

# ASSESSMENT REPORT 2020

## GGY315120 – GEOGRAPHY

In deference to the challenges of the current academic year some of the questions in the examination were modified from those of previous years while still allowing for students to display the depth and the breadth of their understanding and knowledge.

There were 238 candidates. Criteria 3, 4, 5 and 6 were assessed twice, on different questions. Candidates needed to perform consistently in all four sections of the examination and satisfy the requirements of the criteria in each question to achieve the best possible overall award.

It is important that candidates read the instructions carefully so that they answer all the required questions. There were four sections in the examination with eight questions in total to be answered. Again, it was pleasing to note that no candidates this year answered more than the one essay question required in Section D, which has impacted negatively on some candidates in the past.

It is highly recommended that candidates keep to the suggested time allocations on the examination paper and that each question is answered to the best of the candidate's ability. Where there are several parts to a question, recommended times are given.

Candidates need to number the questions clearly and accurately on both the outside and inside of their answer booklets to avoid confusion in the marking process. Candidates must answer each section in a separate booklet. In Section A, a separate answer booklet is required for each question in this section. Candidates should also ensure that their handwriting is legible so that they can be given full credit for everything that they write.

It is imperative that candidates read the questions carefully and respond accordingly, as it was clear that some had pre-prepared responses that did not always address the question.

It should be noted that responses should ensure correct spelling and use of capitals for place names (continents, countries, and cities).

## SECTION A

There were two questions in this section and both questions were compulsory. It was recommended that candidates spend 45 minutes on this section. This section assessed criteria 4 and 6.

### Question 1

This question assessed criterion 4. It was recommended candidates spend 25 minutes on this question. Candidates were instructed to refer to the Information Sheet and the Data Sheet World Population (2018) when answering the question.

## Question 1 (a)

The Information Sheet showed the Population Pyramid of Germany (2020). The scales were in 5-year cohorts and percentages. Analysis of this could be done in the reading time before starting to write answers. Any numbers from either the Information Sheet or the Data Sheet should always have descriptors e.g. Rate of Natural Increase in %.

Part (a) asked candidates to describe the population structure and explain first how it showed the level of development of the country and second what the implications were for future population change. Reading the question, understanding what it is asking and formulating an answer was crucial to success. An analysis of the population pyramid was essential to enable a relevant description and consequently to explain the required implications.

Many failed to understand that if the scale is in percent then the total numbers in the population are not the most relevant statistics. A lot of students showed a lack of understanding of both the nature of the graph and the question by describing in detail the size of individual bars and pointing out the differences between males and females.

Many leaps of judgement were made, for example, Germany has a lot of people in the 50 to 59 cohorts and therefore they have a large middle class. This group were also named as the Baby Boomers even though even the oldest can only be the end of this era. Candidates need to use vocabulary correctly e.g. generation was often substituted for age cohort. The best answers discussed the shape of the pyramid and discussed how it linked to Stage 5 in the Demographic Transition Model which set their responses up to answer the questions on level of development and future change. The Data Sheet was in some cases not used confidently, and reference was made to the sex ratio or the percentage of one-person households – both of which may be relevant if they are made so.

Best answers looked at percentages of the population under 15 and over 65 years, particularly in relation to Germany having an ageing population, and discussed their relevance to future growth. Candidates should avoid the use of words which say little e.g. 'Germany has a relatively skewed population pyramid', and value judgements such as 'Germany has the Birth Rate and the Death Rate under control'.

## Question 1 (b)

Part (b) asked candidates to choose a country with a different level of development to Germany. This was generally done well but some still discussed countries such as Australia, Canada or Iceland, which were inappropriate because their level of development is similar to Germany. Links to The Demographic Transition Model were appropriate in this answer but not diagrams of the model and descriptions of it. Best answers again looked at the Under 15 and over 65 years figures, Birth Rate, Life Expectancy and GNI ppp (US\$) and discussed the implications, particularly of a young population. Those who chose well e.g. a country in Sub Saharan Africa were able to both justify their choice and relate their answer to the question. Despite being asked to only look at ONE socio-economic indicator most candidates looked at multiple, often not being able to state their relevance. Again, total population was seen as a key factor as indeed it is but there were some conclusions made that were not correct. Candidates who implied the shape of the pyramid for the chosen country, quoted statistics to back this up and explained that the Natural Increase would be much greater received the best outcomes. These students also successfully made relevant comparisons to Germany in both population structure and level of development.

