

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCSE A Geography 5GA04_01
Investigating Geography
Controlled Assessment

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the world's leading learning company. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information, please visit our website at www.edexcel.com.

Our website subject pages hold useful resources, support material and live feeds from our subject advisors giving you access to a portal of information. If you have any subject specific questions about this specification that require the help of a subject specialist, you may find our Ask The Expert email service helpful.

www.edexcel.com/contactus

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Summer 2012

Publications Code UG032272

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2012

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

Introduction

The 2012 series saw an increase in the number of submissions, and a larger range of titles than the previous two years. Centres were asked to select from a range of task titles set by Edexcel, the majority of centres opting to use the same task for all their candidates.

It was pleasing to note that a high proportion of candidates produced focused and succinct reports. There was evidence of some truly outstanding work from a significant number of candidates. However, the length of some submissions remains considerably above that recommended by Edexcel.

A significant proportion of the work was a very high standard, with candidates demonstrating excellent knowledge and understanding of geographical theory and terminology,

Administration

The majority of centres sent the correct sample by the due date, and completed all the administrative tasks correctly and proficiently. These centres are thanked for their assistance in assuring that the moderation process was smooth and effective.

However, as in previous years, some instances still arise when there are errors in the addition of candidates' marks. Other common errors are mistakes in the transfer of marks from the mark sheet to the OPTEMS, or sending the Controlled Assessment Record Sheet without the teacher's and candidates' signatures. A small number of centres did not send both the highest and lowest marked piece of work in addition to the requested sample. Such errors meant that the centres had to be contacted in order to obtain the correct information.

However, there was a slight increase in the number of centres who either submitted the incorrect title for the 2012, or adjusted the title as set by Edexcel. Centres are particularly asked to note that the titles change on an annual basis and it is essential to submit the correct and unaltered titles for the relevant year. Details of the titles for 2013 can be found, via secure download, under Controlled assessment at <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/geography/a/pages/default.asp>

X
The majority of work was submitted in simple light weight folders, and centres are thanked for making the submitted work less bulky than in previous series. A small minority of centres used plastic wallets or manila folders, and are requested to avoid doing so for future submissions. Usually this work could just have been stapled which would have been more simple to moderate and cost less in postage.

Most centres helpfully provided detailed annotations directly to the submitted work, provided tables of separate comments or make comments on the Candidate Record Sheets which helped to clarify the reasons for their mark allocations. Where this did not occur, moderators found it much more difficult to understand the reasons for the mark allocations given by the centres.

The moderators felt that the majority of centres had marked accurately and had carried out carefully internal standardisation. In cases where it was felt that the marking did not conform to the published mark scheme,

adjustments to the centres marks were made during the moderation process.

General Comments

The most popular selections of task questions were the tourism, environmental and rivers options. The majority of centres submitted work based on one task question.

Most centres had evidently carefully designed new tasks, for 2012, with clear reference to the task questions set; however there is still evidence that some centres adopting their previous coursework to the requirements of the controlled assessment. This invariably means that the candidates are restricted to some extent and less likely to achieve high marks.

The majority of centres are to be congratulated on the effective way that they planned the controlled assessment, and for frequently allowing their candidates to contribute to the planning by evident discussions concerning the selection of sub-questions to investigate.

Criterion A – Purpose of the Investigation

The majority of candidates attained the higher mark bands for this section. The main purpose was well identified and broken down into subsidiary questions. A number of candidates were able to explain how effective they believed that these sub-questions would be in helping them to address the main task question.

A large number of candidates located their data collection sites in detail by indicating the exact location of each on a base map, or by supplying a six figure grid reference for each site, or both. However, in a significant proportion of studies, the location lacked precision as actual sites for collecting data were not identified. Some centres incorrectly awarded high marks for locations that indicated the general area of the data collection; where non-specific locations were given some mark adjustment took place during moderation.

