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Examiners' Report
June 2010

GCE Geography 6GE01 01

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Introduction

This was the second summer sitting of 6GE01 and, as might be expected, the signs were that centres have 'bedded down' nicely both in terms of delivery of the content and in offering guiding to candidates on how best to tackle the assessment. There were far fewer instances of candidates running out of time, or needlessly over-writing when responding to Section A questions. The overwhelming majority produced appropriate length essays and short answer questions.

There was pleasing evidence of candidates already practicing synopticity – for instance, by using 'global concepts' (such as TNCs and global networks) to identify possible players who might benefit from an ice-free Arctic (question 8a); or an understanding of why the developmental needs of emerging economies makes engagement with climate change mitigation a tough issue (question 3d).

Section A

Candidates appeared more comfortable with the format of short answer questions than in the past. There was far less overwriting and the most able candidates showed better judgement than in the past when it came to realising that enough has been said to merit the full five point marks (which does require discipline – for instance in 1d where many could have written an essay devoted to the Philippines if asked to).

Section B

Question 7 was the most popular by a considerable margin, followed by Question 8. The 'human' themed essays proved far less popular despite being, in both cases, focused on accessible and broad topics. Candidates are too reluctant to leave their volcanic comfort zone – too often resulting in the presentation of a prepared response to a different essay from the one set. This year, a great many chose to answer question 7b by explaining why LEDCs experience high death tolls and MEDCs do not is. This was not the question set. Candidates tackling this question needed to be able to substantiate a case for falling death tolls in poorer places as well as richer places. And as such would have done well to compare, say, the 1976 Tangshan earthquake (750,000 lives lost) with more recent events such as 2008 Sichuan (far fewer lives lost). And if their ability to adopt such an approach is, in fact, lacking then considering questions 9 or 10 might be a wise move.

Question 1a

Most candidates correctly described, rather than explain the distribution of hotpots and effectively referenced their position in relation to the equator and tropics.

Question 1b

In part (b) some candidates struggled with the distinction between hazards and disasters. However, those that were well revised had no trouble in making a distinction between the potential for harm and the realisation of that harm.

Question 1d

In part (d), the candidates' knowledge of the Philippines was generally impressive – a significant number achieved full marks. Some sensibly employed two sub-headings to ensure that both physical and human factors were well-covered (correctly anticipating that the mark scheme award of maximum points would be tied to this requirement). The following example shows a nice concise answer than gained full marks.

(d) Explain how physical and human factors have made the Philippines a disaster hotspot.

(5)

The Phillipines is a disaster hotspot as it suffers from multiple Hazards. Volcanos from Mount Pinatubo, ~~Eyjafjallajökull~~, earthquakes (average 1 a day although majority are small), landslides, Typhoons and Tropical Storms caused by climate. This is because it lies on a plate boundary with the Eurasian plate. The human factors making it a disaster hotspot is that there is a ~~density~~ high density population living in places prone to Hazards. This makes their vulnerability much higher. Also they have vulnerable buildings which were built on steep slopes which means landslides dangerous

(Total for Question 1 = 10 marks)

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Examiner Comments

This response is comprehensive and nearly scored full marks. Several extended points were made about the hazards (rather than just listing them). The candidate also makes good human points such as density of population and buildings in steep slopes. Overall, it is a model answer for Section A - the candidate understands that brevity is important in Section A and has provided a summary overview.

Question 2b

Thermal expansion was not widely known to be the current driver of sea-level rise in part (a). Lack of knowledge of the physical geography of global warming was also often reflected in part (b) where a paucity of physical ideas were presented in relation to risk. Presence / lack of mangroves, geological conditions and relief were all possible discussion points but few discussed anything other than the last of these (and then with a lack of vocabulary that was disappointing to behold at this Key Stage; 'flat' and 'hilly' was about as technical as many managed to get).

Question 2c

In part (c) there was often insufficient focus on the keyword 'human' although a few candidates managed to utilise political issues as a human factor (those that referred to the Junta in Burma showed particularly good understanding).

Question 2d

Answers to part (d) were highly variable in quality. The best provided excellent recall of feedback / tipping point ideas / climate change modelling issues. The lowest scoring answers relied on vague assertions about how difficult it is to know how much ice there is on Earth to get melted. On the paper this question was the least successful.

Question 3b

The meaning of total GHG emissions was not recognised by a great many candidates . The concept of 'equivalent' gases to carbon dioxide – i.e. CO2(e) – simply did not feature in the answers given. Where additional gases were volunteered, answers were often inaccurate - sulphur dioxide was a fairly common suggestion. Factual recall of the main GHG gases is fairly fundamental to the science of climate change and even features in some GCSE courses.