## Question 2

This question assessed criterion 6. It was recommended candidates spend 20 minutes on this question.

## Question 2 (a)

Part (a) asked candidates to describe ONE challenge of either rural or urban Australia. It seemed that this disconcerted many students who seemed keen to discuss at least one other and at times several from both rural and urban. Best answers stated the challenge wry in their answer with descriptions of what it is and examples of where it is found.

Generalisations e.g. urban traffic congestion or lack of services in rural areas should be followed up with specific examples in Australia where these challenges are found, and perhaps how the specific problem relates to a unique situation. E.g. Sydney's traffic problem is exacerbated by the situation of the high ground hemming in the city. Or settlements in NT require more kidney dialysis machines due to the indigenous makeup of the population.

Issues raised such as declining mental health or urban racial tensions need to be backed up with examples of where these stresses are being experienced. Some candidates tried to answer the entire question without a single example.

## Question 2 (b)

In Part (b) ONE solution or program to address the issue stated in part (a) was required. It was mandatory to state this strategy and explain it with examples.

Toll roads may be an answer to traffic congestion in urban areas but what are they, where are they found and how do they operate? Just to state that 'providing more funding to outer urban areas will make the problem of water shortages disappear' is insufficient, but backed up with an example of funding in e.g. Western Sydney where increased finance has made a difference, would answer the question well.

Some good answers had appropriate examples of actual programs which the question specifically asked for. In other words, a generic answer should be made real by applying it to a problem which actually exists; judgements on political, social or environment platforms are inappropriate. e.g. Out migration will prevent deforestation in Australia. Better answers did provide solutions and discussed them with examples to back up their assertions.

## Question 2 (c)

Part (c) was a problem for many students. It was often answered in such a general manner as to make it of little relevance. As this is surely an anticipated question, students should be advised to consider it before the examination. Negative evaluations should be discouraged and, while many schemes do not give immediate positive feedback, students should be encouraged to look at problems and their solutions in the long term. Best answers tended to do this and evaluated specific programs both in the short and the long term.

Overall, there was a lack of specifics in answers and a rather social media response to this question. Students should be more aware of the issues and solutions they have studied in order to answer in a more academic fashion, avoiding personal judgement. This approach was integral in the best answers.

## SECTION B

This section assessed Criteria 4 and 5. All questions in this section were compulsory. It was recommended candidates spend 45 minutes on this section with 25 minutes for Question 3 and 20 minutes for Question 4.

### Question 3

*Explain the causes of anthropogenic climate change. Using ONE example from EITHER a More Developed Country OR a Less Developed Country, describe how climate change is having a negative impact on the environment of that country.*

The first part of this question required candidates to explain the key causes of anthropogenic climate change (ACC). Most candidates were able to provide a suitable definition of ACC and were able to distinguish the difference between human induced climate change and naturally occurring climate change. Many candidates were able to list the major causes as industrialisation, the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, transport, animal meat production, intensive agricultural practices etc. The better answers explained these causes in a historic perspective with the Industrial Revolution, the exponential human population growth, the increase in global interconnectedness and consumerism over the last one hundred and fifty years.

The candidates with a good understanding of ACC were able to clearly explain what was meant by the Enhanced Greenhouse Effect and list the main greenhouse gases being generated by human activity. Some of the poorer responses demonstrated a lack of understanding of how the Greenhouse Effect moderated the earth's temperature and some even incorrectly confused it with the hole in the ozone layer.

The second part of the question asked candidates to describe how climate change is having a negative impact on the environment of a country using an example from either a More Developed Country or a Less Developed Country. The two most popular impacts on the environment cited were rising sea levels and coral reef loss. A few candidates described the impact of glacier retraction and ice sheet melting, desertification and extreme weather events. Bangladesh and some of the Pacific Island nations were used as examples of countries impacted by rising sea levels. The majority of candidates used Australia's Great Barrier Reef as an example of the impact of coral reef loss.

The better responses contained specific examples of the impact on the country's physical environment. The rate and the extent of the impact on the physical environment were clearly outlined. Many candidates made specific references to the negative social and economic consequences of climate change. Even though the question did not specifically ask for the negative social and economic impacts these candidates were not necessarily penalised for this interpretation of the question.

### Question 4

*Explain how ONE form of human activity is directly contributing to land cover change in ONE country and describe the important social and economic consequences of this process.*

This question assesses criteria 4 and 5. It was recommended that candidates spend 20 minutes on their response.

