GEOGRAPHY

| Paper 0460/01 |
| Paper 1 (Core) |

General comments

The structure of all the questions followed the format, which has now been established, to provide a common approach for candidates whatever the topic being tested. The main characteristics of the structure of each question were:

(a)   Questions had an incline of difficulty, starting with relatively straightforward, resource-based tasks requiring brief responses, progressing to tasks requiring extended writing and the demonstration of detailed knowledge and understanding.

(b)   Two different resources were used within each question, one within **Section (a)** and the other within **Section (b)**. Some tasks involved the direct use and interpretation of the resource whilst others used it to act as a stimulus to responses, however marks were not awarded for the direct copying of sections of the resource.

(c)   The final task involved extended writing and either required or invited candidates to demonstrate case study knowledge.

It was felt that this consistent style aided candidates and as this structure will continue to be used it is worth familiarising candidates with it.

Overall, the paper produced widespread differentiation therefore and when considering the full cohort of candidates, almost the entire mark range was achieved. There were relatively few very weak candidates, however some were unable to cope with all but the most basic tasks. Most candidates did however cope well with the demands of the questions and exhibited the ability to analyse and use the resources on offer to build a sound answer. It was particularly pleasing to note the improvement in the use of the photographs where interpretation was required rather than straightforward description.

There are still many good candidates who lack the confidence to discipline themselves to concentrate on the question set. Many recognise key ideas and then write all they know about the topic without being selective and confining themselves to the main thrust of the question. Whilst some score well, they waste valuable planning and thinking time.

Whilst clearly there was immense variation in quality both between and within Centres, excellent responses were seen to all parts of all questions, including the final part of questions which required extended writing, and several Examiners commented on the improved use of case study materials this year, adding a measure of reality to the answers.

It is expected that candidates should, wherever possible, have knowledge of appropriate case studies to back up their generic knowledge and understanding. The syllabus is constructed in such a way that, wherever a Centre is located, there are likely to be opportunities to make use of local case study materials in many parts of the course and Centres are encouraged to make use of such case studies in conjunction with appropriate textbook examples, in order to provide a sound spatial balance for candidates during their course. A blend of small-scale, regional and national examples, within the context of the local area and from other countries at different levels of economic development is ideal. Candidates should be encouraged, wherever possible, to refer to real examples and include place-specific details in their answers. Where candidates develop their ideas they are likely to achieve a higher level of performance than listing simple points.

There were few rubric offences, although a number of candidates, almost exclusively weaker candidates, answered all six questions very superficially rather than selecting three. Clearly this is to their disadvantage. Time management was good for the majority of candidates, though a significant minority of candidates spent too much time on one or both of their first two questions at the expense of the third question.

Questions 1, **4**, and **5** were the most popular choices.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a)(i) A straightforward question for most candidates, however a common error was to answer "young dependents" rather than identify an actual age group as required.

(ii) There were many sound references to the wider or taller apex in the Netherlands [A] and the wider base or larger number of young dependents in Ethiopia [B], though some candidates answered in far too much detail, given the mark allocation and others ignored the population pyramid and outlined the reasons for the differences in life expectancy and birth rates.

(iii) Whilst many candidates managed to distinguish between the dependent populations of the two countries, only those who were prepared to support their answers with accurate figures (using Fig. 1) scored maximum marks. Many did attempt to use figures, however often they were grossly inaccurate.

(iv) This question differentiated well. Many candidates gave it careful thought and offered good answers for both LEDCs and MEDCs. They tended to concentrate on the support of relatives and involvement in the informal economy for the former and seemed to know a good deal about the welfare state and government support through pensions, care homes and free schooling in the latter. Weaker candidates merely commented on 'support from the economically active' or did not understand the meaning of 'support' for the dependent population and explained why the amount of dependents varied between LEDCs and MEDCs.

(b)(i) Many candidates showed a good understanding of the combined effect of low birth and death rates with sound reasoning for the longer life expectancy, whilst others just focused on birth rates. Japan was sometimes confused with China, hence there were numerous references to the One Child Policy.

