# Geography Subject Assessment Advice

## Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the previous year’s assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

# School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Fieldwork

The Fieldwork assessment component requires students to independently plan, organise, and carry out fieldwork and complete a report. The majority of students are applying a range of fieldwork techniques to generate primary data and subsequently analysing and evaluating this data as the basis of their report. Students are assessed on the following assessment design criteria: Knowledge and Understanding, Application, and Analysis.

The more successful responses commonly:

* utilised a wide range of relevant fieldwork techniques (Application Ap1) and effectively organised and integrated their fieldwork data (Application Ap2)
* had depth in their analysis of fieldwork data and explanation of results (Analysis An1 and Analysis An2)
* included strong geographical knowledge and understanding relevant to the topic (Knowledge and Understanding KU1)
* had a clear spatial focus, in particular local studies of small areas in detail
* included a comparative approach for example, comparing two or more sites through a set of fieldwork techniques
* integrated a strong temporal component investigating change over time
* illustrated spatial components of the fieldwork through maps and transects
* applied spatial technology to manipulate data
* analysis of fieldwork data included recommendations or predictions
* included hand drawn sketches and utilised annotations to highlight key features of the fieldwork
* effectively used the structure from the subject outline including headings and subheadings
* included evaluation of the fieldwork techniques used
* utilised a wide range of images, maps, and diagrams to illustrate their findings.

The less successful responses commonly:

* utilised a small number of fieldwork techniques and relied heavily on survey results, photographs and/or observations
* lacked analysis of fieldwork data
* did not have a clear purpose or focused hypothesis or question
* demonstrated limited relevant geographical knowledge and understanding related to the topic
* limited emphasis on the spatial nature of the issue with simplistic use of ‘Google’ maps
* organised results by fieldwork type and thus limited the integration of data
* over-emphasis on ‘historical context’ resulting in superficial analysis of results and few recommendations suggested
* did not appropriately acknowledge sources of information.

Assessment Type 2: Inquiry

Students carry out an inquiry into a geographical issue examining the causes, its spatial extent, and evaluating responses to the issue. The issue selected for the Inquiry should be drawn from a different option topic to that used for the fieldwork report. The assessment design criteria for the Inquiry are Application, Analysis, and Evaluation and Reflection.

The more successful responses commonly:

* had a clear and concise inquiry topic or question
* demonstrated highly effective spatial representation and communication of the local, national, and global nature of the issue
* integrated visual data and referred to it in the text and/or used annotations to highlight key features
* clearly articulated differing opinions on the issue from a range of stakeholders
* utilised a range of maps
* followed the suggested headings in the subject outline
* clearly established the issue, causes, local, national and global nature of the issue, viewpoints and evaluated consequences of responses to the issue
* analysed the researched information and personalised their response.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were on topics that were very general in nature
* had limited spatial representation of the issue
* did not follow the suggested structure and as a result did not include all the required aspects of the report
* included sweeping generalisations about the issue
* had limited analysis of viewpoints on the issue or viewpoints were misinterpreted or ignored
* contained unorganised visuals (graphs, flow charts etc.) with little or no connection to each other or to the text
* were mostly descriptive and lacked analysis, particularly of the local, national, and global nature of the issue
* lacked a geographical or spatial focus e.g. globalisation.

Assessment Type 3: Folio

Students complete four to six assessments for the folio. The assessment design criteria for the Folio are Knowledge and Understanding, Application, Analysis, and Evaluation and Reflection. Effective task design restricted the number of specific features assessed in individual tasks but ensured full coverage across the whole folio.

The more successful responses commonly:

* utilised a variety of presentation methods
* demonstrated analysis through annotation of maps
* used a range of recent and relevant supporting sources
* effectively used a wide range of images and diagrams.

The less successful responses commonly:

* included tests that often limited students’ opportunities to meet the performance standards
* were often descriptive and had limited analysis and evaluation
* did not adequately address the spatial nature of the issue through maps
* lacked integration of images or graphs and did not make reference to or analyse the diagrams effectively thus limiting their relevance.

Assessment Type 4: Examination

Students undertake one 2-hour written examination on the core topic and demonstrate their skills in the use and interpretation of geographical data and information. There was a wide distribution in student results ranging from mid to high 30s to more than 50 out of the available 60 marks.

Question 1: Majority of responses correctly identified Trafalgar.

Question 2: A number of responses did not identify Yallourn or provided an incorrect justification related to hills rather than the settlement.

Question 3: A significant number of responses did not demonstrate correct calculation of area from the map scale.

Question 4: Most responses correctly identified a very gentle concave slope.

Question 5: Most responses correctly identified 38 degrees and 10 minutes south, demonstrating an improved understanding of latitude compared to previous years.

Question 6:

Almost all responses correctly identified the satellite image in question (a). Question (b) was also correctly identified as a Speedway by most students. In question (c) site R was identified by most students, with many stating the darker colour of crops, agricultural land use or its close proximity to the river as valid justifications.

Question 7:

1. Most students correctly drew the direction of river flow from left to right.
2. Most responses identified either greater density of settlement in area A or the linear pattern compared to dispersed in box B but relatively few identified both of these components.

Question 8: Many responses correctly identified hill shading or spot heights as methods of representing relief.

Question 9: Most responses correctly identified the coal mine as the reason for the road being re-routed.

Question 10: A majority of responses identified the bottom-left hand corner graph as the likely temperature. Many students demonstrated an excellent understanding of the pathways of water in question (b) particularly in relation to evapotranspiration. The most successful responses directly linked the high rainfall and low evapotranspiration to high levels of surface run-off. The explanation of the term ‘water table’ in Part (c) proved to be more challenging.

Question 11: Many students misinterpreted this question and discussed emissions or coal as a non-renewable resource. The best responses discussed the cost or energy required in extraction or the availability of more efficient alternatives.

Question 12: Parts (a) and (b) were answered very well by most students. The most successful responses demonstrated explicit links between water management and chosen map layers.

Question 13: This was well answered with the best responses utilising all available sources and demonstrating understanding of the relative merits of both energy sources and also why a mix of energy sources is often preferable. Weaker responses simply listed facts from the sources.

Question 14: Many responses correctly identified Stage 3 in part (a) although a significant number selected Stage 2. Correct responses provided appropriate justifications. Part (b) was answered correctly by a majority of students, with a wide range of limitations identified.

Question 15: Parts (a) and part (b) were answered correctly by a majority of students, showing a good understanding of varying causes of deforestation.

Question 16: Many students correctly answered all parts of this question, although some found it difficult to provide an impact of tree cover related to fauna.

Question 17: Most responses demonstrated an excellent understanding of factors influencing ecological footprints.

Question 18: The most successful responses demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of “global trends”, referring to drops in fertility and increases in life expectancy. This was often illustrated with detailed case studies. Less successful responses did not refer to specific case study examples, or failed to identify global trends. In some instances responses reflected an outdated understanding of population trends.

Question 19: Most responses correctly identified climatic factors as an appropriate reason but relatively few identified a second factor such as large amounts of land or historic centres of civilization.

Question 20: Almost all responses successfully identified appropriate push factors from a migration movement.

Question 21: Few responses explicitly explained how either seasonal variations in rainfall or rivers that are highly regulated may experience large variations in flow.

Question 22 (a) Many responses successfully explained the differences between physical and economic water scarcity. Many responses demonstrated links between agricultural production, health, or industry and fresh water, although answers were not always fully developed in part (b). In part (c) many students had a good understanding of alternative sources of fresh water but incorrect responses often mentioned conventional sources outlined in the instructions.