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Examiners' Report Summer 2008

IGCSE

IGCSE Geography (4370)

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Summer 2008

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Unit 4370 Paper 1F

General Comments

This examination proved to be remarkably comparable to that of 2007. The size of the entry for this tier was very similar despite the significant increase in numbers entering the higher tier paper. The mean mark for the paper and the range of performance were almost identical to those of the previous year. Whilst the general standard of the responses remains static there exists a weak tail of candidates, some falling below the F/G grade boundary. There are candidates entering the 2H paper who would be better served by this more accessible tier.

Question Specific Comments

Section A

Question 1: Water

Generally candidates performed moderately well on this question. Most identified the correct date in (a)(i) but few gained both marks in (a)(ii). Parts (a)(iii) and (a)(iv) differentiated candidates; some knowing base flow and/or discharge and others not. Most candidates were able to indicate discharge differences for (a)(v) but more limited numbers picked up on the role of geology suggested by the key in explaining these differences for (a)(vi). Part (b) was relatively well done with the stimulus of urban land use and vegetation being sufficient to elicit responses about hydrological cycle components from candidates.

Question 2: Hazards

This question was better answered than question 1. Most scored maximum marks on (a)(i) and (ii), and gained marks from part (b). Epicentre was often defined loosely rather than with strict technical accuracy. (b)(ii) was similarly effective in generating two qualities of answer: unconnected pieces of data and the general pattern. The effects of earthquakes were well known and there were many sound descriptions offered in (c). Equally, the ways in which people mitigate these effects was understood. Named examples of these ways was fairly rare and responses tended to be generic in nature.

Question 3: Production

The candidates again seemed to be comfortable with energy as a topic for the question. They scored well throughout the question by being familiar with renewability and its advantages, with the case for an energy mix, and with the reasons for the ever-rising global demand for energy and the recent resurgence in popularity of nuclear power. The latter question parts did differentiate but most candidates achieved a degree of success. Part (b)(i) did, however, pose difficulties with few being able to name an energy source other than electricity.

Question 4: Development

Traditionally, this is one of the paper's weaker questions. This was again the case. However, candidates did get off to a good start in part (a); most used Figure 4a effectively and had some understanding of the meaning of GDP. Part (b) proved to be a challenge with many candidates failing to outline any of the three processes involved in raising GDP. Responses generally amounted to relevant isolated points such as more workers, better roads etc. Generally, the population factor was the best addressed. Performance in part (c) was disappointing. Candidates often failed to appreciate that the question related to the two curves on Figure 4b. Responses tended to be vague accounts of China's recent rapid development.

Question 5: Migration

As in previous years, question 5 was well answered. Good understanding of the push-and-pull model ((a)(ii) and (b)) and good use of the stimulus material provided resulted in generally strong scoring out of the first 11 marks of the question. Part (c) did provide an unfamiliar challenge which, in the main, candidates met. There was a range of performance but large numbers were able to suggest legitimate reactions and in some cases, offer justifications.

Question 6: Urban Environments

This proved to be a low scoring question largely because the conflicts of interest item ((a)(vi)) was so weakly answered. Very few candidates got beyond identifying the conflicting groups. (a)(v) was also disappointing. Few candidates gained more than the odd reason mark even if they had successfully managed to identify two distinctive and valid MEDC urban fringe land users. Some candidates failed to see the distinction between MEDC and LEDC urban areas. The first four parts of the question ((a)(i) to (a)(iv)) posed no real difficulties and provided candidates with many of their marks for the question.

Section B

Question 7: Fragile Environments

This was the more popular option in the section. It generally scored respectably with candidates putting Figure 7 to good use in parts (a) and (b). In (b)(ii) some ticked more than one box in each column but otherwise responses in these early items were as expected. Drought and its impact on soil erosion and desertification, and the link between rainfall and river type were broadly understood by the candidates. Both the human causes ((c)(i)) and human impacts ((c)(ii)) of desertification seem to have generally been taught and were correctly given on many scripts. Part (d) was a very effective differentiator with a range of qualities evident though relatively few at the top end. Case-study type description relating to measures in specified places was rare.

