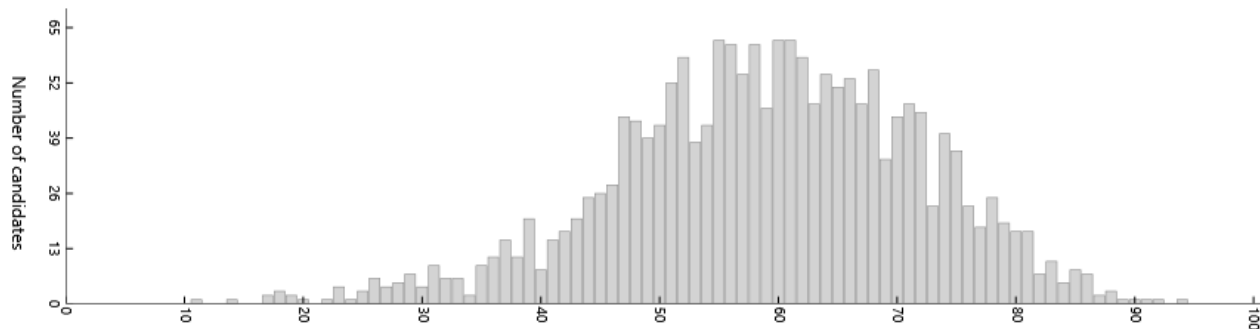




Summary report of the 2017 ATAR course examination: Geography

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2017	1839	31
2016	1913	52

Examination score distribution – Written



Summary

Attempted by 1832 candidates Mean 58.73% Max 93.50% Min 11.00%

Section means were:

Section One: Multiple-choice Mean 77.60%
Attempted by 1832 candidates Mean 15.52(/20) Max 20.00 Min 1.00

Section Two: Short response Mean 59.50%
Attempted by 1831 candidates Mean 23.80(/40) Max 38.50 Min 1.00

Section Three: Extended response: Part A: Unit 3
Mean 50.27%
Attempted by 1797 candidates Mean 10.05(/20) Max 19.50 Min 0.00

Section Three: Extended response: Part B: Unit 4
Mean 49.30%
Attempted by 1776 candidates Mean 9.86(/20) Max 19.00 Min 0.00

The 2017 Examination broadsheet reverted back to using an extract from the 1:25 000 topographic map series of Quinns Rocks 1986 produced by the State Government Land Administration rather than the new editions produced by Landgate and used in the 2016 Broadsheet. However, the aerial photograph was based on a scale not previously used – 1:30 000. This photograph was used to demonstrate the large change in land use within the outskirts of the Perth Metropolitan Area. The excerpt of the location of the topographic map was well received and may become a fixture in future examination broadsheets.

The examination followed the Examination design brief with 20 Multiple-choice questions worth 20 marks in Section 1; 11 questions worth 40 marks in Section Two Short response; and finally Section Three Extended response was made up of two parts devoted to Unit 3 and Unit 4, each worth 20 marks. For each unit, there was a choice of two questions, each with a part (a) and part (b).

Within the Multiple-choice section, the first 13 questions were devoted to topographic and aerial photographic interpretation skills. Questions 14 to 17 were devoted to source analysis/Global environmental change and Questions 18 to 20 were devoted to source analysis/Planning sustainable places.

The Short response section introduced a precis sketch map question requiring candidates to transpose different scales. The coastal outline on the Question/Answer booklet was well received and yet the precis sketch map still provided a level of difficulty to allow for discrimination. Questions 21 to 23 were based on mapping and photographic interpretation. Question 23 could be classified as either being based on Unit 4 or Mapping skills. Questions 24 to 28, worth 14 marks, were based on Unit 3; Questions 29 to 31 worth 17 marks were based on Unit 4.

General comments

The mean of the examination (58.73%) was a little lower than expected. The mean for the Multiple-choice (15.52) was higher than expected when compared to the mean for 2016. There are trends that indicate that candidates are becoming very accomplished with basic mapping and photographic interpretation skills based on the scale of 1:25 000. The sources in the broadsheet were straightforward to interpret and apply geographical concepts to. The Short response section mean was a little lower than previously but within expectations. The mean for both Extended response sections was below expectations – particularly Unit 4. Most candidates still focus on Climate Change, Perth and New York City used as case studies through Units 3 and 4.

Advice for candidates

- Demonstrate your understanding of geographical concepts where the question requires this.
- Avoid providing rote learnt information from textbooks as your response. Sources are selected as a strategy to invite a response that demonstrates your understanding of geographical concepts.
- You are encouraged to use sources on the broadsheet in responses wherever possible – even when there is no direction to do so. Candidates who incorporate information from the sources are rewarded.
- You are also encouraged to use examples, and refer to fieldwork and use sketches and diagrams wherever possible. This is especially important since Geography stresses the changes in spatial outcomes – whether it be within cities and regional areas or biomes (anthropogenic or natural).
- Pay attention to topographic mapping and aerial photograph skills including calculating:
 - area in hectares
 - gradients.
- Compare both the topographic map and aerial photo. Be particularly careful in the transposing of maps and aerial photographs of different scales.
- For the Short response section pay attention to:
 - site and situation
 - urban growth and urbanisation. Understand the difference between these two concepts. This is a perennial issue from past Geography examinations
 - understand the new vocabulary – particularly in reference to land cover change.
- For the Extended response section:
 - be prepared to write a response of at least 250 words.
 - use geographic vocabulary and use large (minimum ½ page in size) diagrams/sketches wherever possible and label/annotate these clearly.
 - refer to your diagrams/sketches in your response.

Advice for teachers

- Teachers are encouraged to value add to textbook resources where possible. Using current geography issues and events is good classroom practice and the resources relating to these are visual, stimulating and more easily understood by students.
- Refer to recent/current urban planning strategies and geographical issues (challenges) where possible, e.g. Perth traffic congestion and challenges in regional centres.
- Despite topographic map scales of 1:25 000 being used recently, do not discount that 1:50 000 or 1:100 000 scale maps could also be used in future exams.
- Topographic maps from regional areas outside Perth and other areas of Australia may also be used in future examinations. The previous WACE course restricted topographic map sources to Perth – the new course allows for greater diversity.
- Be aware that both topographic maps and aerial photographs may also be of different scales.
- Encourage the use of broadsheet sources, examples, fieldwork and sketches wherever possible for students.
- Extended responses now require 'longer' answers than past examinations. Students may need to learn how to structure their responses to articulate clearly their answers. If required, encourage students to use well annotated sketches to supplement their responses.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Section One: Multiple-choice (20 Marks)

The mean of the Multiple-choice was 77.60% – a higher mean than previous examinations. The basic mapping skills such as locating features using Grid References, Area References, measuring distance, identifying single features and height is being mastered very well by candidates on this map scale of 1:25 000. However, calculations on gradient and area (hectares) are still an issue. The results indicate that sources 4 and 5 were easy to interpret and contributed to the high mean. Unfortunately, finding sources – particularly maps that can be applied for both units and both contexts is difficult without compromising the principles of assessment.

Section Two: Short response (40 Marks)

Attempted by 1831 candidates	Mean 23.80(/40)	Max 38.50	Min 1.00
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Section Three: Extended response: Part A: Unit 3 (20 Marks)

Attempted by 1797 candidates	Mean 10.05(/20)	Max 19.50	Min 0.00
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Section Three: Extended response: Part B: Unit 4 (20 Marks)

Attempted by 1776 candidates	Mean 9.86(/20)	Max 19.00	Min 0.00
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