The first part of the question asked candidates to explain how one human activity was directly contributing to land cover change in one country. Various forms of direct human activities contributing to land cover change were explained: deforestation, soil/land degradation, rangeland modification, mining and urban expansion. Deforestation was

overwhelmingly the most popular activity. The Amazon Rainforest of Brazil and the tropical rainforests of Indonesia were the most popular locations to explain the impact of deforestation.

The best responses were those that demonstrated an understanding of the nature of the particular direct human activity. The rate and the extent of the activity were clearly explained with statistical data to justify claims where appropriate. The better answers were able to explain the environmental impacts of their chosen human activity: loss of biodiversity, increased soil erosion, silting of waterways, severe flooding, and loss of soil fertility.

Some candidates struggled to adequately describe the social and economic consequences of their chosen human activity. The better responses recognised the difference in the capacity of a MDC or a LDC to deal with the impacts of the direct human activity. Some of the main social consequences of direct human action land cover change mentioned were the loss of aesthetic and cultural values, restricted recreational use, traditional hunting and food gathering areas destroyed and loss of plant and animal habitats and migratory corridors. Some of the economic consequences were loss of livelihoods/employment, loss of building materials, increase in infrastructure expenditure and decrease in tourism revenue.

## SECTION C

There were three questions in this section and all questions were compulsory. It was recommended that candidates spend 45 minutes on this section. This section assessed criteria 3 and 5.

When answering this section, it is advisable that candidates ensure the information they include addresses each question and is not a regurgitation of all the knowledge they have acquired on globalisation. In general – some candidates seemed to focus on one or two of the questions in this section at the expense of the other question/s. This meant that some content was not addressed adequately despite a strong response for the question/s they focused on.

### Question 5

It was recommended candidates spend 15 minutes on this question.

This question required candidates to explain the concept of globalisation and discuss how one factor has contributed to the process. Most candidates were able to provide an explanation and/or definition of the globalisation process and relate this to a contributing factor such as technology or transport.

- Weaker responses tended to attribute the process of globalisation to a narrow focus such as purely economic trade or related only to Corporations. These responses missed the complexity of globalisation and specifically the cultural aspects.
- Stronger responses explained multiple globalisation processes such as those related to politics, culture and economy. Some candidates made use of terminology specific to globalisation to explain globalisation processes in general. This was an effective approach as it allowed all areas to be covered with some more specific examples to be elaborated on. Some candidates even went so far as to explore the multifaceted impacts of technological innovation within, and across, a number of key industries.

- Strong responses focused on the process of globalisation and how a technology or transport has, and is, contributing to globalisation processes.
- Some candidates chose to briefly explain a range of technological/transport advances that have contributed to globalisation, however, these were lacking depth and stronger responses tended to focus on a single technology or transport advancement and explain its role in globalisation, allowing more opportunity to address globalisation processes.
- It was obvious, also, that better prepared candidates were able to competently and appropriately use specific examples and key statistics to emphasise and support the predominant ideas, information, and concepts.

## Question 6

It was recommended candidates spend 15 minutes on this question.

This question required candidates to reference one example and discuss the economic and cultural importance of world cities as centres for ideas and innovation. Most candidates were able to provide a city as an example with a discussion of the city in relation to economic and cultural aspects, but many were unable to connect this to the importance of cities as centres for ideas and innovation. Stronger responses were able to make this connection.

- Most candidates named a world city as an example. Some named a country or region instead of a city and were unable to clearly address the question.
- Weaker responses tended to only highlight the pull factors of their example city, rather than the way the city is important as centres for ideas and innovation. Some candidates mentioned some contributing factors to importance of cities for ideas and innovation but were unable to link these to the globalisation processes.
- Some did not consider it important to name a city as an example. Some confused this and used a country as an example.
- Stronger responses addressed the processes of globalisation related to the importance of economy and cultural importance of cities and the role of cities as centres for ideas and innovation.
- Many responses referred to the level of tourism and number of cultural landmarks, rather than the role of the city as a centre for innovation and ideas.
- Stronger responses were able to discuss the role of factors like density and diversity in the development of ideas and innovation and the interconnectivity of world cities as passages for the dissemination of these innovations and ideas.

## Question 7

It was recommended candidates spend 15 minutes on this question.

This question required candidates to discuss recent shifts in the pattern of global economic power and cultural influence with reference to a single region or country.

Most candidates were able to identify a region or country and discuss the economic change of that country with some connection to the global economy.