(ii) There were many excellent attempts at this question with the emphasis on the economic stress imposed on the working population through increased taxation due to increased government expenditure on the elderly. Also there were some comments on the strategies that Japan will have to adopt to overcome a declining work force, eg imported labour, increased automation, raising the retirement age etc. Weaker answers included little development, just commenting on the 'need for more support for the elderly', and a few candidates wrongly interpreted the effects of an ageing population in terms of overpopulation and unemployment.

(c) The general effects of rapid population growth were well understood. More effective answers developed ideas rather than simply listing a series of effects, and illustrated them by reference to their chosen country. China was the most popular choice of example to illustrate points being made, though many wasted time by describing the One Child Policy in detail rather than concentrating on the reasons for the concern.

Question 2

(a)   All sub-sections were generally well answered with an acceptable definition **(i)** and good use of information from the table in **(ii)** and **(iii),** although weaker candidates often did little more than quote the statistics from the table in **(iii)**. Many candidates made good use of the photograph in **(iv)** to suggest problems associated with traffic congestion and overcrowding in confined streets including air and noise pollution and the implications of a lack of direct sunlight. Despite the phrase 'Using evidence from Photograph A' some candidates made reference to problems faced by the residents of New York, which were highlighted by Fig. 3 but not evident from the photograph.

(b)(i) Many candidates limited themselves to a single mark because they went no further than stating that the bikes won the challenge against potentially faster vehicles, despite the fact that a mark allocation of three should have suggested that they extend and illustrate their response by reference to information in Fig. 4.

   (ii) This was generally well answered in terms of the reasons for traffic congestion, the impacts of traffic congestion or a combination of both.

(c)   Candidates benefited from the wide choice of urban problems from which they could select and were often able to relate their choice to a local case study with good effect. Whilst some excellent responses were seen, especially in relation to solutions to traffic congestion and squatter settlements, there were also weak responses where candidates did little more than list basic ideas (eg build more roads, improve the housing, give them better water etc.). The more specific the points made the more marks candidates are likely to gain, especially if they are place specific and clearly tied in with the example quoted, rather than generic in nature. There were some unproductive answers when too much time was spent on describing the nature and impact of the problem selected rather than emphasising the solutions.

Question 3

(a)(i) There were some precise definitions of a coral reef however many were inaccurate, describing the environment rather than the coral polyps which build the reef.

            The other three subsections were usually fairly well answered with some interpretation of the map in **(ii)** and **(iii)**, although some candidates included little detail in **(iii)** other than making references to the areas between the tropics.

   (iv) Well-prepared candidates showed sound knowledge of the water conditions, which allow coral reefs to develop, however many, others made weak attempts or did not attempt the question.

(b)   The photographs were used well by many candidates to generate 3 marks in **(i)** although some restricted their answers to tourism. In **(ii)** many candidates did well not only to describe the damaging human activities but also went on to explain how these activities caused problems for the natural environment, though weaker candidates inevitably referred in vague terms to 'spoiling the natural environment' or 'causing pollution' without any form of elaboration.

(c)   This differentiated effectively, with well-prepared candidates describing the sequence of events that causes a headland to change through a cave, arch and stack into a stump. Weaker answers dealt only with the formation of headlands and bays and therefore gained only limited credit and some just named the features with attempting to explain their formation.

Question 4

(a)   Many candidates answered all three sub-sections well, with only the very weakest candidates unable to pick up most of the marks available. It was encouraging that many candidates knew how to use the hygrometer in **(iii)** and the table to determine the relative humidity, however it was evident that candidates from some Centres were unfamiliar with this.

(b)(i)   Some candidates wasted time by referring to where the rain gauge should be sited, writing little about taking the measurements as the question asked. Indeed many answers tended to be rather brief and restricted to pouring the water into a measuring cylinder. More should have been made of the regularity of the readings and the importance of reading at eye level from the bottom of the meniscus.

   (ii)   There were many detailed answers, which related the features of a Stevenson Screen to their importance in establishing an accurate reading. Some candidates also included references to why the roof of a building would not be as good a location.

   (iii)   The ideal locations for both the wind vane and the rain gauge were well understood, most candidates were able to explain why these locations permitted accurate measurements and even weaker candidates were able to make some pertinent points by using Fig. 7.

