vast majority who did that also gave a correct grid reference. Marks were lost mainly by those candidates who picked other features such as farms, or chose services in other settlements, such as the leisure centre in Blidworth.

(b) (i)   Whilst some candidates correctly measured the distance within the tolerance allowed, many under-estimated it. Possibly some measured `as the crow flies` or through the village rather than along the by-pass, however the wide range of responses, ranging from a fraction of a kilometre to several hundred thousand suggested that many are not as familiar with the simple use of the linear scale to work out distances as they should be. With answers varying from 25cm to 240 000km some candidates appear to have no concept of distance.

(ii)   This question discriminated well. There were some excellent accurate attempts and most were sufficiently within tolerance for at least one mark. Common errors were to extend the by-pass much too far to the north or not join it correctly to the two roundabouts. Those who took time and made little notches on the grid lines where the bypass went through achieved the most accurate results. Some completely omitted the task.

(iii)   The best answers recognised the curve in the route and the main directions it followed (NE/SE/E). For many however the task proved challenging. There were a number who said it went north then south which would leave the driver back at the start, and there were many vague comments such as `through the wood` and `north of Rainworth`. There were also candidates who did not look properly at the grid references in the question and reversed their answer. Some did not use compass directions, simply describing the scenery using map evidence, which was not the task set. Some resorted to giving 'satnav' style instructions with a final 'you have reached your destination' after some rather dubious directions.

(c) (i)   The best candidates used each space provided to describe a real difference between the two roads using vocabulary which was geographically correct (e.g. urban/rural, dual carriageway/single carriageway). Such candidates carefully observed differences between the photographs provided and then described, whilst weaker answers tended to list separate points about each road and leave it to the examiner to link these together. Indeed many weaker answers lacked comparison, with many identifying a feature of the road and then simply saying that it wasn't on the other road. Some lost the mark by describing the by-pass as a motorway rather than a dual carriageway.

(ii) Most candidates managed to score at least one mark here for simple ideas (eg less traffic, quicker to travel past Rainworth rather than through it), and sometimes these ideas were developed effectively for further credit (eg less noise/atmospheric pollution, as there would be no need to stop at road junctions) . A significant number of candidates thought the by-pass was going through Rainworth, so their answers were the reverse of those which could be credited, whilst some focused inappropriately on the route of the bypass which was not suggesting why the bypass was built.

(d) (i) Almost all candidates observed the decrease in traffic volumes after the by-pass was built and the best answers used the diagram provided to accurately use data to provide proof of this. The question differentiated effectively as weaker candidates either did not use statistics, did not state whether statistics were to or from Mansfield, or simply lacked accuracy.

(ii) This question, requiring extended writing, differentiated well. The full mark range was achieved and there were some excellent responses which demonstrated the ability of candidates to argue different points of view using a variety of geographical sources to support their ideas. More able candidates were able to identify a range of groups of people, both within and outside Rainworth, who would both benefit or be disadvantaged by the bypass and were able to incorporate map evidence, such as names and grid references in their answers. Weaker candidates tended to be brief, sometimes they did not identify specific groups of people and/or locations, and occasionally they were completely wrong as they assumed the by-pass had been built through the village despite the obvious map evidence to the contrary. Good responses discussed in detail the positive impacts of the reduction of traffic levels in the village, and used map and photographic evidence to point out that businesses in Rainworth would now receive fewer passing customers and less profit – an obvious negative impact. Some spotted the proximity of the mixed woodland and nature reserves and wrote good accounts of the traffic noise and deforestation potentially having an adverse effect on wildlife and habitats. Some incorrectly focussed on perceived disadvantages to businesses in Mansfield or advantages to Ransom Wood Business Park, or to people commuting from Rainworth into Mansfield, all of which would be barely affected by the by-pass.

A733 Local geographical investigation

General Comments

The second series of this specification again gave candidates the opportunity to focus their controlled assessment efforts into one sustained piece of work. Investigation 1A, which gave candidates the opportunity to carry out some detailed surveys about ethical consumerism, was the most popular choice while Investigation 1B, looking at the reasons for the distribution of shops in a chosen retail area, was chosen by around a third of the candidates. Investigations 2A and 2B were each selected by just over 10% of the candidates, with all the Investigation titles proving accessible to the full range of candidates.