Question 3c

In part (c), carbon dioxide was by far the most popular choice, though there were also some excellent answers detailing methane, with a clear focus on the 'increased' aspect of the question (cows, rice and nappies in landfill were common themes). Better answers dealing with carbon dioxide considered both industrialisation and deforestation some mentioned the concept of a carbon sink here. However, there are still some candidates who misunderstand the involvement of carbon dioxide in the destruction of the ozone layer.

Question 3d

Responses to part (d) were generally strong. The best answers covered a range of 'archetypes'. These were: developed nations keen not to lose growth; emerging economies keen not to sacrifice development; LDCs feeling they are minor players. Best well-exemplified with Copenhagen as well as Kyoto. Many candidates are unaware of the current USA/Obama stance. Few referred to Copenhagen.

(d) Explain why some countries lack enthusiasm for implementing global agreements to manage climate change.

(5)

Some countries do not want to sign up to agreements because they fear that their economic growth will suffer as a result. For example the global agreement of the Kyoto Protocol, the USA originally signed up however they dropped out after the election of President bush because of economic growth. Also it is seen as unfair for developing countries to have to limit their emissions because they have not yet industrialised and therefore they will lack enthusiasm in signing up. Countries such as China and India (NICs) will want to industrialise and this will be their priority, managering climate change will be a limiting factor to them. Also countries will be reluctant so sign up if they believe that other countries will still be polluting as this causes a lack of motivation and therefore lack of enthusiasm for implementing the global agreements.

(Total for Question 3 = 11 marks)

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Examiner Comments

This response is crammed with ideas and extended details and examples, all of which warrant point marks. There is more than is neccessary here for full marks to be awarded.

(d) Explain why some countries lack enthusiasm for implementing global agreements to manage climate change.

(5)

It is common for some countries to show a lack of enthusiasm for ~~[illegible]~~ implementing global agreements to manage climate change. Wind farms and other eco-friendly methods of generating energy are very expensive meaning that some countries will not be able to afford them. Another factor is that an increased %N.I.M.B.Y %((Not In My Back Yard)) attitude means that finding suitable places for energy alternatives is long and arduous. In addition developing countries argue that changing over to renewable energy sources will disrupt their economic development.

(Total for Question 3 = 11 marks)

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Examiner Comments

This candidate fell short of full marks, even though he / she appears to have written a decent-length response. But look closely and you will see that the first two lines are a repetition of the question itself.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

One area where improvement is needed is the practice of repeating the question in the answer space, as seen in this example. This provides candidates with a false impression that they have 'filled up' the answer space – which they have indeed done, though not in a way that will score more than half marks; at least not in the case shown.

Question 4a

The overwhelming majority described the pattern well, picking up on western / central aspects.

Question 4b

Answers in part (b) were often pleasingly specific. Most good answers covered agricultural work placements including the low pay that locals have mostly avoided. Some correctly used the acronym 'SAWs' and provided supporting detail about a specific area, thereby scoring well. This is a minor point for improvement, but worth flagging up to candidates: it is far more effective to describe the rural costs of living as being 'cheaper than cities' rather than simply being 'cheaper'. The poorest answers tended to generalise about why people would in general be attracted to rural areas; or about why migrants might be in general be attracted to the UK.

Question 4c

Part (c) revealed a surprising lack of knowledge of the geography of eastern EU – or perhaps demonstrated that candidates working at this level still do not always read the question. Common suggestions were: Russia, Ukraine which were understandably wrong suggestions; Spain, Portugal these two were less understandably wrong but at least within the EU; India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh 'eastern' perhaps but certainly not EU members.

Question 4d

The cohort as a whole performed strongly in part (d). There was good use of geographical terminology: remittances, brain drain / gain and cultural enrichment were frequently referred to. Some answers were structured with 'positives' and 'negatives' underlined – this approach worked well.

Question 5b

In part (b), public transport and solar power proved to be the most popular choices, with the other two methods covered to a lesser extent. A sustainable urban focus was looked for in the answer space – references to congestion, smog or pollution were credited alongside generic carbon footprint ideas. Less able candidates were unable to develop their points or were too vague (i.e. asserting either 'it's environmentally friendly' or '..and therefore it's sustainable').

Question 5c

Some struggled to fully address the command word 'why' in (c). The best answers, on the other hand, could contextualise the sustainability challenge, for instance by recognising the challenge of coping with rapid flows of in-migration in emerging mega cities or of trying to tackle ageing and inefficiently heated housing stock in developed world mega cities. Or by recognising that an extreme climate mean that carbon-hungry air conditioning is hard to dispense with in Los Angeles.

(c) Explain why some megacities are making greater progress than others towards the goal of sustainable urban living.

(5)

One reason is that MEDC megacities have the money to concentrate on sustainable urban living whereas LEDC cities are generally still developing so they are less able to become sustainable. However Curitiba in Brazil is an example of an LEDC city that is sustainable. Another reason is that some cities are concentrating more on developing their city more through industrial ways to even consider changing it to a more expensive sustainable environment, this is happening alot in cities in Eastern China.