Question 8: Globalisation

This was the least popular of the three options. Those making this option achieved reasonably good marks. Many of the 9 marks in part (a) were gained by most candidates though the term 'global shift' was not familiar to all in (a)(vi). TNCs and capital flows into NICs and LEDCs were often known in outline terms; developed reasoning was scant, especially in (b)(ii) and (c). Cheapness, particularly of labour was the usual focus in (c); few candidates referred to local markets and government incentives.

Question 9: Human Welfare

This was generally the lowest scoring question in the section. All the longer question parts created problems for the candidates, that is, (a)(vi), (b) and (c). In (a)(vi) whilst many showed that they appreciated that high GDP enables a country to afford a decent quality of life there were few who appreciated the importance of government spending priorities, especially when GDP is not high. Part (b) was very disappointing; deprivation did not seem familiar and valid ways of measuring poverty were frequently missing. Part (c) called for case-study knowledge of a city; this was available on a minority of the scripts but even on these the focus of the answer was on the intra-urban differences rather than the reasons for them. The short-response items tended to score positively with candidates being able to use Figure 9 well and knowing the terms, trend line and life expectancy.

Unit 4370 Paper 2H

General Comments

It was pleasing to see a significant increase in the candidature, continuing the rising trend of the past three years. The extra candidates spread themselves fairly evenly across the normal range of performance for this specification. The mean mark for the paper was remarkably similar to that of 2007. Any slight overall advance in performance may be attributed to the tendency for a more even mark profile to be achieved by candidates; the question 3 and 4 (People and Work: Production and Development) dip in performance was far less detectable than in previous examinations. The paper discriminated well and again there were some very high standard responses. However, there are candidates entered for this tier who would be better served by the foundation tier paper. It is also worth pointing out that too many candidates across the ability range fail to give due attention to the precise wording of the questions. It is disappointing to read good geography that does not answer the question set.

Question Specific Comments

Section A

Question 1: Water

A reasonably well-answered question. Part (a)(i) provided a positive start for most candidates who were able to use Fig. 1 to good effect. (a)(ii), however, exposed the general fieldwork weakness in the candidature; very few showed any evidence that they had been involved in calculating discharge either through either actual or virtual fieldwork. The term 'catchment area' ((a)(iii)) was not particularly well known with candidates experiencing mixed success with the question. Factors influencing the components of the hydrological cycle were better known; many candidates understood, for example, the role of permeability/impermeability in overland flow and scored well in parts (a)(iv) and (b). Part (c) was also generally well-answered. Almost all candidates knew of a flood scheme or schemes and many were able to offer some case-study type description.

Question 2: Hazards

This proved to be one of the two best answered questions on the paper. Part (a) was invariably well done though some did not gain maximum marks in (a)(iii) – not all offered two basic points or a well-developed reason for the greater damage. The term 'epicentre' was familiar, if not in terms of strict technical correctness to most candidates. Candidates rarely linked (b)(ii) to (a)(iii), and again the influences on damage were understood as a generalisation but developed explanation was rare. Parts (c) and (d) were often well answered. Many candidates distinguished between prediction and preparation and went on to explain how one or both helped to mitigate damage. Better candidates offered damage-limitation details during specific hazard events. There were many good descriptions in (d) of the damage, costs, dislocation etc. brought by a named hazard, often a specific event.

Question 3: Production

The question generally scored well until candidates reached part (d). They tended to use Figure 3 well as a stimulus, to be very comfortable with the terms 'renewable' and 'fossil fuel', to understand the link between these two and global warming, and to be very well aware of the reasons for the ever-rising global demand for energy and the recent return to fashion of nuclear power. Too much repetition of earlier responses and vague ramblings characterised part (d). Few listed and developed two or three specific energy issues in which the concept of sustainability was at very least implicit.

Question 4: Development

This year's Development question tended to score more highly than those of previous years; traditionally, question 4 is the weakest of the six compulsory questions. GDP and its contributory influences were generally well understood, and most candidates were able in (a)(ii) to identify possible future changes to the current pattern of development. Unexpectedly, part (c) created some difficulties; a large number of candidates failed to appreciate that the describe command related to Figure 4b. Sound reasons for China's recent rapid development were frequently given but without the context of stronger urban income growth being made explicit. This was another example of excellent geography being written but without directly answering the question. HDI appears to have been regularly taught and many candidates were able in (d) to draw comparisons between it and GDP; better candidates did offer evaluative comments about the two measures and some referred to aspects of HDI in the context of named places.

