

National Certificate of Educational Achievement

2012 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 was the final year for examinations to assess these achievement standards.

Candidates appeared to be comfortable with the format of the papers which has been consistent in the last few years and timing appeared to be less of an issue judging by the completion of papers sat. However it appears that candidates were being selective in their approach to sitting all three standards with many opting to attempt only one or two of the three enrolled in. A large number of candidates struggled to respond correctly to the instructions words in questions used at this level; such as analyse, compare, justify and evaluate.

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:

- demonstrated a basic understanding of what a natural process is
- drew a series of basic diagrams showing at least one linked step of how a process moves from one action to another which then led to an outcome
- tended to use very broad processes which lacked the depth for higher grades
- used minimal case study information
- showed an understanding of human modification of a process but failed to explain how the process changed
- showed an understanding of spatial variation but failed to concentrate answers on the differences between two places within an environment
- omitted to include any justification of their position on the continuum in their answer.

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:

- did not understand what a natural process is and used a feature instead
- drew diagrams that focused on features formed not the processes causing them
- used the same process for both questions despite the instruction that these must be different
- labelled rather than used annotations on diagrams that consequently lacked the depth required at this level
- wrote answers to question one without any diagrams to accompany them
- described the process rather than analyse the process as required in the question
- failed to incorporate any case study information on their selected geographic environment
- used rote learned answers such as the formation of a feature in question 1 rather than adapting this to the question which needed to focus on a process

- wrote about the effects of spatial variation or human modification on their environment rather than on a process.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

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

- provided a general description of the location of their environment
- showed how one agent based process operates as a series of linked stages
- focused their answers on one specific process for each question
- showed some analysis beyond a basic level
- analysed more than one modification to a process within an answer
- analysed more than one reason for spatial variation of a process
- included a justification of their location on a continuum.

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:

- gave an accurate description of the location of their geographic environment using distance, direction, latitude and longitude or relationship to other geographic phenomena
- used one agent based process that allowed them to show technical understanding or insight in at least one of their answers
- showed clearly how one stage of a process was linked to another by numbering or using good sequence annotations
- incorporated case study information extensively throughout answers such as place names, feature names, climate statistics, types of rock/sediment, plant types etc
- clearly justified their location on the continuum for Questions 2 or 3
- adapted what they knew to suit the question
- understood the term “human modification” by describing how a process operates and then analysed how and why it then operates differently after one or more human actions
- understood the term “spatial variation” by describing how a process operates in one part of an environment and then analysed how and why it operates differently in a different part
- wrote concisely using subject language and a logical sequence with evidence of planning
- used appropriate diagrams to support their answers in the essay question.

OTHER COMMENTS

Some geographic environments are better suited to this standard than others.

Many candidates focused on features and outcomes and not on the natural processes which is what this standard is about. Some candidates used processes that were either too broad like ‘erosion’ or linked to an outcome like ‘dune formation’. In both situations candidates failed to provide the depth of answer that allows them to gain high grades. Basing a process on a feature outcome also caused candidates to write about the effect on the feature rather than the process. An agent based process such as ‘wave erosion’ or ‘wind action’ could more easily be broken down into different stages.

Some candidates showed misunderstanding over the process of “vegetation succession”. Many used this process but wrote only about vegetation growth not the changes to the climax vegetation. Similarly, some candidates wrongly used vegetation zonation as a process, when it is the outcome or resulting pattern. A process must involve some action.

Some candidates failed to read the instructions carefully and wrote about only one process, despite it being stated several times in the assessment to use a different process when answering Question Two or Three. Others failed to read the instruction to justify their place on the continuum.

To provide an analysis, candidates had to give a reason as to why or how the steps of a process occur.

90702 Analyse a Cultural Process

ACHIEVEMENT

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

- drew a map or diagram that was generalised but had some relevant evidence
- identified elements of the process and a relationship between them
- understood the difference between elements/factors and effects
- identified factors and showed how they caused change
- used some specific information about their chosen settings
- showed an understanding of changes to environments.