- Some candidates focused on a single country in their discussion, missing an opportunity to discuss where this country was in a global context.
- Stronger responses discussed global patterns in economic power before relating their example to these global patterns. Stronger responses were able to include some reference to cultural influence. Some candidates discussed the increasing cultural influence of places like China or India; however, stronger responses were able to highlight the persisting cultural influence of westernised locations such as Europe and the United States.
- Very few candidates discussed cultural influence as required by the question, with some not mentioning it at all.
- Stronger responses outlined recent global economic shifts and successfully balanced their focus by detailing the evolution of the historically strong 'western' economies of the USA and Europe against the growth and progress of developing economies such as China, India, Brazil and Russia.
- Stronger responses explained the processes of globalisation related to global economic trends and their impacts and included cultural aspects of the question.
- Weaker responses re-told historical events without making connections to current globalisation processes or global economic trends.

## SECTION D

This section assessed Criteria 3 and 6. Candidates were required to choose one question from this section and respond in Essay Form. It was recommended candidates spend 45 minutes on this section.

### Question 8

This question assessed criteria 3 and 6.

100 candidates chose this question.

Overall, the standard of the essays for this question was good and it was clear many candidates had prepared well for this topic. Conventional essay format and structure was consistent in the majority of responses. The best responses included a clear and coherent introduction, clear delineation of ideas and themes and a logical conclusion. Candidates should be reminded that the use of headings is not appropriate in this format.

The first part of this question asked candidates to explain the process of urbanisation. Most candidates were able to adequately define the process of urbanisation as the 'increase in the proportion of people living in towns and cities', but the best responses also went on to explain why and how it occurs through specific references to push and pull factors. Unfortunately, many candidates either misunderstood the concept of urbanisation and the term 'urban' (referring at various stages to 'urban cities', 'cities with a highly urban population' or 'urban parts of the city') or ignored this part of the question entirely.

The second part of the question asked candidates to select one megacity in a developing country and describe two challenges and two strategies. A number of megacities were chosen to describe/explain/analyse the challenges and possible solutions with Mumbai, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Lagos, Cairo and Dhaka being the most popular. Other megacities used as examples were Shanghai, New Delhi, Tehran, Karachi, Buenos Aires, Bangalore and Kinshasa. Candidates should be reminded that the megacity must be from a developing nation and examples such as Moscow and New York do not meet this criterion. Major challenges facing these megacities ranged from rapidly expanding populations, inadequate housing, ad hoc development, lack of essential services, poor sanitation, disease and poor health services, traffic congestion, public transport issues, air and water pollution, waste management, lack of social and cultural cohesion, lack of educational and employment opportunities, high crime rates, flooding and economic divide.

Better answers were those that:

- Gave a clear (and accurate) definition of a megacity. Whilst not an explicit requirement according to the question, most took the initiative to provide a working definition.
- Clearly introduced their chosen megacity.
- Selected two specific challenges and described/explained them in considerable detail. Some of the weaker responses were quite broad in describing challenges and did not provide any specific details relevant to their chosen megacity.
- Described specific management strategies already being implemented and suggested possible solutions based on the successful approaches to similar problems in similar cities. Weaker responses lacked specificity (e.g. 'more buses'); did not consider the limited available funding in developing countries when suggesting costly strategies implemented in more developed cities such as London, New York and Melbourne; did not discuss current initiatives; and/or did not discuss initiatives that directly addressed the challenges selected.
- Clearly outlined how selected strategies could lead to longer-term sustainability, with many referring to the pillars of sustainability to validate their argument.
- Clearly evaluated the effectiveness of each strategy and provided supporting evidence of efficacy.
- Used current, accurate data. Weaker responses relied on data from 15-20 years ago to describe current population growth rates or the current size of slum populations. When referring to 'current' scenarios, candidates should be encouraged to use data from within the last five to ten years (wherever possible).
- Used subject specific language and terminology.
- Used their gained knowledge and understanding to address each aspect of the exam question. It was clear that a number of candidates attempted to rewrite a rehearsed essay, or at least tried to fashion it to suit the question.

## Question 9

This question assessed criteria 3 and 6.

48 candidates chose this question.

