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Moderators' report

GEOGRAPHY

H481

For first teaching in 2016

H481/04/05 Summer 2023 series

Version 1

Contents

Introduction

Our moderators' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

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General overview

As in 2019 and 2022, the majority of candidates chose to investigate aspects of the specification related to Changing Spaces: Making Places. Reports on coastal processes, landforms and management continue to make a significant contribution, while reports on glaciation, carbon and water cycles make minor contributions to the total cohort.

In 2022 there was a noticeable increase in investigations of the local environment, presumably because of the difficulties in arranging residential fieldwork. In 2023, the number of investigations that were based on residential fieldwork increased considerably. Residential fieldwork has many advantages: an opportunity to experience awe and wonder; visit new places that may contrast geographically with the home region; experience team work; and learn new fieldwork and data presentation techniques, often taught by specialists. Residential fieldwork is not for everyone, and it can be expensive, but it is an option which offers several positive gains for some or all of the four days of fieldwork. However, when used for developing and/or completing the NEA, the benefits of residential fieldwork have to be balanced against a number of disadvantages. Some of these issues are evident in reports seen in 2023:

The candidates are not familiar with the location so have to develop their research framework very quickly. Sometimes obvious opportunities for primary research or literature research seem to be missed.

It is clearly very difficult for some candidates to come up with individual titles or individual research questions. So, titles, sub-questions and hypotheses become variations on the same theme often located in the same place. This is a particular issue when the places used for data collection are small, such as Swanage, Keswick and Southwold, as candidates inevitably create research aims that are similar to those of their peers about the same place. This may not break the regulations for independent research, but it goes against the spirit of independent research which is successfully championed in many other centres.

The amount of time for data collection is often very limited and sometimes it is very obvious that too little relevant data is collected. Candidates do not have the opportunity to go back and collect more data at a later date.

Candidates apparently learn a lot of new data collection and data presentation methods on these visits. It seems that many candidates then take a scatter gun approach to Sections 2 and 3, including a wide variety of methods, some of which are not appropriate or valid in the context of their own investigation.

These issues matter. In the less successful scenarios, it becomes difficult to apply the upper level of some aspects of the marking criteria to reports that have been written in these circumstances. For example, points 1 and 2 can impact the marking and moderation of sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The moderator accepts that reports that have similar titles and aims are written independently but, it can be difficult to find evidence of 'valid and individual literature research' (Section 1, Level 3) or 'effective use of appropriate knowledge, theory and geographical concepts' (Section 4, Level 4) if all of the candidates are using the same literature sources. Similarly, it can be difficult to find 'clear evidence of personalised methodologies' (Section 2, Level 3) when all of the candidates have used the same methods or 'appropriate and selective presentation' (Section 3, Level 3) when candidates are using new and unfamiliar methods of data presentation. In some cases, these issues lead to moderators disagreeing with marks given by centres for these sections of the marking criteria.

By contrast, the very important elements of 'individual' or 'personalised' research were clear in those many centres who continued to encourage candidates to undertake independent research in a wide variety of locations in close proximity to the centre.

Candidates who did well generally:	Candidates who did less well generally:
• provided very clear aims in the introduction and investigated at a small geographical scale • selected a valid sampling framework that was clearly justified • chose appropriate methods to represent their data, including representations of spatial data or other more sophisticated techniques • used a range of quantitative and qualitative methods to effectively analyse their data and linked back to wider theory • drew sensible, evidenced conclusions and demonstrated that they understood wider geographical theory • referenced literature sources throughout the report.	• had unclear aims and/or tried to achieve too much or focused on too large a geographical area • named a sampling strategy but did not provide any detail or justification • used only simple methods of data presentation • described maps and graphs without using any quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis • repeated key findings in the conclusion but links to wider geographical theory were absent • referenced literature sources in the introduction only.

Administration

As in 2022, the majority of centres administered the NEA well, with all of the essential paperwork completed correctly: the moderator team thank teachers for their careful administration. Administrative errors do create a lot of extra work, so please carefully check the following before submitting marks in 2024:

- additions of marks on the marking sheets and transcriptions of marks to Interchange. Additions are checked by moderators, and the discovery of a clerical error delays the moderation process
- candidate and centre numbers. Please make sure that the correct candidate and centre numbers are recorded on each NEA, proposal form and mark recording sheet
- 'Candidate Record Form and Centre Declaration' sheet GCW179. This form <u>is</u> required and it must be signed by each candidate and teacher and submitted with the sample
- the Proposal Forms:
  - these forms must also be submitted with the sample
  - there is space for teachers to add amendments before approval, and this space should be used, especially in the case where candidates may have too large an area to consider in their investigation, or, as was often seen, a lot of key questions and hypotheses and aims. It is always surprising to find that many forms do not contain any teacher comments
  - a consistent level of commentary should be applied to all proposal forms in the sample.