(c)   Flooding and drought were the most popular selections and candidates were able to relate their choice to a case study. There were some excellent case studies, and it is encouraging to see the use of recent newsworthy examples such as Hurricane Katrina. Fortunately, not too many wrote about the 2004 tsunami, although this was an error made by a significant minority of candidates. While many wasted time by writing at length on the causes of the hazard, the problems created for people were well understood with extended writing on each idea offered. The human impacts were often well developed, less so the economic and social impacts

Question 5

(a)   A good start for many candidates who used the table well and understood the benefits that tourism brings to a LEDC, though the brevity of answers sometimes restricted marks in *Sections (ii)* and *(iii)*. Most candidates correctly referred to the fact that the locals ended up with jobs which were lower paid than people from abroad, however many overlooked the fact that far more jobs were created for the local people. Candidates need to be aware that the use of words like 'facilities' or 'services' is insufficient alone to gain marks.

(b)(i)   Three acceptable changes were identified from the diagrams by most candidates.

   (ii)   Answers were very wide-ranging, often making effective use of Fig. 9, and included the economic concerns, social problems encountered by the local people and concerns relating to possible environmental degradation. This was a very productive sub-section for most candidates.

   (iii)   The issue of sustainability is not well known and only rarely did candidates answer this question well in relation to the measures, which would allow tourism to develop and continue with no adverse effects. Most answers concentrated on ways in which tourist areas could become "bigger and better" without any consideration for the knock-on effects, however the small number of excellent answers seen made impressive references to ecotourism, National Parks, limiting development in various ways and using local labour.

(c)   Once again there were some good choices of case studies, many of which were local to candidates who were able to give precise details of the physical and human attractions. Unfortunately some chose too large an area (eg a whole country such as France), and not all candidates focused on the physical and human attractions of their chosen area, merely repeating earlier references to the benefits of tourism to the area.

Question 6

(a)   This was a rewarding part for many well-prepared candidates, who analysed the map correctly and also had the factual information and understanding to answer sub-sections **(ii)** and **(iv)** successfully. However, for weaker candidates marks were often lost in **(iv)** when brief, vague answers were given. In **(iii)** there were some irrelevant comparisons of Japan and Australia, whilst others wasted time by giving explanations for the differences, or irrelevant praise for New Zealand and/or criticism of Japan.

(b)   Whilst some candidates were clearly not familiar with the compound line graph used in Fig. 11, many others were successful in describing the changing importance of the three types of power station, although again many included irrelevant reasoning. Some correctly used statistics in their answers, though many others had obviously misunderstood the cumulative nature of the graph.

(c)   This differentiated well, there were a number of excellent answers relating to the sighting of thermal, nuclear and hydroelectric power stations, however weaker candidates answered in vague or general terms and included little valid explanation.

(d)   Excellent responses were seen to this question for a wide variety of energy forms, with good use of examples and strong links to the natural environment in terms of the impacts of both the exploitation and the use of the energy form chosen. The best answers seen tended to be on the impacts of either nuclear power or the use of fossil fuels, the latter being an ideal opportunity to display an in depth knowledge of global issues such as acid rain and global warming, in addition to local environmental issues. Some candidates wrote at length about impacts on people rather than the natural environment, this was particularly so for many candidates who used Chernobyl as a case study of the impacts of nuclear power generation.

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| Paper 0460/02 |
| Paper 2 |

General comments

This was the first occasion that the paper was in question and answer booklet format. Candidates responded well to this. There were very few candidates who failed to attempt every part of every question and candidates generally wrote answers of appropriate length. The new format answer book seemed to work exceptionally well and, by providing the candidates with a set space to fill, it avoided the problem faced by some candidates who write too much for one question and subsequently run out of time. In particular, the weaker candidates were helped by the structure provided for their answers. Candidates found all questions on the paper to be accessible and, in general, displayed a very wide range of geographical skills. Some answers to **Question 3** were less strong, although this was often a result of misinterpreting the question rather than a weakness in photograph interpretation. **Question 6** tested judgement and decision making skills and here answers were rather variable in quality.