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:

- could not identify and locate two parts/elements on a diagram or map
- could not identify a relationship between two parts/elements
- did not specifically focus the answer on the question asked
- had difficulty distinguishing between economic effects and economic factors.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

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

- drew a map or diagram with three elements and some relevant evidence
- clearly identified the two elements/parts of their setting and discussed the interaction or relationship between the elements
- used specific and appropriate information throughout the answer
- partially justified their answers for Question Two or Three
- used specific examples from overseas and NZ settings effectively
- recognised economic factors and explained how they affected the cultural process, not the place or culture.

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:

- drew a comprehensive diagram/map to show the elements involved in their process
- showed a full understanding of the elements involved in the process and their interactions
- showed extensive use of appropriate geographic terminology
- clearly justified their opinions
- wrote well-structured paragraphs with extensive use of relevant examples
- showed a comprehensive understanding of changes in their process, their causes and effects
- answered the questions with relevant information supported by appropriate evidence.

OTHER COMMENTS

There was extensive use of dated case studies for answers using migration as the cultural process, and across many cultural processes candidates wrote about the history of a place rather than the economic factors causing change to the process. Many candidates also failed to understand that the effects on the cultural process are different to the effects on a place.

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 spatial patterns or temporal patterns in general terms without detail or depth
- identified a reason why aquaculture is becoming significant for New Zealand from resources provided with a reliance on copying from the resources
- described location in very general terms e.g. using some accurate compass directions
- suggested a reason for suitability of oyster farm location using topographic map skills and photograph interpretation skills
- identified features from a topographic map without using a key
- calculated direction of features using a topographic map
- constructed a statistical map with some conventions and accuracy
- correctly interpreted the map or tables and provided some detail in descriptions
- critically evaluated the resources and statement, demonstrating some pros and/or cons with some reference to the resources and details provided.

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:

- misunderstood the questions and/or the resources
- misunderstood the terms “spatial” and “temporal”

- transferred information directly from the resources and did not interpret or analyse or critically evaluate the information to answer the question
- had difficulty interpreting topographical maps and visuals (particularly latitude and longitude, aerial photos, scale, direction, grid references)
- constructed an inappropriate and inaccurate statistical map that was missing basic conventions.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

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

- provided detailed written answers throughout the paper
- demonstrated the ability to interpret the questions and use the resources appropriately, using specific evidence in their responses
- demonstrated good geographic knowledge of the required skills for example scale calculation, locating and naming features from a topographic map and compass direction
- constructed an accurate and appropriate statistical map with appropriate conventions and accuracy
- used the map or statistics to provide detailed descriptions
- evaluated the resources and statement, demonstrating pros and cons with good reference to the resources and details provided.

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:

- described, in detail when the question required this
- understood the terms spatial and temporal
- described both pros and cons to make a critical evaluation
- demonstrated understanding of the key terms of analyse and critically evaluate
- interpreted visual and topographical maps accurately and in detail
- provided specific and accurate information from multiple resources in their responses
- constructed an appropriate and accurate statistical map, using appropriate conventions
- analysed the key statistics and evaluated the significance and potential for the future
- analysed resources to comprehensively explain and critically evaluate the situation or significance, which demonstrated high order understanding and application of ideas.

OTHER COMMENTS

Most candidates attempted this standard and appeared to have managed their time well. They generally provided direct evidence from the resources in their answers.

Some candidates struggled with the topographical map skills and/or were unable to complete a statistical map.

When candidates are required to describe a location in detail they need to provide an accurate grid reference (or at least two points of reference) using compass direction e.g. NSW, SE, and/or provide accurate distances to a main centre such as a township,

harbour, island etc. so that a location can be accurately pinpointed rather than simply being in one direction from a feature.

It is concerning, that candidates at times simply copied the entire comprehensive resource into their answer booklet. These candidates did not apply or evaluate the resources.

The difference between the levels of achievement came down to two aspects: confidence with traditional or pure geographic mapping and graphing skills and the level of complexity and critical evaluation in the candidates' responses. Most candidates did not critically evaluate the resources; instead they sat on the fence and did not reach a conclusive finding. Candidates who did, comprehensively answered the question and displayed a greater level of evaluation, analysis, reasoning and detail, therefore achieving the higher grades.