It is essential that each report is secure: the use of a hole punch and treasury tag is the most effective and simplest method. Loose pages must <u>not</u> be submitted.

The process of moderation is assisted by effective use of the mark recording sheets by the original assessor. Many centres do a brilliant job of annotating these sheets, but, when comments are brief or absent, the process of moderation is much more difficult.

Comments on the mark recording sheets should:

- relate directly to specific qualitative phrases used in the marking criteria. For example, in Section 1, a plan can be 'partial or incomplete' (Level 1), 'mostly clear' (Level 2) or 'clear' and 'well focused' (Level 3)

- make direct reference to places in the candidates' reports where evidence of work meeting the standard of the criteria can be found. For example, in Section 4, you might refer to 'Mann Whitney' being used 'proficiently' on 'page 14'.

In order to provide sufficient and effective annotation please:

- encourage all candidates to paginate their reports. Please refer to specific pages in the candidates' reports where evidence of achievement at certain levels can be seen
- provide concise qualitative statements on pages 2-7 of the Mark Recording Sheet that relate to the bullet points in the marking criteria. Do not leave these pages blank
- where possible, provide a very brief indication on the candidates' reports to show where significant achievements have been made. If used (and these are very helpful) these comments must be summative. Never use formative comments on a candidate's NEA.

When writing comments on the mark recording sheets do <u>not</u>:

- comment on aspects of a candidate's report that are not described in the marking criteria. For example, there is no need to comment on risk assessment
- assign comments to an incorrect section. For example, the effective use of a statistical test or annotated image should be given under the criteria for Section 4, not Section 3
- provide contradictory evidence. For example, when marking Section 1, if phrases in Level 2 have been highlighted and nothing in Level 3, then it is contradictory to give a mark in Level 3.

Interpretation of the marking criteria

When two or more people mark work within the centre it is **essential** to carry out effective internal moderation. The first step is to undergo a process of standardisation **before** marking begins – so that all those involved in marking apply the marking criteria to the same standard.

Where internal moderation has taken place, it would be greatly appreciated if clear evidence of this was provided; for example, notes made by different teachers when marking, and any changes made during moderation. Please be careful when carrying out internal moderation and make it clear which comments and marks the moderator is supposed to refer to. It would be helpful, in all instances where marks are changed at internal moderation, that there is justification of the reason why.

Detailed instructions for the internal moderation of the sample were given in the 2022 Principal Moderator's Report. Please read these instructions carefully.

For many centres marking was closely in-line with the published marking criteria and accurate – at least within the correct level – across all six sections. However, a significant number of centres applied the marking criteria inaccurately, perhaps rather more so than in 2022. Where marking was inaccurate, generous application of the marking criteria was more common than severe application of the marking criteria.

Generous application of the marking criteria was seen on occasion within all six sections of the report. Generous marking seems to occur when markers neglect the qualitative elements of the level statement. For example, in Section 2, markers might give a mark in Level 3 with a comment such as 'sampling described'. Sampling, in fact, should be described in Level 2 and Level 3. The difference is that, in Level 2, sampling is described and is 'mostly appropriate but with limited justification' whereas at Level 3 sampling is described with evidence that it is 'appropriate, coherent and justified'.

The part of the marking criteria that seems to be most misunderstood is Section 4. This section contains five bullets, each described with various qualitative statements across four levels:

1. is about the use of relevant techniques of analysis. These techniques may be quantitative or qualitative – further details of these techniques follow in the next two bullets
2. describes the use of quantitative techniques of analysis. These might include measures of central tendency and range, statistical tests (such as Spearman's Rank, Mann Whitney or Chi Squared) or other appropriate techniques such as the use of Zingg analysis or Nearest Neighbour Analysis
3. describes the use of qualitative techniques of analysis. These might include the drawing of annotated sketch maps or diagrams, the annotation of images or the coding of text or images. Note that annotation is very different from labelling. Annotation involves identifying key evidence in an image and making inferences
4. is about linking the evidence back to the research aims
5. is about the use of wider geographical understanding (including that gleaned from literature research) to demonstrate understanding of the evidence – perhaps relating it to key concepts, wider geographical processes, theories or models.