The paper allowed the really strong candidates to gain very high marks and the less able candidates to score reasonable totals. The mapwork question differentiated most effectively between the candidates but the question did not prove to be as difficult for the weaker candidates as in previous years. **Questions 1(b)** and **1(c)** were found to be more difficult but this was balanced by an easy section **1(a)**. **Question 3** gave the candidates most difficulty but this was balanced by the ease with which candidates successfully answered **Question 5**. Few candidates scored below 20 and there was a good spread of marks from 20 to 55.

Most Centres had prepared their candidates well for the exam and most of the candidates were able to complete the requisite number of questions in the time available, only a few making little attempt in question **6**. Those candidates who are still struggling with the English language found **Questions 3** and **6** most challenging, as they struggled both to understand the nuances of the questions and to express their ideas coherently in written English, but overall most candidates were able to understand what was required of them and to respond appropriately.

Responses to **Question 3** showed that candidates need to be reminded to read the questions carefully and to ensure that they are answering the question being asked. Commonly in this question, candidates failed to differentiate successfully between the words relief, vegetation and drainage and this resulted in answers which were irrelevant and inaccurate. Candidates should be made well aware of the meaning of such common geographical terms, as well as the difference between command words such as describe and explain, ignorance of which caused irrelevant comment in **Questions 3** and **4(c)**.

Some candidates also tend to express their ideas too vaguely or negatively for reward. Examples of this are statements such as "not much vegetation", "poor vegetation", "not steep". Similarly, candidates are often imprecise when plotting graphs. Candidates should be aware that on this skills paper accuracy is required.

Some candidates enclosed the map and the photograph in the booklet as they handed it in. Clearly the Examiner was not expecting these to be returned and they are certainly resources which Centres should find useful in the classroom. Candidates and invigilators should be made aware that Centres are expected to retain them.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The new structure provided for the survey map question allowed candidates to demonstrate good skills of map interpretation. In particular there were far fewer examples of candidates writing about the wrong part of the map than in previous examination session. Particular areas of weakness were in giving six figure grid references and in interpreting cross sections.

(a) Many candidates scored full marks for this part of the question and most candidates demonstrated proficiency in interpreting the symbols. In part **(i)** most candidates scored the mark, although a considerable number ignored the command to 'name the island' and answered 'trees and scrub'. In part **(ii)** many candidates scored the mark but West Harbour and Fort George were common answers. In part **(iii)** the colours of the roads on the map and in the legend were rather similar and, for this reason, either A or C was allowed as correct answers for the class of road. Only a few candidates failed to recognise the road correctly using the key, but 'other' and 'B' were occasionally suggested. In part **(iv)** almost all candidates correctly identified woodland. In part **(v)** most candidates were able to identify correctly two services/functions correctly. A few incorrectly identified a police station and a hotel. In part **(vi)** a significant number failed to score the mark. The instruction to name the pattern meant that descriptions of settlement being along the road could not be credited. In part **(vii)** most candidates managed to describe the shape of the river course successfully. In part **(viii)** quite a large number of candidates failed to be guided by the northings on the base map and incorrectly identified the river at H as the Back Rio Grande. In part **(ix)** a significant number of candidates incorrectly identified the plantation crop at J by naming coconut.

(b) Candidates generally were able to score freely on this question and a variety of responses were given credit. Candidates frequently noted the coastal site and gently sloping land and quoted a variety of functions such as the port, factory or named major services. They identified the railway, rivers for water supply and that the coral reef may have led to the development of tourism. Few candidates noted the sheltered bay or natural harbour or the gap in the coral reef. The road junction/nodal point was rarely identified. The weaker candidates resorted to identifying the large areas of woodland and mentioning their importance in the growth of the town as a fuel supply. Some weaker candidates also attempted to answer the question in generalities, without any reference to the map at all, by referring to push and pull factors. Some wrote about beaches and hotels, for which there was no map evidence. Candidates focused on reasons for growth rather than site characteristics, so it was refreshing to find a Centre whose candidates had been taught site factors such as slope, height and water supply. Too often, though, the sea was regarded as an important source of water.

