

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION®**

MAY/JUNE 2012

GEOGRAPHY

GENERAL COMMENTS

This year, 2065 candidates wrote the examinations in Geography. The number writing Unit 1 was 1025 while 1040 wrote Unit 2. The overall performance on Unit 1 was better than Unit 2, particularly in Paper 02.

The improvements noted in map-reading skills in 2011 were not sustained in 2012 in Unit 2. The new areas of the revised syllabus for Unit 2 continue to present some challenges in Module 2 (Hydrological, Fluvial, Coastal and Limestone Environments) and Module 3 (Development and Disparities in Development). It was evident that candidates continue to struggle with the material in these two modules.

DETAILED COMMENTS

UNIT 1

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

Paper 01 comprised 45 multiple-choice items with 15 items assessing each module across the three cognitive levels — Knowledge and Comprehension, Application of Knowledge and Practical Skills.

For Unit 1, the mean percentage score was 56.6 with a standard deviation of 11.53. For Unit 2, the mean percentage score was 52.9 and the standard deviation was 11.01.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section A

Question 1

Specific Objectives: Module 1–13; Module 2–7; Module 3–9

Candidates were given a map extract of Basseterre, St Christopher on a scale of 1:25 000 and in Part (a) (i), they were asked to describe the form and function of Basseterre. There was a similar question on the 2011 paper and in the Report on Candidates' Work, it was stated that candidates did not appear to understand what was meant by the form of the town. The same observation applies this year. Some candidates described the site; others the situation. The form is the pattern, for example, whether the town is a rectangular grid or elongated in east-west direction.

Candidates were better able to describe the function of the city. However, candidates should be encouraged to give broad classifications with examples. Factory is not the function of Basseterre, neither is school nor church. The functions are industrial or service. It may be residential, commercial or administrative. These categories should be supported by the relevant example(s) from the map.

In Part (a) (ii), candidates were asked to describe the influence of relief on the distribution of villages. Many described the relief without linking it to the distribution. Others were unclear of the definition of relief, confusing it with land use or lines of communication. There was also marked failure on the part of candidates to link relief with patterns — isolated houses in upland areas and pockets of level land.

In Part (b), candidates were required to compare the two coastlines using a well-labelled sketch map. In general, the maps were not well labelled. Many candidates did not compare the coast—orientation, extent shape, relief, landforms. For example, the eastern coastal area is oriented in a north-north-west to south-south-east direction. The southern coastal area is oriented primarily east to west. Beaches are found on both, but they are more extensive in the east. The characteristics of the two coasts may have been the result of different depositional history — subsidence of the south coast and emergence in the east. The responses were poor.

In Part (c), two photographs were provided — one showing conditions before a tsunami and the other, after the tsunami. In Part (c) (i), candidates were required to describe the effect. This was well done. In Part (c) (ii), candidates were asked to define the term *tsunami*. Candidates need to be more precise in their definitions. A big wave is not acceptable. A more precise response is, *it is a big wave generated mainly by underwater earthquakes but also by volcanoes and landslides*. The expected response for Part (iii) is that *the causes of tsunamis are earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and landslides*.

Part (d) was exceptionally well done and many candidates scored between 12 and 15 marks from a maximum of 15. However, a few candidates listed hurricanes and flooding as geological hazards. Acceptable responses are *volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, landslides when resulting from earthquake and emissions of toxic volcanic gases, bombs*. Candidates should note that volcanic eruptions are hazards but volcanoes of themselves are not hazards.

In Part (d) (i), candidates were able to name and locate an area where a tsunami could pose a hazard. Most candidates identified the southern coastline.

Most candidates responded to Part (d) (ii) and were able to outline strategies to mitigate the effects of a tsunami — *increased awareness, evacuation plans, simulation exercises, warnings and zoning*.

Section B

Module 1: Population and Settlement

Question 2

Specific Objectives: Modules 1–3, 4, 12

The stimuli in Parts (a) (i) a) and b) were two population pyramids showing the structure of Japan in 1950 and 2008. Candidates were asked to state the terms that best describe the two pyramids.

