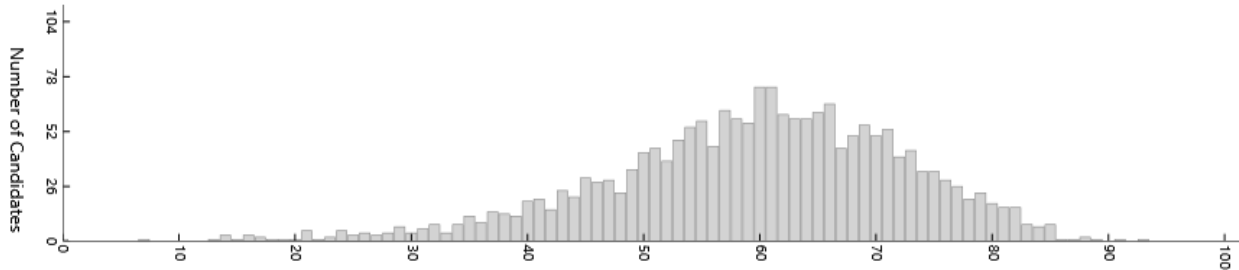




## Summary report of the 2016 ATAR course examination: Geography

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2016	1913	52

### Examination score distribution



### Summary

Attempted by 1913 candidates

Mean 59.10%(100) Max 92.50% Min 0.00%

Section means were:

Section One: Multiple-choice

Mean 13.18(/20) Max 20.00 Min 0.00

Section Two: Short response

Mean 25.10(/40) Max 40.00 Min 3.00

Section Three:

Extended response: Part A: Unit 3

Mean 10.60(/20) Max 19.50 Min 0.00

Extended response: Part B: Unit 4

Mean 10.69(/20) Max 19.50 Min 0.00

### General comments

The 2016 ATAR Geography examination was the first for the new course. The Broadsheet introduced a new variation of the topographic map which is a major component. The change was a break away from most topographic maps used in the E Code and WACE Geography examinations which were based on topographic maps produced by State Government Land Administrations in the late 1970's and early 1980's. However, the 2016 topographic map was one of the new editions produced by Landgate (Western Australian Department of Land Administration). The broadsheet therefore had a new map and an old aerial photograph as opposed to an old map and new aerial photograph as in the past. Despite the fact that teachers and candidates had been using old topographic maps and new aerial photographs, the new map was well received. Feedback from all regarding the 2016 ATAR paper to date, indicate generally that it was a safe, predictable examination with no surprises.

The mean of 59.10% was a pleasing outcome given this was the first ATAR Geography examination. The mean of 13.18(/20) for the Multiple-choice and the mean for the Short Response of 25.10(/40) was expected. In Section Three the mean of Part A 10.60(/20) and Part B 10.69(/20) was slightly lower than the previous two sections, but was also anticipated as this section had less weighting in the overall examination in 2016.

The answers from the Multiple-choice indicate that skills associated with the Broadsheet (interpretation and analysis) was very good generally. However, some perennial concerns were related to questions that dealt with calculating area in hectares, measuring gradients and working out speed, distance and time. Surprisingly, the mean results for questions relating to basic definitions were not as high as expected.

On the whole the Short response section was good with an array of examples used where possible. The questions relating to mapping skills were satisfactory; however, there is still

room for improvement and candidates should refer to sources wherever applicable, for example, refer to features on the topographic map when answering related questions.

The new examination design brief has an extended answer section with less weighting than with previous Geography examinations. The extended response sections have two parts in 2016 rather than 3 or 4 as per previous examinations. As a result, the questions are inviting longer responses that are more of an 'essay' type rather than a three to four paragraph answer. This will have an impact on classroom practice as candidates will have to be mindful when planning in order to articulate clearly their answers to these questions. Interestingly, despite the lower weighting, evidence suggests that the amount of writing completed by candidates for Section Three was comparable to previous examinations.

#### *Advice for candidates*

- Demonstrate your understanding of geographical concepts where applicable.
- Do not simply reproduce rote learnt information from a textbook. Sources are picked with the intent to use these as a strategy to solicit a response that demonstrates your understanding of geographical concepts.
- You are encouraged to refer to sources on the broadsheet wherever possible, to use examples and to refer to fieldwork as well as sketches and diagrams. The latter is particularly important as 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
  - speed, distance and time.
- Compare both the topographic map and aerial photo. Examine and look for similarities and differences. Use the reading time to study these two sources carefully.
- Urban growth and urbanisation – you must understand the difference between the two concepts.
- Refer to the sources wherever possible.
- Understand the new vocabulary – particularly in reference to land cover change.
- Use geographic vocabulary, large diagrams/sketches (half a page in size preferably) and label/annotate these clearly.

For the Short answer section pay attention to:

- site and situation
  - Grid references - know your eastings from your northings
  - Area references - know which quadrant it refers to.
- For the Extended response section be prepared to write a response of at least 250 words.

#### *Advice for teachers*

- Fieldwork should be more readily available. Loss of biodiversity can be observed within a relatively short time scale as opposed to Climate Change.
- Teaching current Geography issues and events are good classroom practice and the resources relating to these are in general visual, stimulating and more easily understood by candidates.
- Refer to recent/current urban planning strategies and geographical issues (challenges) where possible for example Roe 8 Highway dispute, Perth traffic congestion and also challenges in regional centres.
- Do not discount the use of older maps despite a new topographic map being used for 2016.

- Be aware that scales of 1:25 000 used for topographic maps have been used extensively in the recent times, this does not discount the use of maps that are 1:50 000 or 1:100 000.
- Be aware that both topographic maps and aerial photographs may also be of different scales.
- Encourage use of broadsheet sources, examples, fieldwork and sketches wherever possible for students.
- Extended responses require 'longer' answers than in past examinations. Students will 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**

Attempted by 1913 candidates	Mean 13.18(/20)	Max 20.00	Min 0.00
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#### **Section Two: Short response**

Attempted by 1912 candidates	Mean 25.10(/40)	Max 40.00	Min 3.00
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#### **Section Three: Extended response: Part A: Unit 3**

Attempted by 1885 candidates	Mean 10.60(/20)	Max 19.50	Min 0.00
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#### **Section Three: Extended response: Part B: Unit 4**

Attempted by 1860 candidates	Mean 10.69(/20)	Max 19.50	Min 0.00
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