Question 5: Migration

This was the other very strong answer on the paper and where many candidates achieved their highest Section A mark. The push-and-pull migration model was again well known and the vast majority of candidates scored well in part (a). There were some pleasingly valid suggestions which often directly answered (b); both positive and negative government reactions were given and justified. Part (c) proved to be a challenge for some; the phrase 'immigration policy' seemed to generate uncertainty in some minds, and policy details were frequently absent. However, it was interesting to read a significant number of answers which rightly referred to Canadian immigration policy as per the May 2007 question 5 stimulus material.

Question 6: Urban Environments

This was not generally a strong answer though most were able to make a positive start by effective use of Figure 6 and by knowing the terms 'rural-urban fringe' and 'greenfield site/green belt'. Developments on the rural-urban fringe had clearly been addressed in most centres and the candidates generally were aware of the development potential of such land and its likely users ((a)(iii) and (iv)). There were some responses focussing on LEDC city fringes with their shanty towns but not in large numbers. The conflicts of interest parts ((a)(v) and (b)) were less well answered. The conflicts were often not made explicit and answers often failed to differentiate between the views of residents and those of environmentalists in relation to developments. In part (b) the phrases 'urban manager' and 'managing change' seemed to cause uncertainty. Strong responses to this question were fairly rare.

Section B

Question 7: Fragile Environments

The majority of candidates went for this option. It tended to mark more highly than question 8 but less highly than question 9. Figures 7a and 7b were generally well used to generate creditable responses to (a)(ii), (a)(iii) and (b)(i) on most candidate's scripts. Most candidates used Figure 7b discriminately to extract only the human causes for their responses to (b)(i); there was, however, a good spread of quality in the responses to this item. Part (b)(ii) saw the link between soil erosion and desertification being clearly understood by the majority. Part (c) was moderately well answered in the main with relatively few candidates having a range of measures and case-study type information at hand. Marks were generally quite high on part (d) but generic responses dominated the entry. Specific examples of the actual impacts on named areas and communities were quite scarce.

Question 8: Globalisation

This question was both significantly less popular and lower scoring than the two alternatives in this section. Part (a)(ii) proved too challenging for almost all candidates and low marks were typical though these candidates coped well with the demands of (a)(i) and (a)(iii). The term 'global shift' was generally well known though named examples of the shift were frequently missing from the answers. Part (c) often scored well with the basic reasons for the investment trend being appreciated by most candidates. Parts (b)(ii) and (d) posed problems for many candidates. There was a frequent failure to indicate why TNC R&D is usually MEDC-based and most restricted their reasons to wealth alone. In (d) most candidates dealt with only one aspect of the question i.e. either interdependence or rich-poor divide. Any links between the two and examples of trading nations experiencing these consequences were rare.

Question 9: Human Welfare

A reasonably popular choice and overall, the highest scoring question in this section of the paper. Part (a) proved to be very accessible to the candidates with most correctly identifying the basic relationship, appreciating that HDI measures quality of life, giving other valid human welfare indicators, understanding that HDI improvements are expensive and take GDP expenditure, and making reasonable suggestions about the causes of Cuba's high GDP. Part (b) proved to be very straightforward and high scoring with most candidates picking up on the pattern of affluence/deprivation and offering supporting evidence. There were some sound accounts of welfare differences within named cities in (c), including Sheffield from the Edexcel-endorsed core textbook for this specification. Part (d) was the least well done part of this question. Actual carrot and/or stick policies for regeneration were generally absent from the responses, and a region according to the scripts can vary in scale from a shanty town to Africa.

Unit 4370 Paper 03

General comments

A larger proportion, approximately three quarters of the total candidate numbers, were entered for Paper 3. This was an appreciable increase on previous series.

The paper, which was common to both tiers, was in general accessible to Foundation Tier candidates but allowed the Higher Tier candidates to obtain high scores. A number of centres had evidently prepared their candidates thoroughly for the paper and for question 3 in particular, by the use of well-planned field work. However, a significant number of candidates scored appreciably lower marks for question 3 having displayed competence with questions 1 and 2.