About 90 per cent of the candidates could not identify the structure using accepted conventional terms such as *youthful* or *ageing*. Instead, they used terms such as ‘high’ and ‘fluctuating’ to describe the stages of the demographic transition.

In Part (a) (ii), candidates were asked to suggest reasons for the changes between 1950 and 2008. Many candidates correctly described changes in the structure of the Japanese population. However, they did not make the connection with the changing shape — *fewer children narrowing the base; high life expectancy expanding the elderly population*.

Part (b) (i) required candidates to describe a policy implemented by a country to deal with its rapidly growing population. The majority of candidates was able to do so, outlining some benefits and problems resulting from the policy in Part (b) (ii).

In Part (c), candidates were expected to discuss three causes and three consequences of gentrification in more developed countries. The responses were extremely poor. It was clear that candidates did not understand the term and process. *Gentrification describes a process in which the young, affluent middle class moved into formerly depressed inner city neighbourhoods.* They did so to be near to the services and amenities of the central city and to minimize the journey to work. Some of the consequences of this development were the displacement of the former population and an increase in property values. Candidates focused on the conditions existing in inner-city areas before gentrification. Gentrification was not caused by crime; the upwardly mobile did not move into these areas because of crime. This was a fundamental error and the misunderstanding was widespread.

Question 3

Specific Objectives: Modules 1–5, 6, 12

The stimulus in Part (a) was a map showing the population density of Brazil and in Part (a) (i), candidates were asked to name the method used to depict density. The majority of candidates correctly identified the method as *choropleth* although the spelling was often incorrect. The responses to Part (a) (ii) were also good — the advantages and disadvantages of the method. Candidates mentioned the visual impact and it was possible to see dense and sparse areas as advantages, and the suggestion of uniform values and sudden changes at boundaries as disadvantages.

Rank size rule and urban primacy are new areas in the syllabus and very few candidates understood the concepts. *The rank size rule is an attempt to find a numerical relationship between the population size of settlements within a country — size is inversely proportional to the rank.* The city ranked second will have a population that is half of the size of the city that is ranked first, and the third ranked will have one third of the population of the city ranked first.

In urban primacy, the largest city is more than twice the size of the second largest.

In Part (c), candidates were asked to write an essay to assess the economic and social impact of international migration in the area of origin and destination. Although a few responses were excellent, some general weaknesses were identified:

- Candidates did not know the difference between *social* and *economic* (remittances — economic; skewed population structure — social).
- Several candidates had an inadequate grasp of the types of migration (rural—urban is not international).
- The question did not call for push and pull factors in international migration.
- Essays require an introduction and conclusion.

Module 2: Hydrological, Fluvial, Coastal and Limestone Environments

Question 4

Specific Objectives: Module 2 – 1, 2

In Part (a), candidates were given a diagram of a beach profile and breaking waves and asked to identify a number of features. In general, the question was well done with the majority of candidates identifying constructive waves, backwash and swash. There was less success with the identification of the longshore bar.

Part (b) was based on the hydrological cycle and candidates were asked to describe a number of related terms. The responses were unacceptable. The responses expected are as follows:

- (i) Infiltration capacity refers to a rate.
- (ii) Interception storage refers to the precipitation retained on the plants.
- (iii) Potential evapotranspiration refers to the water that could be lost if the supply is unlimited.
- (iv) The water table is the upper surface of the zone of saturation.

When responses were not completely wrong, they were convoluted and candidates did not understand what was needed in a definition.

In Part (c), candidates were to explain three ways in which the channel shape affects the efficiency of the stream. Too many candidates described changes in the long profile of rivers. Some discussed the factors associated with efficiency without relating it to channel shape. Candidates were expected to make the link between hydraulic radius (efficiency), friction and loss of energy. Generally, the marks were unsatisfactory.

Question 5

Specific Objectives: Module 2 – 2, 3

In Part (a), candidates were given a diagram illustrating Darwin's theory of coral reef formation. They were asked to identify two features — a volcanic island (A) and an atoll (B) and two processes — sea level rise (C) and subsidence (D). The responses to this part of the question, especially the processes, were poor.