As most reports contain a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data one might reasonably expect to see <u>both</u> quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques used. However, the use of <u>both</u> quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques is not a requirement, so bullets 2 and 3 begin with 'When appropriate to the topic …'. This means that the moderator expects to be able to apply bullet 1 and either bullet 2 or bullet 3 when moderating the work, and, in some cases, bullets 1, 2 and 3 can all be used. However, in reality, many reports are completely devoid of any analytical techniques at all. In these reports, which are surprisingly common across the national cohort, graphs and maps are followed by text which describes the evidence and which occasionally offers some tentative explanations – although these explanations are seldom linked to geographical theories or literature that has been quoted earlier in the report. So, it is difficult to give a mark that moves beyond Level 1 or a low Level 2. In some cases, these reports have been given Level 4 marks, therefore, centres will experience a change to the marks.

Generous marking of Section 4 also occurs when insufficient attention is paid to the qualitative statements within the levels. For example, imagine a situation where the candidate has attempted to use Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient to test the statistical probability of correlation between two variables. However, the candidate has not stated a null hypothesis (or even explained why a correlation might be expected); has only six pairs of data (rather than the required minimum of ten pairs); and has not commented on the significance of the result. Despite this, the marker has given Section 4 a mark in Level 4. A mark in Level 2 would be more appropriate as the qualitative statements relating to the use of statistical techniques are:

Level 1: absent or irrelevant

Level 2: used but with limited success

Level 3: used with some accuracy

Level 4: used accurately and proficiently.

Commentary on the individual sections of the report

Planning purpose and introduction

The number of reports that focused on a 'geographical' issue that is not directly related to the specification rose slightly in 2023. A small number of reports, across several centres, focused on river water quality – perhaps because of news reports about sewage discharge into rivers. In several cases, the aim of these investigations was on sewage pollution – a topic that is not mentioned in the content of the specification. Centres are reminded of the requirement that reports are linked explicitly and precisely to content within the specification – another reason why the submission of the Proposal Form alongside the sample of reports is required.

Assessment for learning

In future years, the area for teacher comments on the proposal from should be used to help guide candidates to consider fewer research questions, more achievable aims and a smaller geographical scale of study.

A successful planning purpose and introduction to the report is, in many ways, key to a good project. The most effective written reports contain each of the following elements:

- have manageable aims that are clear
- are linked precisely to a geographical idea or issue that is defined in the specification
- contains a justification (of the choice of research and/or choice of location)
- is very clearly geo-located to the study of a place at a small scale
- demonstrates understanding of individual literature research in a concise report.

Successful candidates:

- briefly, but effectively justify their research. This is usually achieved when candidates justify their individual research questions and their decision making regarding the selection of location of their research
- use two or three well selected maps, at appropriate scales, to provide a geographical context for their research. The best of these show sample locations and are annotated to justify their selection. Maps are ineffective if they:
    - are at a small scale
    - have no north arrow or scale line
    - are not referenced in the text.

Overmarking of Section 1 sometimes occurs because the research aims are too broad and, therefore, unclear. Overmarking also occurs because one or more of the following elements is limited or absent, for example, where:

- the literature research is limited to one or two sources which are not understood, not valid or the same sources as those used by other candidates in the centre (so there is no evidence of individual literature research)
- the literature has been described as a stand-alone exercise – with no explicit link to the research
- the justification for both the choice of research and location are completely absent.

As mentioned in the introduction, the majority of candidates investigate aspects of the specification related to Changing Spaces: Making Places. A significant number of candidates continue to create aims that appear to be unachievable or which fail to focus on a place at a suitable scale. For example:

- 'To what extent has the regeneration of Liverpool One been successful?' Without baseline data it is difficult to see how this research question can be answered.
- 'Place Identity in Brixton'. This aim is vague and the scale of study too broad.

If a candidate is considering the impact of a change, then they would need to consider how they would measure this impact, including looking at the timescale, which is a temporal one. In addition, if a candidate considers the extent of a variable in their title, they would need to address how they would measure the extent. If it is success, then what is the success criteria?

Misconception

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It is not necessary to develop a space/place title around the comparison of two places. Indeed, in doing so, the candidate is doubling the workload. It is better to focus on patterns, perceptions or place identity in **one**, well defined location.

