# Government of South Australia LogoSACE Board Logo2023 Geography Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2023 assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

Across the Assessment Types for this subject, students can present their responses in oral or multimodal form, where 6 minutes is the equivalent of 1000 words. Students **should not speed-up the recording** of their videos excessively **in an attempt to condense more content** into the maximum time limit.

If a video is flagged by moderators as impacted by speed, schools will be **requested to provide a transcript** and moderators will be advised to moderate based on the evidence in the transcript, only considering evidence up to the maximum word limit (e.g. up to 2000 words for AT3).

If the speed of the recording makes the speech incomprehensible, it affects the accuracy of transcriptions and it also impacts the ability of markers/moderators to find evidence of student achievement against the performance standards.

School Assessment

Teachers can improve the moderation process and the online process by:

* thoroughly checking that all grades entered in School Online are correct
* ensuring the uploaded tasks are legible, are facing up (and all the same way), and have no blank pages
* uploading all tasks for students in the sample
* clearly naming each task with reference to the names used in the LAP.

Assessment Type 1: Skills and Application Tasks

Students complete four geographical Skills and Applications Tasks which together comprise a maximum of 4000 words or the equivalent in multimodal form (6 minutes in multimodal form is the equivalent of 1000 words).

Three tasks must be taken from the following Stage 2 Geography topics:

* one task from Topic 2: Climate change
* one task from Topic 4: Globalisation
* one task from Topic 5: Transforming global inequality.

One task can be from any topic or have a focus on fieldwork or geographical skills.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* using tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to cover the assessment design criteria, particularly the application of fieldwork and geographical skills
* allowing students a variety of ways to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills, for example through case studies. Prescriptive tasks without choice restrict student responses and lead to over-scaffolding
* enabling variation in the mode of assessment and in word limit across the tasks to help students to provide details required to achieve in the higher grade bands
* if using tests, linking these directly to the assessment design criteria and providing opportunity for students to address more than knowledge and understanding. Conversion of marks to grades was relied on in some cases and it prevented students from demonstrating their learning across a range of performance standards.

*The more successful responses commonly:*

* specifically referred to key concepts from the subject outline, including change and sustainability, and used the words of the Assessment Design Criteria and/or subject specific terminology, including evaluate and analyse
* used infographics, or similar, to good effect
* made good use of clearly and accurately annotated images and in a diversity of ways
* used a wider range of case study information, particularly for tasks relating to climate change, global inequality, and globalisation
* made better and more extensive use of heat maps in a range of presentations
* accurately analysed a range of geographical data presented in a variety of formats
* communicated the interconnections of geographical concepts and processes.

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided limited depth of explanation, which meant less chance of demonstrating ‘comprehensive knowledge’
* those who included a voice-over, added little value, or read from the information provided on slides
* had limited annotations or reference to diagrams and images
* lacked depth of explanation in addressing the assessment design criteria
* fell considerably short of the possible word limit
* did not reference appropriately or include a reference list
* were found in tests that did not enable students to demonstrate their learning, particularly in the application performance standards, and were generally focused on KU.

Assessment Type 2: Fieldwork Report

Students produce one individual fieldwork report. Each student is responsible for **independently** planning, organising, and carrying out fieldwork and completing a report. Fieldwork techniques used to collect primary data are paramount in the report, and students should analyse and evaluate primary data as the basis of their report. Information from secondary sources may be used to support students’ primary data.

The fieldwork report may be in multimodal, written, and/or oral form. A written report should be a maximum of 2000 words; an oral report should be a maximum of 12 minutes; a report in multimodal form should be of equivalent length.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* ensuring students focus on primary data collection, using secondary information to support their primary data
* enabling students to use a wide range of primary data collection techniques and presentation techniques, including the use of GIS
* encouraging students to explore the background geography of their fieldwork topic to set the context for the report
* encouraging students to develop a hypothesis to respond to throughout their report
* ensuring students do not respond to recommendations in a topic that does not require recommendations, for example a comparison of beach morphology
* ensuring students independently plan, organise, and carry out their fieldwork. Fieldwork hypotheses should be developed individually by students.

The more successful responses commonly:

* made outstanding use of statistical testing, including Mann-Whitney U test, Spearman’s, Pearson’s, and Chi Square
* made good use of secondary data, e.g. house and rental prices, to support primary data
* started with one or more hypothesis statements and included background geography for context, furthermore these hypotheses were referred to throughout the report
* provided clear evidence that ‘they’ visited the site/s, including maps and photographs
* effectively used data collection programs, such as Epicollect5 for data collection and displayed spatial data in forms, such as heat maps
* used Nitrate, phosphate, and turbidity measures seen in creek studies
* used annotations effectively to highlight features, particularly on photographs
* were able to communicate the interconnections of geographical concepts and processes.