The majority of candidates chose 'Sea Level Rise' or 'Coral Reef Loss' as their land cover topic with fewer choosing 'Glaciers and Ice Sheets' and 'Desertification'. Examples for Sea Level Rise included Kiribati, Maldives, Florida (U.S.A.),



England, Netherlands, Perth (Australia) and Bangladesh. The Coral Triangle and Great Barrier Reef were examples often used for Coral Reef Loss responses. Greenland, The Himalayan region, and South American Andes being common choices for Glaciers and Ice Sheets responses. The 'cropland/pasture loss and/or degradation or desertification' papers cited the Sahel region of Africa and Australia as common examples.

Most responses to this question demonstrated clear understanding of their topic. Responses to this question were required to explain how anthropogenic climate change (ACC) is having an impact on one form of land cover change (from the list provided) and to describe the important social and environmental effects of that impact. In addition, a description of two management strategies that address these effects, and an evaluation of their effectiveness was also required.

Strong responses included a clear, logical, essay structure, with many providing contextual information about ACC with the nature, rate, extent and causes of the land cover change explained in the introduction. This provided context for the logical progression to a description of the important social and environmental effects of the impact of ACC on the chosen land cover, before then describing the management strategies that address these effects. Evaluation of the chosen management strategies effectiveness was missing in some of the weaker responses.

Some candidates chose to discuss management strategies at different scales including local scale responses such as use of sea walls in island communities impacted by sea level rise, and global scale responses to mitigate a range of impacts to different land cover types, such as the Paris Climate Agreement.

Weaker responses often mentioned generalised impacts to the land cover without linking these to the effects relating to specific examples or places including environment or society as required by the question.

It is important to use formal language in essay responses along with terminology specific to the geographical phenomena being discussed. Place names should be capitalised.

Consistent metric measurements should be used rather than mixing in imperial measurements.

## Question 10

This question assessed criteria 3 and 6.

20 candidates chose this question.

Eleven candidates chose deforestation, 2 candidates chose land and soil degradation, 1 candidate chose land reclamation, 2 candidates chose the expansion and intensification of agriculture, and 4 candidates chose mining to discuss as a human activity impacting on land cover change.

The question required candidates to discuss the negative environmental impacts of one form of land cover change due to human activity. Some weaker responses discussed social and/or economic impacts without discussing the negative environmental impacts. Stronger responses described the nature and extent of their chosen human induced land cover change and gave good examples of negative environmental impacts. The question also asked for a description of one existing program that is being used to reduce the negative environmental impacts, and to assess the effectiveness of that program. Stronger responses mentioned sustainability in their discussion.

The majority of candidates responded with clearly structured essays and used terminology appropriate to their chosen topic. All candidates responded in essay form; however, some candidates did not start with an explanation of the land cover change they were addressing. It is recommended that candidates commence with a strong introduction of their chosen topic and finish with an equally strong conclusion which focuses on the future sustainability of their selected rehabilitation program.

## Question 11

This question assessed criteria 3 and 6.

Eight candidates chose this question. The topics included: coal; mineral ore; uber; lithium-ion batteries; dumplings; coffee; and cannabis.

Candidates were required to write an essay considering the changing distribution of production and consumption of a chosen economic activity (commodity, good or service) as specified by the syllabus and the question. They were also asked to describe the reasons for that change. They needed to use specific examples and were asked to discuss the important current social and economic implications of these changes.

Stronger candidates wrote articulate, cohesive, well-structured essays, used geographical terminology appropriately and provided a range of specific geographical examples. They were also able to provide an evaluation of the current social and economic implications of the changes for the commodity, good or service they were discussing both now and in the future.

## Question 12

This question assessed criteria 3 and 6.

Fourteen candidates chose this question.

A variety of cultural elements were chosen for discussion including cricket, music; basketball; the black lives matter movement; political ideas; language; religion; tattooing and fashion. The best responses described how the cultural element had evolved.

This question had a range of responses. Some candidates wrote articulate, cohesive, well-structured essays, used geographical terminology appropriately and provided a range of specific geographical examples. A few responses lacked logic; structure; geographic terminology and specific geographical examples.

Describing the nature and pattern of geographical distribution of the cultural element was imperative to answering this question successfully. Along with using specific examples to explain how this pattern has been influenced by technological advances. Being able to assess likely future changes to this process was also required.

Stronger candidates explained the processes of globalisation using their examples, whereas weaker responses tended to focus on the historical changes that had occurred for their chosen topic without explicitly stating the links with the processes of globalisation. Better responses were able to effectively comment on how the element had been embraced in other countries and how technological advances had influenced this spread. Identifying limitations to the processes of globalisation within the chosen topics, especially in less developed countries and regions, was mentioned in the best responses.