In Part (b), candidates were asked to explain how limestone landscapes were influenced by climate, joints and bedding planes. Generally, candidates were able to describe the chemical process of carbonation. However, many of them failed to link, for example, high rainfall and solution, high temperatures, the production of organic acid and solution or carbon dioxide and solution. Some candidates concentrated on rainfall to the exclusion of temperature. The responses to Part (b) (ii) were also weak. Jointing allows a greater surface area to be exposed to weathering. The widening of bedding planes results in features such as caves. In far too many responses, weathering and carbonation were confused.

In Part (c), candidates were required to explain how climate change, the extraction of reef fish and nearby build developments were threats to coral reefs. The responses were fair. However, the majority of candidates concentrated on the effect of changing temperatures but with little understanding of the mechanism of coral bleaching and the symbiotic relationship which kept the corals alive. Changes in the composition of the reef and the effect of a lowering of salinity were also neglected.

The emphasis of the responses to Part (ii), extraction of reef fish, was on the effect on biodiversity. Little was said of the effect of changes in species dominance — removal of parrot fish causes algae to dominate and cover the corals thus killing them. Unsustainable, fishing practices was another area that could have been better developed.

The final section was generally well done. Candidates described the effect of the enrichment of coastal waters by tourist-related activities and other land-based developments.

Module 3: Natural Events and Hazards

Question 6

Specific Objectives: Module 3 – 3, 4, 5

Candidates submitted very good responses to Part (a), very good descriptions of the types of flooding — riverine, flash, coastal and estuarine. Some candidates, however, put too much emphasis on causes such as deforestation and little on characteristics, such as the intensity and short duration of flash flooding and the confinement of water in estuarine flooding.

Part (b) focused on the concept of a seismic gap. The responses were poor. Candidates described the various types of gaps that could be formed by an earthquake. Some candidates also conceived a gap as the interval between earthquakes. Few described a gap as the segment of an active fault where there had been no earthquakes for an unusually long time.

In Part (c), candidates were required to explain the formation of three types of landforms that are associated with the convergence of two oceanic plates. Generally, the responses were poor. Many candidates described landforms produced by the convergence of continental and oceanic plates. Some identified the landforms — island arcs, trenches, accretionary prisms, marginal basins, volcanoes — but could not describe their formation. The diagrams underscored the misconceptions. Many candidates conceptualized the convergence of plates in terms of the convergence of winds at the Inter-tropical Convergence Zone. They explained, **incorrectly**, that the two plates are of the same density and cannot subduct. On meeting, they are forced upwards, forming either volcanoes or mountains.

Question 7

Specific Objectives: Module 3 – 4, 7

Responses to this question were better than those provided for Question 6. The stimulus for Part (a) was a diagram of the Disaster Management Cycle and in Part (a) (i), candidates were asked to name two phases, and in Part (ii), to list two activities that would be undertaken in one of them. Most candidates correctly identified the preparedness and recovery phases. However, the activities that

they associated with the recovery phases were more relevant to the response. In the recovery phase, attention would be paid to emergency relief, provision of shelter, restoration of infrastructure and emotional support.

In Part (b), candidates were required to describe two secondary effects of volcanic eruptions, citing specific examples. The effects of a hazard may be classified as primary and secondary. A volcano may spew ash which may fall and cause damage. This is a primary effect. However, the ash may reflect solar radiation which will result in cooling. This is a secondary effect. Or, the eruption may melt ice which triggers a lahar, a secondary effect. The responses showed a poor grasp of the subject.

Part (c) required candidates to write an essay explaining how the eruptive style of volcanoes is affected by the characteristics of the magma. Many of the responses were extremely good. Candidates described the types of volcanic rocks focusing on their different composition, viscosity, temperature and the manner in which these affected eruptive style. Few candidates, however, described the effect of water content. Candidates must pay more attention to introductions and conclusions. Candidates cannot earn full marks if the introduction is merely a repeat of the question. Much improvement is also needed in the construction and presentation of diagrams.

Paper 031 – School-Based Assessment (SBA)

In most studies, the cover pages were correctly presented. In general, the statement of purpose was done satisfactorily in that purpose and skills were identified. However, the contents were not always well developed, and research questions or problems were not well explained.