(Total for Question 5 = 10 marks)

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Examiner Comments

This answer falls short of full marks. The examples are good and there is an attempt to tackle the "why" aspect of the question - although a little more could be done (why has Brazil managed it, for instance? We are not told.)

Question 6a

This question was well-understood and well-answered by most.

Question 6b

In part (b), some candidates mistook 'producers' to mean the supermarkets (as 'producers' of finished goods) rather than farmers / workers – however, their ideas were still given credit if the points made were solid enough. The best answers tended to make 3 distinct points – perhaps addressing how consumers may struggle with product availability, in addition to cost. Some could extend the idea of prohibitive costs (e.g. by addressing the economic turndown context of the global credit crunch).

Question 6c

Part (c) was generally very well attempted, with most answers providing a range of ideas and some examples. Some candidates referred to the 'race to the bottom' and quoted Disney, Primark, Nike and Tesco.

Question 7

Part (a) ideally required some distinction to be made between landslides and avalanches. The least successful answers talked about both being triggered by 'hills' and 'rain' (exceptionally pedestrian ideas and vocabulary). In contrast, based a discussion around slope, relief, gradient as one might hope for in an AS question that touches, as required by the Specification, on some pretty basic elements of geomorphology. Many candidates picked up on the idea of seismic triggers though too many assumed a major plate boundary went through the Appalachians (perhaps because one goes through California). Other comparative exemplars were frequently employed successfully, particularly the Philippines and the Alps. Human aspects of the hazard distribution were also recognised by most candidates (conceptual understanding that helped lift some responses into level 3).

In part (b), the lower scoring answers tended simply to describe reasons why 'LEDCs' have high deaths and low costs and vice versa for 'MEDCs'. Such a narrowly descriptive and generalised approach rarely made it beyond Level 2, particularly given the actual wording of the question. Those candidates who did focus on changing trends (for all levels of development) found it much easier to access Levels 3 and 4. The more able candidates also considered the effect of 'freak' or unusually high magnitude events such as the 2004 tsunami or Hurricane Katrina – and explicitly recognised that the essay was asking them to discuss a rather crude generalisation.

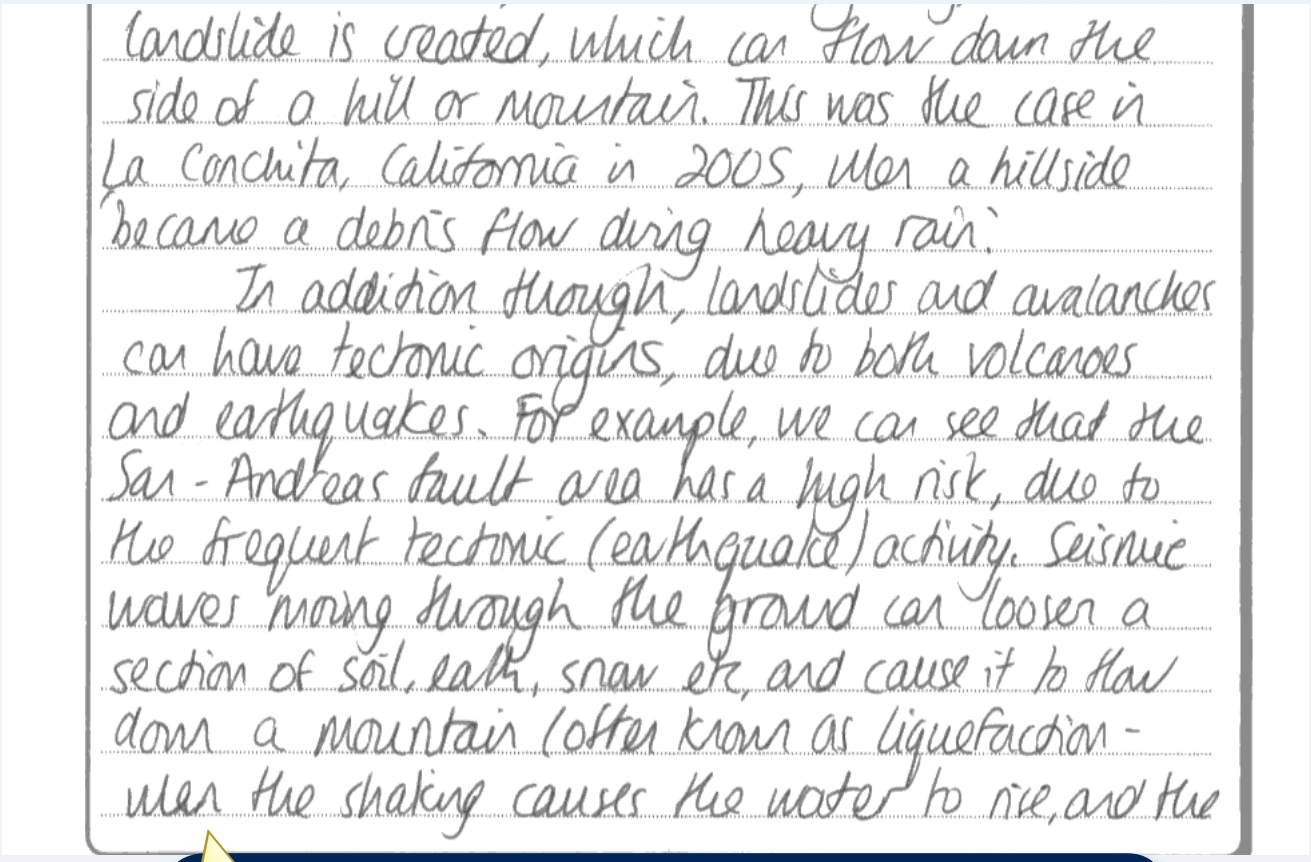
Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen Question Number:

