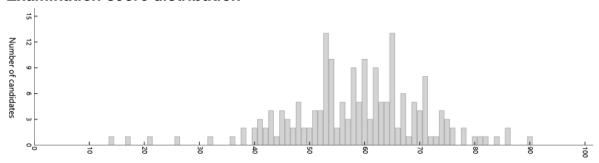




Summary report of the 2017 ATAR course examination: Earth and Environmental Science

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2017	184	6
2016	272	11

Examination score distribution



Summary

Attempted by 184 candidates

Mean 58.42%

Max 89.50% Min 13.50

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Candidate performance was in line with expectations and consistent with performance over the past several years.

Section means were:

Section One: Multiple-choice	Mean 76.70%		
Attempted by 184 candidates	Mean 11.51(/15)	Max 15.00	Min 3.00
Section Two: Short answer	Mean 57.31%		
Attempted by 184 candidates	Mean 31.52(/55)	Max 49.00	Min 6.50
Section Three: Extended answer	Mean 51.89%		
Attempted by 182 candidates	Mean 15.57(/30)	Max 28.00	Min 2.00

General comments

The overall quality of candidate response was satisfactory, but individual questions (notably Question 16 and Question 18(d)) in large part failed to achieve responses commensurate with the expectations of the examining panel. The number of 'non-attempts' in papers remained low, with most candidates attempting a very high proportion of the examination, and responses were usually coherent and effective. The examining panel's incorporation of a higher proportion of open-ended questions (in particular Question 27) provided latitude for candidates to demonstrate command of curriculum points in a flexible manner, and produced answers of a generally high quality.

Advice for candidates

- The examiners are seeking demonstrated insight and understanding of the syllabus, rather than the recall of specific facts.
- Even when not explicitly called for in a question, annotated illustrations and tables can provide an effective approach to presenting an answer.
- Relevant examples are strongly favoured as a means of demonstrating knowledge and understanding, particularly where their relevance to the question is clearly established.

Advice for teachers

 Case studies and examples studied are not expected to be drawn from a specific geographic region. Your students need diverse examples where these illuminate the syllabus content in an informative fashion.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Overall performance was matched with the expectations of the examining panel across all sections of the examination. Some questions are intended to be more challenging than others as a means of differentiating between candidates of differing calibre, so individual questions with a low average mark are not considered problematic in and of themselves. Questions 16 and 18(d) are more of a concern; however, in regards to widespread failure of candidates to provide answers of the form expected by the examiners.

Section One: Multiple-choice (15 Marks)

Attempted by 184 candidates Mean 11.51(/15) Max 15.00 Min 3.00

All candidates attempted all questions in this section. Candidate performance was satisfactory and very similar with previous year's results. All questions except questions 8 and 12 achieved over 60% success rate.

Section Two: Short answer (55 Marks)

Attempted by 184 candidates Mean 31.52(/55) Max 49.00 Min 6.50

Candidate performance was generally quite good across this section, although production of explanatory figures by candidates remains a point of notable weakness. Notably, some candidates also still struggle with the fundamentals of illustrative questions (production of a graph from primary data and production of a geological cross-section) that have been consistent elements of the examination for many years and should be expected.

Section Three: Extended answer (30 Marks)

Attempted by 182 candidates Mean 15.57(/30) Max 28.00 Min 2.00

Performance in this section was broadly in line with expectations and previous years. As expected, given the novel format of Question 27, substantially less than half the candidates attempted this question, but responses to this largely open-ended question scored well, indicating it may have attracted more able candidates and therein provided a mechanism for them to differentiate themselves.