(c) Although good candidates scored full marks, others were unable to interpret the cross section. For example the flood plain was sometimes marked on top of a hill. Other candidates failed to annotate the topographic profile and drew arrows which pointed to the base line of the diagram. In the case of the railway, candidates frequently failed to measure to the correct distance and gave answers which were outside the permitted tolerance. Candidates need to pay more attention to how to draw and label cross sections. Only the good candidates managed to label successfully (with drop down arrows correctly placed) all three features. Some had no idea at all how to tackle this question and had obviously never done a cross-section before. The best candidates were meticulous in their measurements and therefore scored the marks.

(d)(i) This was generally very well-answered and compass directions are clearly known by the majority of candidates. Most candidates were able to successfully give an accurate compass direction but some gave a bearing instead.

(d)(ii) For the grid reference, either 040730 or 041730 were accepted as correct. It is clear that many candidates are not aware of the correct method for measuring the third and sixth figures of the grid reference. This is explained clearly on page 14 of the syllabus.

(d)(iii) Answers between 3300 metres and 3700 metres were credited. The response of candidates was variable. Please note that advice on measuring map distances is also available on page 14 of the syllabus. This was a difficult measurement of a considerably curved line and the 50% or so who answered within the tolerance allowed should be congratulated.

Question 2

Answers were generally very good and many candidates were able to score full marks.

(a)   Many candidates scored full marks on this part of the question. Those who did not were sometimes too imprecise in their reading of the rainfall total for Ambleside in part **(ii)**. The strongest candidates realised that the answer here needed to be between 201 and 209 mm. Many candidates lost the mark by reading the graph inaccurately. Other candidates failed to state the units in parts **(ii)** and **(iii)** and were not given credit. Encouragingly, most candidates understood the negative temperature in part **(iii)**. Almost all candidates recognised that Edenhall had the lowest rainfall.

(b)   Candidates generally scored full marks for completing the graphs. Those who did not were generally too imprecise in their plotting of the rainfall graph. Most candidates managed to score the mark for correctly placing the temperatures on the graph but quite a few struggled with the scale for the rainfall and placed the bar too high. Some placed it at 180 rather than 118 mm.

(c)   This question tested candidates' ability to interpret the map and data provided. Most candidates responded well by noting the onshore, westerly, moisture-bearing winds, the relief rainfall at Keswick and Ambleside, and the rainshadow at Penrith and Edenhall. Although the question did not test understanding of the formation of relief rainfall, it was clear from many answers that the processes involved are not well understood by candidates. Some lost marks by simply commenting that different rainfall totals were caused by "prevailing winds", "the wind direction" and "altitude" without noting whether each of them these caused a high/low total and why this was the case. Many ignored evidence and concentrated on an explanation based on distance from the sea. Candidates' lack of knowledge of the convention for naming wind direction was often disappointing.

Question 3

(a)   A number of candidates failed to score on this part of the question because they did not describe the relief features shown in Photograph A and instead commented on the vegetation, drainage and climate. Marks were frequently scored by reference to the steep slopes or cliffs, the bare rock and the more gentle slopes. Few candidates referred to the valley or the dry river channel. The strongest candidates, who understood the concept of 'relief', wrote detailed answers relating to the topography. Others were inaccurate in their descriptions often referring to a sand dune or barchan instead of rocky hill. Even glacial landforms were mentioned from time to time. Full marks were gained by only a few candidates.

(b)   Marks for this part of the question were much better with candidates frequently referring to the sparse vegetation, dry vegetation, scrub and the lack of surface drainage in the Photograph A and the green grass, continuous grass cover, stream and waterfall in Photograph B. For Photograph A, some candidates referred to features of desert vegetation, e.g. deep roots, which were not visible on the photograph. No credit was given for these points.

Most candidates were able to find something relevant to say about the vegetation in each of the photographs but the drainage proved more challenging especially for Photograph A, which showed no obvious surface water. The dry river bed was not noticed by more than a few candidates.

Photograph interpretation is an important skill and many candidates need more practice on this type of question to improve their scores. Teaching geography through photographs provides teachers with an excellent opportunity to improve their candidates' language skills. Quite a few of the candidates lacked the vocabulary necessary to write successfully about the relief, vegetation and drainage of photographs A and B.