Question Specific Comments

Question 1

These questions required the candidates to use both a range of resources and geographical skills. The majority of candidates achieved slightly similar scores for each question.

1(a) This question was generally answered well with candidates who used the resource to identify different land uses around Lake Naivasha. However, a significant number were unable to give the six figure grid reference for the primary data collection point.
The majority of candidates were able to both complete the scatter graph to show the change in papyrus reeds and draw an acceptable trend line (1b (i)). The trends shown by figures 1c and 1d were well described in 1b (ii) although some candidates failed to compare the overall trend patterns and therefore could not be awarded full marks.
Question 1c resulted in a range of answers. Some candidates were able to link the information from the three recourses to produce well-structured and detailed conclusions about the impact of flower growing on Lake Navasha. Nearly all candidates included information from figure 1c, and recognised the boost to the Kenyan economy provided by the flower growing, but failed to include evidence from earlier in the paper. The following extract forms part of a detailed response which easily obtained level 3:

'The students reached the conclusion that there is an increase in the area covered by flower farms in the area of Lake Naivasha, this has had a negative effect on the lake as it has led to increased pollution … Flower growing in the region has led to the death of aquatic life in the lake possibly due to high nitrogen and chemical pollutant levels, therefore concluding that the area around Lake Naivasha is slowly degrading and the lake is over used and polluted due to the increased flower growing.'

In 1c (ii), most candidates were able to suggest ways to improve the accuracy of their conclusions, although many did not explain them fully. Many candidates focused their answers on speaking to more people about the effects of flower growing, and failed to consider how obtaining additional data would improve the accuracy of any conclusions reached.

Question 2

The first sections of question 2 proved to be very accessible, with the majority of candidates achieving high marks in sections a (i) and (ii).

In general section 2a (iii) was completed well. The majority of candidates were able to identify the benefits, costs and disadvantages of the Jubilee River, while a large percentage of candidates successfully compared the costs and benefits to reach a justified conclusion. Most paid particular attention to the financial commitment involved in the construction of the Jubilee River, with some candidates noting that the costs were short – term problems while the benefits were much more permanent. Others noticed that building the Jubilee River would prevent expenditure:

'Although the cost of building the channel was high, it has advantages as it prevented the area from greater expense that would have been caused by damage from floods as it protects important routes and businesses.'

Most candidates responded well to question 2b (i). However, care should be taken to read the accompanying extract (figure 2c), which gave more than enough reasons why the river flooded to achieve the full two marks.

Question 2c (i) required candidates to read and interpret tabulated data and transfer the relevant data onto the graph. Unfortunately, a number of candidates failed to draw the columns accurately or neatly, or to use the key for the correct shading. Those who did managed to achieve the full two marks. Observant candidates noticed that the length of the two bars that needed to be drawn were identical to two that were already on the graph and so could copy them without the need to measure. In some cases more care was needed to ensure that the columns were drawn in the correct order and in the relevant spaces in the graph.

Question 2 c (ii) posed difficulties for a number of candidates. The better answers looked for patterns and contrasts in the data for Wraysbury and Maidenhead and commented on reasons for these patterns and any contrasts. The use of data to support arguments was largely absent. Level three answers recognised that the Maidenhead answers to the questionnaire were mixed, with a lot of uncertainty, due to the location in the CBD and away from the actual flooding. In contrast the Wraysbury responses were much more negative and unanimous due to experiencing the floods first hand. Some candidates just described the graph in mathematical terms which limited the marks awarded.

Question 3

As previously stated, there were some excellent answers to question 3 where candidates had carried out investigations involving geographically relevant topics. Some of the most successful answers related to river investigations, the location of a wind farm or delimiting the CBD (central business district) of a local urban area.

In 3a, the majority of candidates were able to identify at least one aim for their investigation, although the geographical focus was sometimes lacking. Candidates who selected non-geographical topics such as how payments were made in a supermarket or the number of students having school dinners were unlikely to be credited with more than one mark. Some of the best answers were structured: '*my first aim was… my second aim was…'*.

Although candidates were often able to identify some of the data collected to achieve their aims, many explained their methods of collection, not the data itself Few candidates linked their data back to their aims from the previous question and a number of candidates described data collection that was unrelated to the investigation described in 3a.