The design of many studies did not allow for in-depth analysis. Figures, graphs and charts were generally well drawn but lacked proper titles and labels. Generally, photographs were not well labelled or annotated. Increasingly, maps are relegated to simply displaying the location and the study area. Maps can provide valuable geographical data and often can be used effectively as part of the analyses. Well-labelled aerial photographs and satellite imagery (including from Google Earth) could be used more frequently in description and analysis.

Although improvements are evident in the use of maps and diagrams, students are still failing to integrate and use their illustrations effectively. Maps and diagrams must be regarded as an integral part of the written description and analysis. Generally, *Description of Findings* was satisfactorily done by those using primary data, although they sometimes did not make effective use of maps and diagrams. The description of secondary data was often not thorough enough; sometimes this section is simply a transfer of information from the expert/resource person to the assignment.

On the whole, Analyses and Discussions were poorly done. Students failed to make inferences, show connections, give reasons for the patterns formed or for any changes or deviations in an expected phenomenon from the data gathered.

Although some improvement was noted in grammar, there was still little use of relevant geographical terms, which is often reflected in poor bibliographies.

The conclusions should be framed with reference to the purpose of the study. The conclusions were generally fair. The recommendations were generally satisfactory. Sometimes limitations were given instead of recommendations. The bibliographies were generally poor. Many of the texts cited were at the CSEC level. There was little evidence of in-depth reading by students.

Teachers and students should be careful in their choice of research topics. These should be framed within the specific objectives of the syllabus, geared to the Advanced/CAPE level, and allow for the collection of reliable data and scientific analyses. Hazard responses, preparedness and perception studies were very popular; however, most were often very poorly treated.

Paper 032 – Alternative to School-Based Assessment (SBA)

This paper is written by private candidates in lieu of the SBA. Candidates were required to respond to three structured questions which parallel the skills required in the SBA. The candidates performed unsatisfactorily. The mean score was 25 per cent.

Several candidates could not state or apply the rank size rule required in Question 1. They were expected to explain that a hierarchy according to size of the population is noticed in some countries. The population in each city is inversely proportional to its rank. The more able candidates stated that the n^{th} -ranked city will be $1/n$ the size of the largest city. Additionally, candidates had challenges locating countries, for example, most of them could not locate Jamaica or the United Kingdom.

For Question 2, the majority of candidates failed to recognize the landforms in the photograph. They lost marks when they focused on the river rather than on the alluvial fan.

Generally, candidates knew many of the activities to be undertaken for a disaster management plan as required in Question 3 but were unable to place them in relevant categories.

UNIT 2

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section A

Question 1

Specific Objectives: Module 1 – 8, 9; Module 2 – 1, 10; Modules 3–9

This question was compulsory and assessed practical and map-reading skills. Based on the general performance, the majority of candidates writing this unit have not mastered map-work skills. Candidates used descriptions such as ‘mountainous’ and ‘flat’ very loosely. There was no appreciation for *hilly, rugged, undulating, low lying*.

In Part (a) (i), the definition of a soil profile was imprecise. Candidates were expected to state that a soil profile is a vertical section through the soil and shows several horizons and layers. In Parts (a) (ii) and (iii), candidates were required to complete the drawing of two soil profiles on a slope. Again, the responses were inadequate. Candidates should have explored the effects of relief on soil

formation. So the horizon on the upper slope should have had a thin A horizon, the absence of a B and C should have been dominant. The lower profile should have had a better development of horizons — deeper A, distinct B.

Part (b) (i) required the name and location of three different economic activities on the map. A name and grid reference would have satisfied the requirements, for example, port services at Charlottesville (674527). The activities were not properly located. Candidates confused social services and economic activities.

In Part (b) (ii), candidates were to suggest three reasons for the dominance effect of Roxborough. Unfortunately the wrong grid reference was provided — the examining team apologises for any inconvenience to candidates. Seemingly, the majority of candidates had no difficulty locating Roxborough and scored full marks, identifying, for example, access to the sea, flat coastal plain, road network. Similarly, candidates performed well on Part (b) (iii) which asked them for a factor which could limit the expansion of the town, for example, relief, forests, competing growth poles.