Question 4

(a)   The majority of candidates were able to state correctly the proportion of the population in secondary industry in the United Kingdom as 48%.

(b)(i)   Candidates were usually able to complete the divided bar graph for Egypt accurately and use the correct key. The majority of candidates are familiar with compound bar graphs and they are therefore able to either construct them or read from them. A minority forgot to complete the key to gain full marks and some found the divisions difficult once they had done the primary sector, but overall this was well answered.

(b)(ii)   Candidates generally showed impressive skills in completing the triangular graph. Rarely was the position of Egypt shown outside the correct triangle and the majority of candidates were able to draw the point on the graph with a high degree of accuracy. The majority of candidates are also now familiar with triangular graphs but the plotting of a point correctly is not always straightforward and this meant that some candidates lost a mark for slight inaccuracies. Most Centres are ensuring that candidates are familiar with this way of displaying data.

(c)   In describing the differences in the employment structure of MEDCs and LEDCs shown on **Fig**. **5**, many candidates were able to score three marks for three statements which referred, in turn, to the difference in primary secondary and tertiary industry. Candidates failed to score marks when their statements referred only to LEDCs or MEDCs, eg "In MEDCs more people are employed in tertiary industry than in primary industry".

The question differentiated well between the candidates. The most common cause of failure to score marks was where candidates confined their answers to a description of the employment structure of each type of country, without comparing them to each other. Others failed to heed the command in the question to use the information in **Fig**. **5** only; they incorrectly stated that tertiary was the smallest sector in LEDCs whilst in the two LEDC countries given, secondary was the smallest sector.

Question 5

(a)   The vast majority of candidates were able to complete the table correctly by stating that Latin America has 1% of world coal reserves.

(b)   Candidates' completion of the pie chart in **Fig**. **7** was generally impressive with accurate plotting of the angles and correct use of the key provided. Weaker candidates struggled with this task, as expected. Some candidates drew three segments instead of two by including the Middle East, despite there being no figures for that region in the table.

(c)   Candidates found the completion of **Fig**. **8** more difficult. The amounts to be plotted on the bar graphs were not round numbers and some found this difficult to interpret. The question successfully differentiated between the candidates. Very few did not know the difference between North America and Europe and Russia on the world map. The majority who failed to score the mark did so because their interpretation of the scale was inaccurate or their plotting was imprecise.

(d)   This question was generally well answered by all candidates. The weaker ones struggled with the first few answers, often including Europe and Russia instead of the Middle East and Latin America instead of Africa, as they obtained information from the wrong resource. They were, however, usually able to collect a couple of marks at the end of the section. Quite an impressive number of candidates scored full marks on this question.

Question 6

This question tested judgement and decision-making skills and discriminated very well, as it produced good, thoughtful responses from the more able candidates. Weaker candidates wrote too vaguely about 'disturbance to the people' and 'pollution' being a problem.

(a)   Although many candidates scored both the marks available, too many of the answers lacked full explanation. For example, they would write that Route A was too close to the village but not state why this was a problem. Similarly, others wrote that Route A would have to cross the river four times but not that this would result in the extra expense of bridge building.

(b)(i)   Most candidates managed to score some marks on this section showing effective map reading and reasoning skills, as well as an ability to make sound judgements based on the information provided. Most were aware of the environmental impact of open-cast mining, although some were a little vague on the types of pollution resulting from it and rather too many thought that it would pollute the river. Quite a lot missed the risk of flooding from the river.

(b)(ii)   Examiners accepted a wide variety of environmental, recreational and industrial uses as being correct and candidates responded well to the question.

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General comments

This session saw the introduction of examination booklets. The Examiners commented on the overall improved performance of candidates, with no loss of marks due to mislaid inserts, and the candidates responded well to knowing how much to write as indicated by the space allocated.

Question 1 investigated the popular topic from the Settlement theme. The candidates' knowledge with understanding was generally well demonstrated and significantly higher marks were attained than in **Question 2**. They coped well with the information and a pleasing number of candidates scored between 20 and 30 marks.