Question 3b (ii) produced some excellent answers from a relatively small number of candidates, as illustrated by the following extract:

'The pH of the river was collected using a pH probe, at regular intervals along the stretch of river, hence this was done by systematic sampling … the aquatic life was studied at random points, hence this was use of random sampling.'

Unfortunately, however, many candidates described their investigation methods rather than sampling methods. Other candidates proceeded to explain the equipment they would use. It would appear that the students had misinterpreted the question, or had not been given the opportunity to carry out sampling techniques.
Due to the fact that few candidates identified sampling methods in the previous question, it meant few marks could be awarded for 3b (ii) as the answers were often related to investigation methods and equipment. However, those that successfully identified correct sampling methods often were able to provide at least one valid answer for this question, with most candidates recognising that sampling methods led to a more representative sample. In the following example the candidate has a clear understanding of the need to use sampling techniques:

'Systematic sampling was carried out in order to give a fair representation over the length of the river, whereas random sampling was selected for the aquatic life as it gave each an equal chance of being selected, it avoided bias.'

The majority of marks were awarded in section 3c. Most of candidates were able to identify at least one method of presentation and were able explain why they were used, the most popular being pie charts and bar charts. At times this question was misinterpreted and answers were based on investigation techniques rather than presentation. Section 3c(ii) was also done well, and most candidates were able to identify valid ways to improve their presentation, often by including another technique such as pie charts:

'I could have improved my presentation by drawing bar graphs of the results. This would have helped me to identify patterns that emerged at each location.'

Unit 4370 Paper 04 (coursework)

Introduction

The coursework option, paper 4, attracted an entry of approximately one quarter of the total candidates. There were entries from both the higher and foundation tier candidates.

Administration

There were few administrative errors on behalf of the centres submitting coursework who are to be thanked for greatly assisting the moderation process. Centres are requested to ensure that they use the correct ICRS for IGCSE geography.

The majority of work was submitted in simple light weight folders which again assisted with moderation. Centres are requested not to send work in bulky ring binders.

As in the past, much of the submitted work was accurately marked. However, there were some instances of centres being overgenerous with a number of criteria, and this resulted in adjustment of their candidates' marks. Some very detailed work, involving a range of primary data collection techniques, was marked rather harshly, again resulting in some mark adjustment at moderation.

Several centres most helpfully annotated submitted work or provided separate comments clarifying their mark allocation.

General Comments

The choices of topic were usually geographically relevant and related to the specification. In some cases the centres allowed their candidates to select their own topics for investigation. Although this allows candidates to investigate an individual field of interest, it is essential that this is related to the specification. Centres are encouraged to contact Edexcel for clarification of the relevance of coursework topics.

Criterion 1 – Introduction and Aims

It was pleasing to note that most candidates stated one or more clear aims for their investigation in addition to posing questions or hypotheses. The following extract illustrates a clear line of questioning that enabled the candidate to develop a logical sequence of investigation:

The main aim of this coursework is to examine why the various features of the river change so drastically. These will be examined after we have taken:

- *river depth measurements*
- *river velocity measurements*
- *river bed load size measurements*
- *river bed load degree of angularity*
- *slope angle measurements.*

The candidate was then able to suggest a number of hypotheses which were well linked to geographical theory, in this case the Bradshaw model.

The majority of submitted studies were clearly located using maps and/or aerial photographs. Opportunities exist to use these more effectively, for example by adding annotations showing and describing data collection sites.

Criterion 2 – Data Collection
Much of the submitted work placed a strong emphasis on primary data collection. Candidates who had outlined plans and had developed a sequence of data collection in Criterion 1 usually gained high marks for this section. The following extract is a taken from a level two data collection section:

Method used	*How carried out*	*Why this method was used*	*Ways to improve*
Pedestrian counts	*We stood on the sides of the pathway and counted using sight*	*It was the simplest and most effective*	-
Land use surveys	*We walked along the roads and surveyed using sight*	*It was the only way it could be done*	*Enter the building and check properly*
Vehicle counts	*We stood on the road side and counted using sight*	*Only possible way considering the resources available to us*	*No other way*
Questionnaires	*Stopped people and asked them CBD related questions*	*To find out peoples personal opinion*	*No other way*

It is pleasing to see an increasing number of candidates using sampling techniques when collecting data. For example, this candidate was clearly aware of the concept of sampling but did not explain how it benefitted the study; an explanation of the lack of bias would have assisted the candidate when evaluating the validity of their conclusions (criterion 4):

Hypothesis two: The river bedload - size decreases as the water's velocity increases when it goes downstream.