Criterion B- Methods of collecting data

Candidates who divided the main task question into three or four relevant sub-questions (Criterion A) usually reached the higher mark bands for this section. Nearly all the candidates were able to give an out-line of the data collection processes, but this frequently lacked sufficient detail to reach the higher mark bands. The following extract is an example of a lower mark response; ‘...we carried out a survey where we asked people numerous questionswe were given a readymade survey to collect they information, which we into a tally system so it was easier to record and collect data. We stopped shoppers to ask them the survey whilst walking around the area.’ Such a response would reach a higher mark band if the candidate had stated exactly were the survey was carried out, for how long, information about the sample size, sampling techniques, details of the questions asked and the justification, with reference to the sub-question or the over-all task question, for asking the selected questions.

Criterion C- Methods of Presenting Data

This was an area where there was still incorrect levels marking by centres. Some centres continue to mark a map, a couple of bar charts and a pie chart as being Level 3. It needs to be reiterated to centres what sophisticated means, and what constitutes a range. A range of techniques might include labelled base maps to show data collection sites, labelled photographs and field sketches and two or three different graph types. Sophisticated methods are usually those that combine two techniques such as a well-annotated photograph which has been located by a six figure grid reference, a series of graphs located onto a base map to show spatial distributions or a well-constructed kite diagram. To obtain the highest marking level candidates should produce at least three different sophisticated methods. Hopefully the centres that have over-marked this year will take heed of their moderator's comments with regard to the use of techniques such as annotated photographs and field sketches and be able to reach the top level in the future.

However, the work from some centres was exceptional. The candidates were encouraged to think about the relevance of each of their chosen methods and each candidate's work showed a degree of individuality for this reason. Candidates produced an excellent range of data presentation methods, each with a title and north arrow scales, where appropriate, and frequently a grid reference. The tourist and coasts investigations were the most fruitful in terms of presentation as located flow lines, proportional circles and accurately drawn beach profiles were frequently used.

Criterion D – Analysis and Conclusions

This section of the Controlled Assessment must be carried out under high levels of control, i.e. examination conditions. Most candidates were able to describe their findings, although a few did not refer to their graphs/photographs/maps or other data presentation techniques and only made general comments. Some candidates found this section more accessible if they carried out a presentation technique and then analysed the information directly beneath the technique.

Most candidates achieved Level two, by including some detail and an attempt at analytical comments. Conclusions were very varied, from none, to a conclusions for each hypotheses, but lacking an over-arching conclusion, to a fully developed, thoughtful piece of writing which drew together all the parts of the task.

Some candidates did not appear to know the difference between an analysis and a conclusion and consequently combined the two together, assuming that, because they have described what they could identify, they had drawn some conclusions. Centres are reminded that they can teach how to carry out the skills required for Criterion D, but this must be based on material that differs from that forming part of the Controlled Assessment. For example, population graphs might be used to teach analytical skills to candidates who are carrying out work on rivers.

Criterion E – Evaluation

This is the second section of the Controlled Assessment which must be carried out under high levels of control. A number of excellent evaluative sections were seen by the moderators where candidates considered the data collection methods, the data presentation and an evaluation of the task as a whole were explicitly included.

Some candidates found it difficult to evaluate the data presentation and to explain why the methods they selected were appropriate to display specific sets of data. Common evaluative comments tended to be of this type; '.....a bar graph, this is easy to do and easy for people to understand as well. I also did a pictogram, I think this is quite easy to do and quick.' Centres are reminded that they are permitted to teach the advantages and disadvantages of selecting different types of graph, although this must not be based on the graphs specifically used by candidates.

For a minority of centres, Criterion E remains an area of some confusion. A smaller group than last year, but still significant, number of candidates only evaluated data collection. Others produced very limited evaluations, even if they included all the requisite areas the work did not reflect the time allocated for this section in the specification.

Criterion F – Planning and Organisation

As last year, most of the submitted work was well organised, and the majority of candidates attained at least level 2 for this criterion. All the work seen contained at least some geographical terminology and followed a logical sequence. There were very few examples of incomplete Controlled Assessments.

It would be extremely helpful if centres could encourage candidates to write their name, candidate number and centre number clearly on the front of the actual submitted work, in addition to filling in the Controlled Assessment Record Sheet.

Further copies of this publication are available from
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467
Fax 01623 450481
Email publication.orders@edexcel.com
Order Code UG032272 Summer 2012

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit
www.edexcel.com/quals

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE

Ofqual
.....



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