There is an expectation that candidates use geographical literature to support understanding of theory, concepts or processes that are relevant to their investigation. The use of geographical literature is different across the national cohort. It is used extremely well by some candidates, and it is always pleasing to see candidates referring to relevant literature by Doreen Massey, Tim Cresswell or Yi-Fu Tian (the language used by each of these authors is relatively accessible). For other candidates the use of literature is problematic. There seems to be confusion in the minds of some candidates about its purpose. The following uses of geographical literature are all misconceptions when candidates:

- quote phrases directly from a source without explaining meaning or discuss how they are relevant to the investigation – the equivalent of using a geographical term in an essay without demonstrating that its meaning is understood,
- use literature to provide one academic view before stating that they aim to prove that this view is wrong,
- provide a review of a piece of literature – literally giving it a score out of 10.

These misconceptions are relatively rare. What is more common is for candidates to select literature that is not particularly relevant to their enquiry. For example, one might expect that a candidate who is investigating how places are perceived differently depending on age, gender or ethnicity might select some literature about perception of place (perhaps referencing work by Yi-Fu Tian) but they are more likely to reference something (such as Wikipedia) that provides historical or geographical context to the place that is being studied.

It is worth remembering that an understanding of relevant geographical literature helps candidates in Sections 1, 4 and 5 of the report. Furthermore, in Section 6, there is an expectation that high achieving candidates reference the use of literature (and secondary sources) throughout the report.

Data, information collection methods and sampling framework

One area of increasing strength is the use of software to collect and geo-locate data. However, the understanding and application of appropriate sampling strategies is still vague for too many candidates.

Assessment for learning

Candidates need to think ahead when planning data collection. For example, they need to consider whether their data will offer opportunities for sophisticated data presentation. They also need to consider whether they will have enough appropriate data that can be statistically analysed.

Methodology tables continue to be used by many candidates and sometimes they are effective. However, they have a number of disadvantages:

- they often run over several pages, making them hard to read
- in many cases they contain a lot of general, repeated information and lack specific detail to individual methods
- they usually fail to provide sufficient detail about sampling strategies.

Continuous prose is sometimes better for this section and allows several methods to be discussed specifically in relation to an individual hypothesis and any associated geographical theory.

Most candidates select an appropriate range of data collection strategies. However, where work has been conducted at a residential centre, evidence of personalised methodologies is often hard to spot. In too many cases, candidates take a scattergun approach to data collection: collecting tiny amounts of data from too few sites but using numerous different techniques. Sometimes it is difficult to understand how the selected data collection method will help answer the research question: footfall, traffic count, shopping basket surveys, and clone town surveys are frequently used even though the link to the impacts of gentrification or sense of place are loose or absent. This mismatch (alongside the lack of evidence of personalised methodologies) is sometimes a cause of overly generous marking.

It is rare to see more sophisticated forms of data collection. In-depth interviews are used only occasionally. Annotated field sketches are rarely seen. Image elicitation is rarely seen in data collection methods.

Assessment for learning

If a questionnaire is used, a copy should be included. Annotations should be used to clarify and justify individual questions. This provides evidence of a personalised approach.

The number of candidates who understand, use and justify their sampling strategies is steadily increasing. For example, the number of candidates who position a notional grid over their sample area and use a random number table to select sample sites that are distributed at random across the area has increased. The justification for this strategy is simply that random sampling is least likely to be biased so creates a representative sample from a smaller data set than, for example, systematic sampling. In 2022 the Principal Moderator's report encouraged the greater use of aerial forms of sampling so that spatial patterns in the data could be represented – so it is encouraging to see that this advice has been used.

A significant number of candidates are also using systematic sampling along a line or transect. This strategy should be used when investigating environmental gradients – although few candidates seem to understand this concept and use it successfully to justify the strategy. Only a minority of candidates provide sufficient detail about the decisions taken to choose locations (for example the beginning and end of the transect), frequency (why samples were a certain distance apart) or timing.

A significant number of candidates state that they have used stratified sampling when the description seems to indicate systematic sampling. A number of candidates state that they have used stratified sampling when the description seems to indicate that they have actually made pragmatic decisions about where to locate their sample. Stratified means identifying strata and then calculating population within each strata. Stratified sampling then requires either random or systematic sampling of the correct proportion of the population within each strata. For example, in stratified sampling of infiltration rates on a slope that is made of three rock types (in a ratio of 25/25/50) sites should be selected (using random or systematic methods) in a ratio. What most candidates mean by stratified is actually pragmatic – they select one site within each strata.

