# 2018 Geography Subject Assessment Advice

## Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the previous year’s 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.

# School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Geographical Skills and Applications

Students undertake four tasks for Geographical Skills and Applications to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of geographical concepts, and to examine geographical features, patterns, and processes.

Tasks for this assessment type should be to a maximum of 4000 words or 24 minutes in total, teachers have discretion in allocating word/time limits to individual tasks.

The more successful responses commonly:

* provided evidence against a small number of performance standards
* had a clear focus, examining one issue in depth and applying specified concepts
* had flexible options in presentation methods, including multimodal
* demonstrated effective use and integration of visual representations and annotations to support their analysis
* demonstrated highly effective analysis of trends and patterns and supported this with a wide range of maps, diagrams, photos and graphs
* addressed the performance standards in a structured way and used headings and captions to clearly communicate information
* demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the interconnection between people and social, economic, and environmental factors
* demonstrated comprehensive understanding of a variety of geographical concepts.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not meet the requirements of the current subject outline, most notably they completed more than the required four tasks for this assessment type and addressed the specific features of the previous subject outline
* lacked depth and geographical focus and did not explicitly respond to the question posed in the assessment task
* were descriptive on the whole and demonstrated only limited analysis
* responded to a series of lock step questions and did not enable or encourage creative thinking or analysis of an issue in depth
* presented evidence of learning in text heavy PowerPoint presentations that lacked integration of supporting information such as diagrams and maps
* presented evidence of learning in aesthetically pleasing formats such as websites but lacked geographical relevance.

Assessment Type 2: Fieldwork Report

Students undertake one individual fieldwork report with a focus on a local topic or an issue of personal interest. They collect and analyse primary data using a wide range of data-collection techniques. Students integrate this data using visual representations and may support this with information from secondary sources. They analyse patterns and geographical concepts from the data they have collected and may make recommendations based on their data analysis.

The fieldwork report should be to a maximum of 2000 words and may be written or in oral or multimodal format.

The more successful responses commonly:

* integrated geographical theory and concepts into the chosen context for the fieldwork report
* demonstrated a wide range of fieldwork techniques undertaken to collect primary data and usually visited the location under study several times
* used students’ own data and spatial technologies to generate original maps
* focused on a small-scale, clearly defined issue or hypothesis relating to the local area
* highly organised and integrated evidence and data to support their analysis
* identified a range of perspectives and explained and justified recommendations made in the report .

The less successful responses commonly:

* had an undefined focus or were linked to a broad topic
* lacked a range of fieldwork techniques and relied heavily on information from secondary sources
* carried out a large amount of fieldwork but with much of it unrelated to the focus, or repeated the same fieldwork data collection techniques for a number of different locations
* completed the data collection over a short period of time and so lacked a temporal aspect
* focused on evaluation of the fieldwork techniques rather than analysis and evaluation of the data collected
* provided only general recommendations that did not make suggestions specific to the context of the fieldwork report
* were assessed against the performance standards from the previous subject outline.

## Assessment Type 3: Examination

Students undertake one 2-hour examination. The examination has two sections, section 1 focusing on geographical skills and section 2 on topics 1: Ecosystems and people and topic 3: Population change. Students use a range of geographical skills to interpret written and visual materials, including maps, and apply these skills in unfamiliar contexts.

The more successful responses commonly:

* were able to discuss elevation, slope, land cover and direction in the walking notes (question 1) and demonstrate their map skills and geographical knowledge in an unknown context
* evaluated the positive and negative factors of their selected site for the proposed housing development and of the remaining sites (question 1)
* interpreted the information provided across a range of maps, including the air quality maps and urban development map
* demonstrated extensive knowledge of the services provided by ecosystems and of the management strategies used to ensure the sustainability of ecosystems
* demonstrated detailed knowledge of case study information for population pyramids and for the movement of people
* attempted to answer all questions in the examination with many extended answers provided
* demonstrated strong geographical literacy.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked application of their knowledge and understanding of fieldwork (techniques and analysis) in an unfamiliar context and did not apply their own knowledge and experiences of fieldwork to the sand dune
* did not identify the sand dune system as an ecosystem
* lacked an understanding of the positives and negatives of different types of graphs used to display and analyse geographical data
* did not understand the concept of vertical exaggeration and its application to cross-sections
* confused ecosystem services with ecosystem resources
* misinterpreted population density and climatic and location factors with demographic processes
* lacked case study knowledge for both ecosystems and population movements and provided only general information about each
* had difficulty understanding the command terms in each question resulting in misinterpretation and non-response to all elements of the question.