It was felt that the topic investigated of atmospheric pressure and wind speed in **Question 2** were more difficult concepts to tackle, although well within the syllabus content both in the use and location of the barometer and in knowledge of tropical rainforests. However the candidates found it difficult to apply their knowledge within the context of a fieldwork investigation.

The performance on this paper was generally an improvement in terms of geographical understanding. However the limited quoting of actual figures to support concluding comments severely restricted the marks. This should certainly be an area of improvement for many candidates. Also candidates need to apply more effort to the completion of the graphs and the use of scales and keys to ensure that these marks are not lost through lack of care. The heeding of command and key words is generally improving but candidates would still benefit from greater encouragement to focus their answers to meet the demands of each question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) A good response needed the key idea that convenience goods are bought frequently. Many candidates were able to offer an example but struggled to write a specific definition. Examiners commented on vague statements such as 'needed for everyday life' and the broad examples of 'food' or 'clothes' which could not gain the marks.

Many candidates clearly understood how land values change with distance away from the CBD. This was accompanied by reasoning often linked with demand and competition, thus gaining the two marks. Knowledge about how accessibility changed was less well understood and too many candidates tried to link their answers to shop A or shop B.

(b) The majority of candidates correctly plotted the data of shop A and then gave a simple description of the pattern to gain all the marks. Some carelessness limited the marks awarded on the graph but generally this question was answered well.

(c) The quick and easy nature of pacing as a method of measurement was generally accepted but the disadvantage of the method due to pace differences was less well expressed. Candidates must be encouraged always to qualify 'inaccurate' in order to show sufficient understanding to gain the marks. An alternative and acceptable disadvantage was that the frontage of a building may not accurately reflect the overall size of the shop.

(d) Candidates generally recognised that a larger car park indicated that the main transport use would be the car/vehicles. However there was significant confusion between car park size and car park use, with some candidates suggesting that with such low usage the method of transport would not be vehicles. This would be avoided if sufficient focus was applied to the key words of the question. The calculation and graph usually gained full marks although again there were occasions when an incorrect key was used thus leading to loss of marks.

(e) It was pleasing to note the success of this question. Although many of the instructions tended to be long-winded, most contained the key thoughts of five common items available at both shops, that these should be the same size/quantity/brand and the information should be recorded on the sheet. The layout of the recording sheet generally fitted the purpose but the marks were restricted if the candidates filled in the sheet.

(f) Despite the candidates being given the definition of the sphere of influence, there was a common lack of understanding about this concept. Most candidates offered a simple explanation, eg larger car park or sells comparison goods but did not qualify this idea by linking it to the greater distance people would be prepared to travel and hence a larger area of influence.

(g) Most candidates recognised that the data supported the hypothesis but marks were constantly restricted by a reluctance to quote the supporting figures from the tables. Some candidates intelligently questioned how importance could be measured and gained credit for well argued comments, eg shop A was equally important to the surrounding residents because it sold convenience goods.

Question 2

(a) It was rare that candidates scored full marks for this question. Correct characteristics also did not necessarily mean secure understanding which was tested later in the question.

(b) This is a common question in this paper and Examiners were pleased to report a generally better response with far fewer just 'accurate' answers but appropriate use of the words 'fair test' or 'more reliable' to gain the marks. Generally the barometer was not correctly read at 1018 Mb. Those who were more familiar with using the instrument and filled in Table 5 correctly often missed the mark because the line graph was not completed correctly, due to careless reading of the scale of the line graph. This is an area of concern because plotting data is an essential coursework skill. The use of the index pointer to manually indicate the pressure change over a certain time period was very poorly understood and very few candidates gained the marks for this question.

(c) The 'zig-zag' pattern of the atmospheric pressure at School X was widely recognised with the better candidates identifying the range of between 1016 mb and 1020 mb as important too. Occasionally, candidates attempted to explain the pattern with reference to the wind speed and again careful heeding of the command words would avoid these mistakes.

(d) The advantages and disadvantages of using a hand-held anemometer were generally well expressed, with the best responses comparing it to a more traditional pole located instrument. This showed a good grasp of weather instrument location. The wind speed bar graph was usually correctly completed although carelessness was evident here too.