In Part (c) (i), candidates were to identify three types of economic activity around Speyside that could be expanded. Many candidates identified economic activities that were not present and so expansion was out of the question. Farming was a possibility on areas currently dedicated to coconuts, for example.

In Part (c) (ii), candidates simply did not understand what was needed as a response to this question. The statement referred to *internal* economic and social disparities that could constrain development. Candidates were supposed to identify the disparities within the area east of Easting 65. A comparison was necessary. There was good accessibility in the south and east but the absence of roads in the north and central area could constrain development. Services were not well distributed. Charlottesville dominated, while other centres lacked essential services. Candidates did not come to grips with the concept of disparity and the need for internal comparison.

Section B

Module 1: Climate, Vegetation and Soils

Question 2

Specific Objectives: Module 1 – 1, 5, 7

The stimulus for Part (a) was a map of the Caribbean showing weather conditions on 3 April 2010.

In Part (a), candidates were required to identify a country that is under a low pressure system. The responses to this section would have been better if candidates were able to identify countries in the Caribbean. Columbia and Venezuela were under a low pressure system. Other questions based on the map drew better responses.

Responses to Part (b) were unsatisfactory. Candidates were asked to describe the role in the global heat budget of shortwave radiation in Part (b) (i) and longwave radiation in Part (b) (ii). It was clear that they did not understand the concepts — shortwave radiation from the sun, losing heat as it passes

through the atmosphere, heating the earth and longwave radiation from the earth, heating the atmosphere.

In Part (c), candidates were asked to describe three problems and three opportunities presented by the development of tropical rain forests. A surprisingly large number of candidates thought, incorrectly that one way to develop the tropical rainforest was to replace it by different activity. It was an opportunity, they said to develop agricultural enterprise. Candidates were expected to indicate that species loss is a problem. Forest removal is associated with global warming as it destroys the livelihood and culture of indigenous peoples. There are opportunities to market natural products, for research and development of ecotourism, carbon trading and debt-for-nature swaps.

Question 3

Specific Objectives: Module 1 – 8, 9

Given a triangular graph, candidates were asked to state the percentage of sand, silt and clay. Candidates failed to read the graph correctly and the answers were generally wrong. However, they were more successful in stating the maximum amount of clay loam as 40 per cent.

In Part (b), candidates were asked to describe three processes — salinization, calcification and gleying. The descriptions were fair with most candidates managing to identify a few characteristics of each: salinization — the deposition of a salt crust after water is drawn upwards by capillary action and evaporation; calcification — the accumulation of calcium deposits in the B horizon as a result of capillary action; and gleying — the result of waterlogging.

In Part (c) (i), candidates were required to explain the ways in which the vegetation of tropical grasslands are influenced by climate and in Part (c) (ii), by human activities. The majority of candidates stated the features of the climate, essential to an answer in very general terms. Several discussed the effects of soil.

In Part (e) (ii), many candidates made generalizations about the effect of industrialization, urbanization and global warming, giving the impression that they were prepared to discuss what they had studied rather than what the question required — the effect of, for example, fires, agriculture, nomadism. Generally, the responses were inadequate.

Module 2: Economic Activity

Question 4

Specific Objectives: Module 2 – 6, 7

Part (a) (i) required a definition of organic farming. The majority of candidates submitted imprecise definitions and could not be credited with the maximum four marks. An acceptable response would be *that organic farming is farming without factory-made chemicals either in the form of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides or yield-enhancing drugs for animals. The aim is to produce a high quality product with minimum damage to the environment.*

Most candidates were able to state two benefits and problems of organic farming in Part (a) (ii) — *less likely to harm the environment, less loss of wildlife, water retentive soils*. The problems of farming were *lower yields than conventional farming, more weeds, greater loss from pests and disease, and more expensive*. Too many candidates focused on the end result than on the farming process.