The less successful responses commonly:

* used only a small number of primary data collection techniques and relied heavily on counts, interviews, and photographs
* spent many words on the historical background of the topic rather than background geography
* demonstrated limited use of spatial technologies and relied on Google Maps or included hand-drawn spatial representations of poor quality
* failed to refer to the question in the final summary or throughout the report and thus, did not link findings to answering the hypothesis or question
* had an inquiry focus rather than fieldwork, relying heavily on secondary sources of information, which whilst these can be used, they should only supplement primary data
* lacked primary data which generally made it difficult for students to present their data in a variety of forms other than annotated photos and bar graphs.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination

Question 1

Most candidates were successful in identifying sources of water pollution in 1(a) with many referring to water treatment plants and residential buildings. Whilst not required, many responses used specific map evidence, including grid references to identify sources.

Many candidates correctly identified the role of flat land and water sources in influencing settlement in 1(b). Weaker responses did not refer to specific areas within the map.

Most candidates correctly identified the scale as closest to 1:13000 in 1(c). Benefits of the satellite images identified by successful candidates included specific patterns of vegetation, more detail, and shapes of buildings. Weaker responses were vague and repetitive.

Successful candidates explicitly identified and analysed similarities and difference between the two sites in 1(d) with specific map evidence. Many responses only referred to similarities or provided lists of features rather than comparison between the two sites.

Question 2

Candidates generally identified either a range of factors or explained in detail 2 factors that made this an appropriate fieldwork approach for 2(a). It is an open-ended question which allows for a range of fieldwork techniques to be used, process uses random sampling to avoid bias, 35 houses is a valid sample size, process is repeated twice to assess change in data, data is collected on two attributes which may indicate a correlation between food scraps present and percentage of landfill bin filled. Weaker responses were unfocused and/or repetitive.

Candidates rarely evaluated effectively in 2(b), with many only listing positive factors, including spatial presentation of data, the two colours clearly indicate presence of food scraps, the size of bubbles represent proportion of bin filled, Temporal change (before and after), which houses are used in the survey. Negative factors, such as the lack of scale and difficulties in reading exact values, were only identified in relatively few responses.

Responses generally identified both the decrease in overall waste and increased proportions of food scraps in 2(c).

Candidates were generally successful in selecting appropriate fieldwork techniques related to sustainability goals with many selecting vegetation transects and quadrats for biodiversity and pedestrian and cycle counts for active transport. Weaker responses did not link directly to the goals or were not actual fieldwork techniques.

Question 3

Most responses correctly identified changes to the population structure diagrams in 3(a), with increases in young workers and decline in teenagers’ common responses.

Candidates effectively used the information provided in 3(b), with most candidates referring to improved transport networks, employment, recreational facilities, and cheap housing.

Relatively few responses fully addressed the requirements of question 3(c), with limited use of case studies. Responses were often vague referring to only one impact, such as economic issues. Stronger responses used specific detailed case study information and referred to effects on economic activity, strain on pensions, and pressures on workers, along with issues around healthcare and aged care facilities.

Question 4

Almost all candidates identified the positive relationship between GDP per capita and life expectancy.

Responses explaining this relationship were generally less effective. Candidates tended to talk vaguely around healthcare rather than making links to specific health system benefits of countries with high GDP per capita. Living conditions, sanitation, and food supply were rarely referred to. The strongest responses mentioned specific countries.

Question 5

Most candidates effectively measured the quarry area as closest to 1km2. In 5(b) students consistently demonstrated a strong understanding of the effects of this type of land cover change on different components of an ecosystem. Weaker responses were repetitive.

In 5(c) almost all candidates identified positives of the skink plan, with most referring to preservation of the species. Many also identified negative, including lack of genetic diversity.

5(d) was answered relatively poorly due to lack of specific examples as outlined in the syllabus. Most responses did identify urban expansion and agricultural expansion.

Question 6

Relatively few candidates followed the question instruction related to different components of the ecological footprint, limiting the success of most responses. Many weaker responses talked only about carbon footprints. The strongest responses used specific map evidence, and made links between diet and grazing land, house size and timber supply, transport, and carbon.