(e) This question tested the knowledge with understanding about different climates of the tropical rainforest and the tropical desert. The most common responses described the basic differences of rainfall and humidity but rarely gave reasons for these differences. Examiners reported much confusion from candidates and rarely was clear knowledge evident. Too many candidates tried to bring irrelevant information about Schools X and Y into their answers, thus missing out on the marks.

(f) The success of drawing the line graph was sporadic and disappointing. The scale was misunderstood and the data incorrectly plotted. Many candidates failed to label the line and the awarding of full marks was not common. Again, more care was needed to gain the marks. The comparison between the two Schools was generally good with a clear recognition of the lower and more stable pressure at School Y. However, attempts to explain this difference showed very insecure knowledge and understanding by the majority of candidates. There was rarely any mention of global circulation, pressure systems or the impact of latitude on climate types, therefore marks were generally not awarded here.

(g) The quality of conclusion to this investigation was very variable. Many candidates correctly identified that the data from the table and the graphs did not support the hypothesis. Candidates who stated support for the statement usually failed to focus on the change in pressure and wind speed as key words but rather commented on high and low pressure. Analysis of data from the table should identify that on only one occasion (11th – 12th Jan School X) is there an increase in pressure and a decrease in wind speed but there is plenty of evidence to suggest there is no relationship between pressure and wind speed. The most successful responses quoted figures from the table and graphs but too often the Examiners reported on a continued reluctance to quote information, thus restricting the marks which could be awarded. Many candidates gained marks for critically evaluating the data collection methods, which boosted scores, but rarely above half marks for this final task.

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General comments

Although this new style of assessment mirrors the alternative to coursework paper, the opportunities and creative approach of using computer technology in formal assessment at IGCSE is an exciting development. Those Centres which attempted the 'paper' this year also completed the written alternative to coursework paper (0460 04) to enable comparisons in the level of responses and the subject knowledge shown by candidates to be compared.

Seventeen of the twenty three questions were computer marked. This report focuses on the remaining six questions, which were examiner marked.

Comments on specific questions examiner marked

Question 6

Clustering: Many candidates answered the question 'why are there lots of bars and cafes?' and avoided the key word of clustering. This limited marks. The simplest response suggested that bars and cafes attract customers when together and would be found near to the hotels. Perhaps too many candidates took the approach from the tourists' viewpoint rather than the advantages to the bar owner, although the more able candidates suggested competition and mutual benefit would influence where a bar or café located.

Question 10

Most candidates correctly suggested that the hypothesis was partly supported in that tourists did influence the land use of the resort. The evidence quoted was generally from the pie chart by using data to show how tourists and residents both use the majority of services. The better candidates referred to the land use map too and suggested how certain land use would not be present if tourists did not visit the resort.

Question 16

Often only a tenuous link was expressed between the spatial pattern of different vehicle types and the land use. Many candidates described in detail the concentration of cars and vans along the coastal zone and the occurrence of mopeds throughout the settlement. However the candidates rarely heeded the command word of 'explain'. The more able candidates commented on how the vans were used for the transport of goods to the hotels and how the tourists and other visitors used cars near to the beaches and hotels. Overall, this was a low scoring question due to insufficient regard for the command word to explain the link between the pattern and land use.

Question 17

There was an excellent response to this question and the majority of candidates were easily able to suggest four practical improvements to the investigation. Changes in time and place were the most popular ideas but many tasks were well justified and thus gained the marks.

Question 18

This provided good differentiation between candidates. Many candidates commented that there would be greater demand and hence profit if the tourists were to stay for longer. There were also good responses concerning increased employment but litter pollution in the town.

Question 23

This provided the candidates with an opportunity to use data and form an opinion concerning the location of two hotels – using the video and a scoring system method of assessing the advantages and problems of certain locations. Overall there were some excellent justifications for the candidates' decision but also there were a disappointing number of errors in the use of the map and scoring table.

It is interesting to note how the common errors of misunderstanding the command and key words of the exam question still occurs in this new style of assessment but overall there was a high level of geography shown within the answers.