First we used a shovel to get samples of the 50 random rocks to get the bedload. Afterwards we measured the middle axis and the long axis with a caliper and recorded the size of all the rocks to see how the bedload size changes as we go downstream.

Candidates who relied heavily on secondary data obtained from the internet or other resources tended to be severely limited when describing their data collection, and did not usually obtain a high level for this criterion.

Criterion 3 - Data presentation
As in previous series, candidates demonstrated some excellent data presentation techniques, and many showed competence with various ICT packages. Some candidates included both field sketches and/or photographs that were clearly annotated to explain the selection and location of sites, data collection methods and any problems encountered. Many candidates used a wide variety of techniques, and were therefore able to access Level 3. Although some candidates were awarded full marks for this criterion, scope remains for some more original

methods to be used and justification of choices of technique. Centres are asked to note that studies containing basic data presentation methods such as bar charts, pie charts and photographs without some detail in the annotations should not be awarded higher than level one for this criterion.

The following example is taken from a level three section, and illustrates how a high scoring candidate justified their selection of a data presentation method:

To show the degree of angularity, I have chosen to use the pie graphs as I think it is most effective. It shows the proportion and degree clearly in comparison with all the locations. Each location shows different sites, and I think by putting the value in it makes it even more precise. Also different colours state the different locations, so it is obvious which location has the highest or lowest degree of angularity.

Criterion 4 – Analysis and Conclusions

The majority of candidates were able to offer some concluding comments, the best of which considered the original aims and questions of the investigation. Frequently, however, the analysis was limited to descriptive comments, and therefore did not reach the highest level for this criterion. The following is an example of a typical level one approach:

This graph shows that more males think house rents/prices in Doha will increase after the Pearl is built than females do.

In this instance, the candidate later included a much more detailed discussion of both the primary and secondary data collected and was able to achieve a higher level.

The majority of candidates included some concluding comments, the best of which returned the original aims and questions of their investigation. This can be illustrated with an extract from a level two response:

The data collection carried out and concluded was all to answer the question does Mombasa have a typical CBD. The conclusions answer this question and prove that Mombasa does have a typical CBD as it has most of the characteristics of a typical CBD which are:

- *Good conditions of buildings*
- *Usage of ground floor's retail shops to provide easy access to buyers who are mostly pedestrians*
- *The four main roads that meet which bring the rest of the town to the CBD*

The only characteristic that the CBD lacks is a number of high rise buildings.

Most candidates were able to comment on some limitations of their studies, usually linked to data collection, and to make valid suggestions for improvement. The majority indicated that they should repeat their data collection at another time or take a greater number or range of measurements. Those evaluations that recognised changes at the planning, data collection and analytical stages would improve the validity of their conclusions were normally those that reached level 3 for this criterion.

Criterion 5 – Planning and Organisation

All the submitted work showed evidence of organisation with the majority of candidates attaining at least Level 2 for this criterion. The most effective studies included diagrams and graphs that were integrated into the text. Candidates normally acknowledged sources of secondary data, including maps, books and websites.

All of the centres made effective use of ICT to enhance studies. Hand written annotations and labels, although only rarely seen, were easy to read. Over all, the submitted work was extremely well presented.

IGCSE Geography 4370 Statistics

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grading option 1: 03 Written Alternative
1F Written Paper

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Subject Grade Boundaries	100	51	43	36	29	22

Grading Option 2: 04 Coursework
1F Written Paper

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Subject Grade Boundaries	100	51	44	37	30	23

Grading Option 3: 03 Written Alternative
2H Written Paper

Grade	Max. Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E
Overall Subject Grade Boundaries	100	67	59	51	44	36	32

Grading Option 4: 04 Coursework
2H Written Paper

Grade	Max. Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E
Overall Subject Grade Boundaries	100	68	60	52	45	37	33

Grades per paper

Grade		Max. Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Subject Grade Boundaries	**03**	60		40		32	26		14	
	04	60		44		33	27		15	
	1F	110				55			34	
	2H	150		86		63	52			

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