The stimulus in Part (b) was a table showing tourist arrivals from a number of countries. The majority of candidates gave accurate answers to four of the five questions that were based on the table. In the fifth, they were asked to suggest reasons why few markets accounted for such a large share of tourist arrivals. Many understood the question and suggested reasons for the growth in tourism. The main source areas evident from the table were the USA and Europe, all temperate regions attracting warmth-seeking visitors. The USA, the largest market, is closest, airfares are lower and travel times are shorter. A large diaspora is involved and European travel can often be explained by colonial ties.

Part (c) proved challenging to the majority of the candidates. They were asked to discuss two ways in which multi-national corporations (MNCs) have influenced change in major industrial regions in more developed countries. Several candidates did not attempt this section (Unit 2, Module 2 SO6, Content 3 (ii)). Those who attempted it wrote at length about the characteristics of MNCs and the impact of MNCs on developing countries. There was no discussion of changes occasioned by offshoring, outsourcing or specialization.

Question 5

Specific Objectives: Module 2 – 1, 4, 6

In the diagram in Part (a) (i), P represented evaporation and Q capillary action. Candidates were more likely to identify P than Q. Consequently, many candidates were unable to answer Part (a) (ii) which asked for the effects of the processes on agriculture.

Part (b) required candidates to distinguish between the terms *tertiary economic activity* and *quaternary economic activity*. The term *distinguish between* implies that a comparison is needed. Candidates simply described the characteristics of the two. They could have said that *tertiary activities are concerned with providing a service to customers unlike quaternary which delivers information and skills*.

In Part (c), candidates were asked to write an essay to support the statement *Governments in the Caribbean encourage the development of manufacturing industries*. They were also asked to include three benefits and three challenges associated with this encouragement. The few candidates who had the information on which to base an essay, wrote excellent essays. About 90 per cent of the candidates ignored the key component of the question — *Write an essay* — but rather focused on the benefits and challenges. What they were supposed to include as a part of the essay became the focus of the essay. There was no discussion of the strategies used by Caribbean governments, such as import substitution and free zones. In addition, the intention of the question was to have a discussion of the benefits and problems of the policies, such as high prices and low quality for locally produced goods and the flight of industry once they had lost their tax exempt status. Overall, the marks earned on this question were satisfactory.

Module 3: Development and Disparities in Development

Question 6

Specific Objectives: Module 3 – 4, 7

The performance on this question was weak. The majority of candidates scored fewer than five marks. The evidence suggests that candidates were completely unfamiliar with the topics and the responses were the result of guesswork. The table in Part 2 showed aid to developing countries in the form of total value and as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP). Candidates were asked to describe what was an inverse relationship. Few candidates gave the correct response.

In Part (b), candidates were asked to describe the concepts of underdevelopment in Part (b) (i) and gender in Part (ii). The responses to underdevelopment were better than to gender. For Part (i), the majority of candidates described (in very convoluted language) a situation in which the resources of a country were not fully harnessed and not reflected in the standard of living. In view of the recent changes in the concept of gender, candidates were credited if they described it in terms of socially assigned roles and behaviour as well as a biologically determined concept — sex. Despite this, candidates performed very badly.

On the final section — an essay on the consequences of global disparities in development — candidates lost their way. They discussed the causes of global disparities. In some cases, they ignored *global* and discussed *local* disparities while in other cases, they did not appear to understand the term disparity (See comments on Question 1 (c) (ii), page 9).

Question 7

Specific Objectives: Module 3 – 6, 7

The responses to this question suggested that candidates were completely unfamiliar with the subject matter and several resorted to guesswork. The calculations of debt relief based on Table 3 were incorrect in Part (a) (i), (ii), (iii). The syllabus (Unit 2, Module 3, Content (3) (ii)) specifies the application of Myrdal's model to an understanding of regional disparities in income, poverty or health in a specific country. Candidates were required to have knowledge of a specific case study. The nature of the disparity required by Part (b) (i) was supposed to be based on one of the three areas mentioned in the question. For health, a disparity such as low infant mortality or high or higher infant mortality could be used specifying the actual rates. For income, differences in GDP would suffice.

