

# **National Certificate of Educational Achievement**

## **2011 Assessment Report**

### **Geography Level 3**

- 90701 Analyse natural processes in the context of a geographic environment**
- 90702 Analyse a cultural process**
- 90704 Select and apply skills and ideas in a geographic context**

## COMMENTARY

This year saw a change in format in the 90704 Skills paper, which had only two main sections with Important Geographic Ideas woven into each question rather than being examined separately, as in previous years. This change was responded to very favourably by candidates, who clearly found this paper more manageable with regard to time. As a result, timing was clearly not an issue in any of the standards, with markers finding a high percentage of candidates completing all three papers easily. However, it appears that candidates still remain selective about standards attempted, with many opting not to attempt one standard.

## STANDARD REPORTS

### **90701 Analyse natural processes in the context of a geographic environment**

#### **ACHIEVEMENT**

**Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They typically:**

- understood the difference between a natural process and a natural feature
- showed some understanding of the term 'analyse' by explaining how and why processes operate
- drew a sketch map (or cross section) of their case study, showing some natural features with basic mapping conventions such as a title and labels or a key
- wrote answers that showed how one process was involved in the formation of a feature.

#### **NOT ACHIEVED**

**Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:**

- completed only one of the two questions required and showed a lack of understanding
- did not demonstrate knowledge of the difference between a feature, an element, and a process e.g. a river is a feature and river transport is a process
- chose a natural process that limited discussion of the different stages
- wrote about human modifications of an environment or feature rather than of a process
- did not show the link between the action of people and the operation of a process e.g. how does putting up a fence interfere with aeolian transport?
- described rather than analysed how a feature was formed by natural processes
- did not use case study evidence in their answers
- did not draw maps or cross sections of their environment that showed natural features or did not use any mapping conventions
- did not name natural processes responsible for the formation of a feature.

## **ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT**

**In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit typically:**

- chose clear agent-linked natural processes/features, which were then the focus of their answers
- analysed more than one modification to a process within an answer
- showed good interpretation skills, such as writing about how a process was modified as well as the extent and outcomes
- analysed more than one natural process responsible for the formation of a feature or analysed more than one reason for the distribution of a natural feature
- gave answers that had some depth and detail to them
- used a range of supporting case study evidence
- drew a sketch map (or cross section) of their case study, showing several natural features with sound mapping conventions such as a title, north arrow, colour, key or labels, and scale.

## **ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE**

**In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence typically:**

- used specific information related to their case study environment throughout their answers
- adapted their knowledge to suit the question and used key words from the question in their answer
- used technical detail, as well as depth, within at least one of their written answers
- wrote answers that were concise and used subject language appropriately to convey their understanding of natural processes
- wrote answers that showed a logical, planned format.

## **OTHER COMMENTS**

Since this standard is about natural processes, more than one process had to be used across answers. As a result, candidates had to attempt both questions in order to gain Achievement in the standard.

Candidates selecting inappropriate natural processes were disadvantaged. These were either feature-based such as dune formation, or were too broad such as coastal processes or simply 'erosion'. Such choices do not lend themselves to allowing the detail required for analysis at this level. Many other candidates chose appropriate processes but did not write about them in their answer. Many chose saltation but wrote about aeolian deposition; others chose plant succession but wrote about plant growth.

## **90702 Analyse a cultural process**

### **ACHIEVEMENT**

**Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They typically:**

- made at least one valid statement about social or economic effects on people
- used specific information to back up the statement
- identified at least one reason for a spatial variation with some relevant evidence
- identified one role that the element played in the operation of the cultural process with evidence
- drew a map that highlighted elements or features of the process.

### **NOT ACHIEVED**

**Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:**

- showed limited knowledge of the topic with little or no specific details
- completed only one of the two questions required and demonstrated a lack of understanding
- wrote in very general terms about the entire topic without relating any of it to the question
- had difficulty distinguishing in Question One, between social and economic effects on people and the social and economic impacts of the cultural process on the setting.

### **ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT**

**In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit typically:**

- made clear comparisons between two settings and used specific detail
- made good use of geographic terms eg concentration, dispersal, and agglomeration
- showed a good understanding of the role of elements in, or the reasons for the spatial variations produced in, the operation of their cultural process
- drew an effective map that included key elements and relevant annotations.

### **ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE**

**In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence typically:**

- wrote well-structured paragraphs demonstrating good understanding of the question
- used geographic terms extensively and appropriately
- used a range of detailed annotations on the map with all of the relevant conventions
- demonstrated comprehensive and valid comparisons between the two settings
- analysed the role of elements on the operation of, or the reasons for the spatial variations produced in, the operation of their cultural process with use of evidence throughout.

## **OTHER COMMENTS**

The majority of candidates answered this standard using the cultural process of tourism development. Candidates produced a number of very good quality papers that were well-deserving of the Excellence grades. However, it was a concern that some candidates answered only one question or tried to use one setting only. The standard clearly states that awards of Merit and Excellence can be gained only through using both settings. Hence, while candidates could use one setting for most of their answers, the comparison section became vital to gain these higher grades.

## **90704 Select and apply skills and ideas in a geographic context**

### **ACHIEVEMENT**

**Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They typically:**

- described location in general terms
- understood how the natural environment could be an advantage or a disadvantage
- drew a graph using basic conventions
- applied concepts such as 'process' and 'change' correctly
- analysed either the issue of water supply or water demand in Abu Dhabi
- referred to resources generically in their answers.

### **NOT ACHIEVED**

**Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:**

- misinterpreted questions, such as using the cultural environment rather than the natural environment to consider advantages and disadvantages to economic growth
- showed limited understanding of specific geographic skills such as latitude and longitude, direction, scale, and précis mapping
- transferred information from the resources without applying it correctly
- identified the issue of water supply and demand, but did not explain the reasons for the issue arising
- did not correctly locate features on the précis map
- had difficulty with graphing conventions, such as the accuracy of the y-axis scale and title
- did not refer to resource material in their responses, or developed answers based on information not related to the resource material.

## **ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT**

**In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit typically:**

- gave an absolute location with latitude and longitude or used the scale statement to give correct distance statements
- selected and used resource information appropriately, such as using specific facts to indicate the nature of the social, cultural, economic, and environmental changes
- showed a sound understanding of Important Geographic Ideas (IGI) and applied the definition given, such as identifying the steps in the process of change (as an IGI) for Abu Dhabi
- drew précis maps with care and precision
- drew graphs that were appropriate and accurate.

## **ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE**

**In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence typically:**

- showed a superior depth of understanding of geographic ideas, such as making the link between diversification and sustainability of a process
- identified a problem related to water on their graphs
- made links between the resources in their analysis of water supply and demand issues
- understood the need to provide specific and accurate information from multiple resources that was appropriately integrated throughout their answers
- demonstrated that they understood the key terms of “analyse” and “comprehensively explain”.

## **OTHER COMMENTS**

A wide range of geographic skills and ideas were covered, allowing candidates to show their strengths, and resulting in a larger number of Merit and Excellence grades being awarded.

This standard expects candidates to select and apply given information, in this case based on issues in Abu Dhabi. However, the use of the resources was variable. Some candidates simply copied the entire resource into their answer, showing they could select the correct information but not necessarily demonstrate that they could apply or analyse it. A superior analysis required candidates to make links between different phenomena rather than just stating facts from the resource.