Misconception

The most common misconception is that 'random' people can be selected for a questionnaire without the use of random numbers. In reality, the candidate is using convenience sampling – selecting people who are willing to be interviewed.

Data presentation techniques

As in 2022, candidates produced a wide range of data presentation techniques. Many are well selected (they are an appropriate way of representing the data), accurate, and complete. A larger number of candidates seemed to represent spatial patterns using maps than in 2022; the most frequently used technique being located proportional circles created using a GIS software package.

Candidates who conduct coastal research invariably represent beach profiles using cross sectional diagrams. These are best drawn by hand using a protractor and ruler to create accurate angle measurements which have zero vertical exaggeration. Many candidates draw beach profiles using software programmes such as Excel but these graphs inevitably have a lot of vertical exaggeration.

Candidates must take greater care when finishing graphs. The number of graphs that had no title, no labels on the x-axis and/or y-axis, or labels but no units of measurement, was unusually high in 2023.

Candidates also need to give more attention to the selection of valid methods of data presentation. For example:

- discrete data (such as EQI or footfall at five different locations in a city) should never be represented on a line graph
- footfall at different locations is best represented as either proportional arrows located on a map (as they indicate the volume and direction of movement) or isoline maps (to indicate the density of footfall). The selection of located proportional circles for this data indicates lack of understanding of data and its presentation.

Assessment for learning

Located proportional circles are an example of a more sophisticated method but they are sometimes poorly selected and frequently incomplete.

The use of located proportional circles was common in 2023. On the positive side, this is a more sophisticated technique as it allows the representation of spatial distributions. However, there are a number of limitations to this technique and candidates should be encouraged to think carefully before using it as the inappropriate selection of data presentation techniques could prevent access to higher levels of the marking criteria. The commonest limitations seen with proportional circles are:

- proportional circles should only be chosen when the range of data values is very large. When the range is small, the circles all appear to be a similar size. This is commonly seen and indicates that a different technique (such a located proportional bar) would have been more appropriate
- located proportional circles are good at showing spatial patterns. They are much less useful at showing small variations along an environmental gradient. For example, an appropriate way to show variation in the proportion of gravel on a beach would be to draw pie charts located above a beach profile. This would be much more appropriate than three circles on a map or satellite image of a beach
- proportional circles need a scale so that their size can be interpreted. This important detail is often absent.

The other GIS generated map that is more commonly seen is the heat map. This technique places a circle of different shades of red or blue on a map. It is only appropriate where data has been collected from multiple points across a relatively small-scale area. In this case, the map will look something like the heat maps used by Zoopla to show variations in house prices. It is not appropriate to use this method for a small number of sample sites – as two or three discrete blobs of colour on a map will fail to show any pattern at all.

Misconception

Word clouds are not necessarily sophisticated, unless they are coded (using different colours for positive and negative words, for example) and located on a base map to give a spatial dimension.

Data analysis and explanation

Data analysis continues to be the section of the report that differentiates by centre as well as by candidate. This section relies on the use of methods of analysis: quantitative methods of data analysis (such as measures of central tendency, measures of dispersal, or statistical tests) and/or appropriate methods to analyse qualitative data (such as simple text analysis, coding or effective annotation of images). However, it is still common to find that all of the reports submitted by a centre have no methods of analysis at all.

Assessment for learning

Candidates should have opportunities to experience qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis throughout the course and particularly during the four days of fieldwork.

In the best reports, analysis

- effectively uses a range of appropriate quantitative and qualitative methods that are used with understanding of the technique
- focuses on answering the research questions – rather than describing individual graphs
- uses relevant theory from the individual literature research to interpret the findings. This literature is referenced correctly
- is concise.

In 2023 there were still relatively few candidates who used annotation effectively. Some candidates add simple labels to their photographs but these are invariably short and descriptive. For annotation to be analytical it needs to:

- identify key elements of the image
- use inference* to explain the possible significance of these images – linking the specific evidence seen in the image to wider geographical understanding
- link to literature research identified in the project's introduction.

(* Inference with an annotation can be achieved by the use of connectives such as 'so', 'therefore' or 'this means that')

Misconception

The addition of a few simple labels to an image is not the same as annotation and should not be given as such.