The initial comparative advantage of the core may have been the presence of a natural resource as *port facilities*. That advantage had to be a characteristic of the core. So, if Port-of-Spain was the core region, the initial advantage could not have been the deposits of petroleum in South Trinidad. If Port-of-Spain was the core, then the answer to Part (b) (i) should have focused on the disparity between Port-of-Spain and the rest. There is a fundamental misunderstanding of the concepts and issues which must be addressed in a systematic way. These two questions barely nibbled around the edges of the cumulative model and candidates were unable to grasp the essentials.

In Part (c), candidates were required to write an essay outlining four reasons why appropriate technology is one of the keys to sustainable development. The definitive word is *appropriate*. It is not technology. Too many candidates wrote about the application of technology to development. Appropriate technology utilizes local skills, reduces the import of expensive, sophisticated machinery, can be repaired locally, and causes little harm to the environment. Those candidates who grasped this difference performed extremely well.

Paper 031 – School-Based Assessment (SBA)

In most studies, the cover pages were correctly presented. In general, the statement of purpose was done satisfactorily in that purpose and skills were identified. However, the contents were not always well developed, and research questions or problems were not well explained.

The studies often lacked focus especially evident where experts or resource persons were assisting students. The methodology was done fairly well in most cases. Those for coasts and rivers were among the better ones. The methodology for questionnaires was generally unsatisfactory — the sample sizes were often inadequate, sampling methods were not outlined, and the purpose of the questionnaire and information being sought were often not included. The majority of questionnaires were created in a vacuum — there was an absence of a theoretical framework on which the questionnaires or studies were based.

The design of many studies did not allow for in-depth analysis. Figures, graphs and charts were generally well drawn but lacked proper titles and labels. Generally, photographs were not well labelled or annotated. Increasingly, maps are relegated to simply displaying the location and the study area. Maps can provide valuable geographical data and often can be used effectively as part of the analyses. Well-labelled aerial photographs and satellite imagery (including from Google Earth) could be used more frequently in description and analysis. Many studies had no maps so there was no spatial context. In vegetation studies, students generated graphs using excel, but failed to construct transects.

Although improvements are evident in the use of maps and diagrams, students are still failing to integrate and use their illustrations effectively. Maps and diagrams must be regarded as an integral part of the written description and analysis. Generally, *Description of Findings* was satisfactorily done by those using primary data, although they sometimes did not make effective use of maps and diagrams. The description of secondary data was often not thorough enough; sometimes this section is simply a transfer of information from the expert/resource person to the assignment.

The descriptions were fairly well done but in many physical studies (soils, vegetation), the study areas were not adequately described.

On the whole, Analyses and Discussions were poorly done. Students failed to make inferences, show connections, give reasons for the patterns formed or for any changes or deviations in an expected phenomenon from the data gathered.

Although some improvement was noted in grammar, there was still little use of relevant geographical terms, which is often reflected in poor bibliographies.

The conclusions should be framed with reference to the purpose of the study. The conclusions were generally fair. The recommendations were generally satisfactory. Sometimes limitations were given instead of recommendations. The bibliographies were generally poor. Many of the texts cited were at the CSEC level. There was little evidence of in-depth reading by students.

Teachers and students should be careful in their choice of research topics. These should be framed within the specific objectives of the syllabus, geared to the Advanced/CAPE level, allow for the collection of reliable data and scientific analyses. Global warming and climate change are becoming more popular topics. Teachers should ensure that students understand the concepts and have grasped the facts before they attempt any study. Studies on perception of global warming should be avoided.

Paper 032 – Alternative to School-Based Assessment (SBA)

This paper is written by private candidates in lieu of the SBA. Candidates were required to respond to three structured questions which parallel the skills required in the SBA. The candidates performed unsatisfactorily. The mean score was 37 per cent.

Candidates knew little about transects and quadrants and consequently, they earned very little marks on Question 1.

Question 2 had the best responses. The candidates did the calculations correctly and drew the graph. However, regarding the section focusing on tourism, – most thought *leakages* related to tourists going somewhere other than their country.

The responses to Question 3 were also satisfactory. The majority of candidates was able to identify differences and made a satisfactory effort at explaining the factors.