The candidates used their knowledge and skills to respond to the Investigation titles and the submitted marks once again spanned the full mark range. Candidates have again visited a wide range of interesting fieldwork locations – both urban and rural - and deployed some appropriate and very effective fieldwork skills. In the best work seen it is very satisfying to report that candidates clearly displayed and communicated their in-depth place knowledge of the locations being studied. It was also very pleasing to once again see many Centres contextualising the published titles so that the tasks became more relevant to the candidates' own experiences, although it is vital that candidates do clearly address the Investigation title without straying into unrelated discussion. To avoid this, an increasing number of candidates used the Investigation title as a heading at the beginning of their work, formulated two or three enquiry questions or hypotheses based upon the Investigation focus and then returned to the title when drawing their conclusions. This once again helped candidates maintain a clear and consistent focus on the aims of their chosen Investigations so ensuring that the data collected was entirely relevant to, and consistent with the Investigation title. In the best work seen candidates clearly understood the rationale and purpose of their fieldwork activities, and were able to use their data in a discerning and effective manner.

Most candidates were able to demonstrate the need to establish an effective and logical sequence of enquiry, as identified in the specification. In the best work seen this was obvious from the outset, and the work maintained a rigour and clear sense of purpose with the issue under investigation being firmly rooted in geography. A few candidates unnecessarily included preparatory research notes with their submitted work. Please advise future candidates to only submit work for moderation that is directly relevant to the Investigation brief.

Many more candidates used methodology tables, which helped them better understand and focus on the reasons that lie behind their data collection. Candidates who used the table to clearly explain how each data set would contribute to their Investigation as a whole tended to produce work more deserving of the higher mark ranges. Such tables give candidates the opportunity to clearly consider, and then identify the techniques to be used, and also enabled many to justify, and reflect on the relative merits of the field techniques chosen. This then proved helpful when writing their evaluations, as they had clear evidence from which to draw when suggesting possible improvements to their work.

As would be expected, a wide variety of presentation and analytical techniques were seen by the moderating team. It was good to see that some candidates carried out pilot questionnaires in order to inform their final choice of questions. To solidly justify marks at Level 3 in AO3, candidates should be reminded of the need to try and demonstrate independence and initiative both in the choice, and their use of analytical techniques. Many candidates did achieve this through the careful selection of, at times, quite complex techniques such as overlays, located and proportional symbols, radar diagrams and statistical tests. One Centre encouraged the inclusion of an 'Independent Initiative' section to encourage Level 3 marks. This proved particularly successful as it alerted candidates of this requirement in both their planning and

writing up; the candidates were able to display their own unique focus so offering them additional challenge. In contrast, Investigations that were overly prescriptive and formulaic often led candidates to offer little originality in their work. These proved to be very repetitive to read and did not always give candidates sufficient opportunity to express themselves, so suppressing the marks that they could ultimately be awarded.

The use of photographs was again a positive feature of much of the work seen, with most candidates adding detailed and thoughtful analytical annotations. In the best work seen candidates carefully selected the images that they used, so ensuring that they each were included with a particular purpose in mind. This again helps candidates to provide evidence of their independence and initiative, affording them opportunities to offer a very personal perspective on their Investigation. Interviews were used to good effect, particularly those related to ethical consumerism, and in the best work seen candidates exploited a sound research base upon which to base their concluding remarks.

Written analysis once again proved most effective when it was included with the data presentation technique chosen. It proved more challenging for many candidates if they left their written analysis to the end. It would be helpful to remind candidates of the value in analysing each chart or graph as they appear in their work; this has the added benefit of ensuring that all data is analysed sufficiently and also helps candidates draw together some general conclusions. One area that was also challenging for a significant number of candidates was in their ability to present a cohesive summary of their findings. While it may be related to the points made in the paragraph above, it is also perhaps seen as relatively unimportant by a small minority of the candidates themselves. The specification highlights the need for candidates to offer 'substantiated conclusions that address the key questions'. The ability to critically reflect upon the whole process of their Investigation – from planning, through to data collection and analysis and value of findings - is not only essential if candidates are to justify marks at Level 3, but also if they are to successfully develop their ability to act and think like geographers . A number of evaluations tended to focus too much on failures by other group members when collecting data rather than analysing shortcomings and suggesting improvements in the methodology employed.

Administratively there were few problems and the best-fit mark scheme was used effectively. Most completed the URS668 Unit Recording Grid appropriately, although the simple provision of a mark in each section is not of great assistance to the moderating team. It is helpful to have the statements on the grid highlighted or ticked to help the moderator understand the thinking that lay behind the final mark submitted.

In conclusion, the moderating team once again report that they have seen some very high quality geography from the candidates. With the continuing support and expertise of their teachers, candidates are clearly engaging in some appealing, relevant and very worthwhile geographical enquiries.

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