It would be nice to see a bigger range of methods of analysis being used: for example, Nearest Neighbour Analysis or Zingg Analysis are useful and effective methods that are very seldom seen during moderation. Coding of text is still rarely seen. However, some candidates in 2023 colour coded word clouds – which added a layer of sophistication to this otherwise simple method.

Where a statistical test is used, a high level response will:

- select a test that is appropriate to the data that is being analysed
- concisely explain why the test is being used
- clearly state the null hypothesis
- show the workings
- consider the statistical significance of the result
- use wider geographical theory (and possibly literature) to consider the meaning of the result.

Misconception

? Spearman's Rank (and Pearsons Product Moment Coefficient) can only be used when there are ten or more pairs of data. It cannot be used to look for correlations between six pairs of data.

Conclusions and investigation evaluation

As in 2022, the conclusions and evaluation are quite widely differentiated by outcome. This section is worth 12 marks (almost twice as many as the methods section – which is often very long) but some candidates do not seem to spend much time on this section and write very little, while other candidates write several thousand words. Candidates should be challenged to write between 800 and 1500 words for this section as that might cut out the very short and very long responses.

A good conclusion:

- is concise
- is substantiated with carefully selected primary and secondary evidence
- provides a considered **overall** conclusion
- refers to wider geographical theory and literature
- demonstrates how research of the specific (the actual place studied) compares to the generic (the expected outcome as predicted by theory).

Conclusions were generally completed reasonably well but often relied on repeating the findings made from analysis of primary data without relating their findings to wider theories or generalisations. In future submissions candidates should spend a bit more time thinking about the wider geography that underpins their investigation and they should be encouraged to apply their understanding of the literature review to contextualise their own findings.

Most candidates present an adequate conclusion to each sub-question of their project and many substantiate this with well selected primary or secondary evidence. However, as in 2022, many candidates fail to reach a final overall conclusion.

As noted in 2022, the majority of candidates seem to reach very firm conclusions. If the accuracy and validity of the data is considered properly one might expect to see more tentative conclusions. Candidates should avoid sweeping statements. Candidates should also avoid making strong links between cause and effect as the evidence they are using is partial. For example, it is difficult to see how the result of a footfall survey in one location in one place can prove the success of a regeneration project.

The majority of candidates still use a table within Section 2 to describe data collection methods, even though these tables frequently limit the candidates' ability to fully detail and justify their methods. Most candidates go on to repeat the limitations and strengths of their methodology in the evaluation which seems unnecessary and also suggests that the report cannot be considered to be concise. It might be more sensible to focus on a justification of the methods and sampling procedure in Section 2 and reserve the evaluation of the methods for Section 5. An effective evaluation will, of course, go beyond an evaluation of methods to consider elements such as:

- the scope and scale of the research framework
- the reliability of sources of data
- the accuracy of the data
- whether the sample was representative
- the validity of the analysis and conclusions
- the ethical and socio-political dimension of the research.

Misconception

It is a misconception that ethical and socio-political dimensions are applicable only to human geography research. This is a misconception held by a small number of candidates and teachers.

Overall quality and communication of written work.

The comments in the 2022 Principal Moderator's report are still relevant. The headlines were:

- most candidates produce well-structured and beautifully presented reports
- most reports are paginated. Please make sure all reports are paginated in future submissions as this greatly assists the teacher annotation of the marking sheets
- most candidates use a recognised method for referencing their literature sources
- the majority (but not all) reports are over word length.

Please encourage candidates to use formats that make the marking and moderation processes as smooth as possible. In particular, please ask candidates to use:

- A4 portrait pages. Larger pages or A4 landscape pages should only be used occasionally and for good reason, for example, to include a map
- Text must be legible. Font size 11 would be helpful.

In addition, please make sure that candidates present their maps, graphs and other images in a format that is legible. A significant number of reports in 2022 and 2023 included pages where an image, such as an Excel graph, had been screen shot and incorporated into the text at a size that made it impossible to read the graph or the labels on the axes.

Section 6 is sometimes overmarked by teachers quite significantly. Most reports have a high level of communication (the first bullet point in the marking criteria) and use sub-headings to create a logical structure (the third bullet point in the marking criteria). Some teachers seem to overlook other criteria that should be taken into consideration. When marking Section 6 please consider whether:

- arguments are strong and clearly individual (bullet 2)
- sources and literature references are clearly stated throughout the report – not just in the introduction (bullet 4)
- geographical terminology is technical and used appropriately (bullet 5).

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