Question 7 ☒ **Question 8** ☐

Question 9 ☐ **Question 10** ☐

a.) Landslides and avalanches ~~may~~ have ~~to~~ two main causes - hydrometeorological, and geophysical (tectonic). Areas that experience high precipitation levels may have an increased risk, such as mountainous areas, which can be seen in fig7 - the Rocky Mountains and Appalachian mountains both have 'high' or 'very high' potential for landslides and avalanches. Increased precipitation can cause the soil to become saturated, and loose its rigidity, hence a



landslide is created, which can flow down the side of a hill or mountain. This was the case in La Conchita, California in 2005, when a hillside became a debris flow during heavy rain.

In addition though, landslides and avalanches can have tectonic origins, due to both volcanoes and earthquakes. For example, we can see that the San-Andreas fault area has a high risk, due to the frequent tectonic (earthquake) activity. Seismic waves moving through the ground can loosen a section of soil, earth, snow etc, and cause it to flow down a mountain (often known as liquefaction - when the shaking causes the water to rise, and the

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Examiner Comments

This first page from a part (a) answer gives us an excellent range of explanation, with good links made to Figure 7. There is also plenty of evidence of the candidate's own knowledge here as well, plus a good focus on the question (for instance, human elements of risk are mentioned). Level 3 marks were awarded.

Question 8

Some candidates possessed good knowledge of their own relating to Greenland. Those that did not still scored highly in many cases by structuring their answer around a range of clearly identified players (such as TNCs) and opportunities (such as mining). Most candidates were generally able to identify a reasonable range of potential opportunities but some struggled to identify specific groups. The opaque word 'they' was too often used a substitute for – presumably – indigenous inhabitants of Greenland, tour operators, oil companies, shipping companies, TNCs.

In part (b), a minority of candidates discussed specific species (e.g. arctic char, caribou, spruce) and turned in very good answers. A larger number of candidates had no problems identifying ecological impacts, but were not always able to support and illustrate these ideas with exemplars (other than polar bears and seals). Plants were just plants, trees were just trees, fish were just fish. Significant numbers found it hard to keep focused in part (b) and instead drifted into an examination of wider Arctic environmental changes such as ice retreat (gaining limited credit) or even impacts for other places altogether such as Bangladesh (gaining no credit).

Question 9

Part (a) allowed candidates to employ plenty of their own knowledge in ways that supported the resource and there was no shortage of pathways to gaining credit as in the following example.

In part (b), it was good to see greater details than might have been expected of how TNCs bring change to rural areas (generating the push factors) in addition to their providing the urban employment 'pull'. Good use was made of a range of complementary international examples, notably movements within the EU.

Question 10

Good use was frequently made of the part (a) resource. Competent answers could either describe the range of data sources available or could explain why a range is needed. There were some excellent responses covering both aspects and those candidates who drew on personal circumstances often did particularly well. One candidate even drew a personal family tree. In part (b), most students managed to take a balanced look at both social and economic factors. There were some excellent answers with clear case study references.

The cohort as a whole responded well to this paper and dispayed good broad familiarty with, and understanding of, contemporary geographical issues and concepts. During the last teaching year there were an abundance of high-profile current affairs stories that have since proved highly relevant to the teaching of this Unit – including the Haitian earthquake (geophysical hazards), the Copenhagen climate change conference (tackling climate change), the Gulf of Mexico oil spill (polluting TNCs) and Iceland's Eyjafjallajokull volcano, amongst many others. It was pleasing to see candidates from many centres referring to these events.

Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N	U
Raw mark boundary	90	69	64	59	54	49	44	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	120	96	84	72	60	48	36	0

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