![Government of Western Australia — School Curriculum and Standards Authority]

Summary report of the 2019 ATAR course examination:
Geography

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2019	1563	25
2018	1692	30
2017	1839	31
2016	1913	52

Examination score distribution–Written
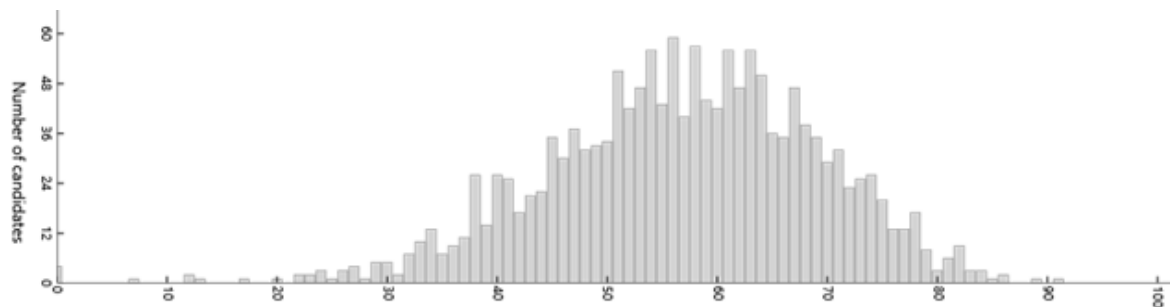
Summary
Attempted by 1563 candidates   Mean 56.45%   Max 91.00%   Min 0.00%

Section means were:
Section One: Multiple-choice   Mean 71.58%
Attempted by 1563 candidates   Mean 14.32(/20.00) Max 20.00 Min 0.00
Section Two: Short response   Mean 57.76%
Attempted by 1559 candidates   Mean 23.11(/40.00) Max 38.00 Min 1.00
Section Three: Extended response: Part A: Unit 3   Mean 46.78%
Attempted by 1545 candidates   Mean 9.36(/20.00)   Max 19.00 Min 0.00
Section Three: Extended response: Part B: Unit 4   Mean 50.31%
Attempted by 1528 candidates   Mean 10.06(/20.00) Max 19.50 Min 0.00

General comments
The examination mean of 56.45% was slightly higher than that of 2018 (56.28%). The topographic map on the broadsheet was the first since the implementation of the new courses to use a location outside Western Australia. The change did not hinder candidates' ability to demonstrate their geographical skills or course-related knowledge. A small minority of candidates did not appear to be familiar with a map scale of 1:50 000. The broadsheet included a variety of different source types, including a flow diagram, satellite images, graphs and population pyramids. Candidates needed to be familiar with different ways of presenting and interpreting data and topographic maps from a variety of locations and of different scales.

Advice for candidates
- Pay careful attention to topographic map skills that require the application of simple mathematical calculations (i.e. area, gradient, scale comparisons/conversions).
- When comparing topographic maps and photographs, make sure that the locations you refer to are located within the area shown on both sources. You also need to be aware that the map and the photograph will typically be of different scales.

- You are encouraged to use sources on the broadsheet wherever appropriate to assist with your answers. You can also include recent examples and fieldwork to strengthen your responses.
- You should know the definitions of key course concepts as these are often found in the Multiple-choice and Short response sections.
- Large diagrams and sketches (preferably half a page in size) with clear labels and annotations should be used to aid your answers wherever it is appropriate to do so.
- When a question states 'with specific reference to the source' your answer must refer to the data provided in the source.
- Be aware of the differences in content that is linked to the Overview section of each unit and the content that is linked to the Depth Studies.
- Avoid confusing mitigation and adaptation measures and strategies.
- Not all Extended response questions will begin with 'describe' or 'explain'. Familiarise yourself with higher order words including 'assess', 'discuss', 'account' and 'evaluate'. You need to be aware of what these different instructional words require you to do with information.
- Avoid rote learning information from textbooks or practice questions completed in class. The questions asked in the examination will rarely be the exact question you may have practised.

Advice for teachers
- Students need to be exposed to a variety of map scales including 1:25 000, 1:50 000 and 1:100 000. Whilst these are the most common topographic map scales, any scale could be used in future examinations. In addition, the age of the maps and photographs used may also vary.
- Highlight to students that maps and aerial photographs on an examination broadsheet are rarely presented at the same scale. Teach students methods to determine and compare scales.
- Practise using contour lines to determine heights, gradients, landforms and slope characteristics.
- Whilst candidates generally displayed a good understanding of direction, bearings continue to cause some confusion.
- Definitions of key course concepts are regularly examined. The concept of 'natural biomes' was defined poorly by candidates in the 2019 examination.
- Teachers should spend time covering skills related to the interpretation and application of statistical data presented in sources.
- Maps drawn by candidates were generally of poor quality. Typically, maps showing the external boundary (morphology) of an urban area were inaccurate. Many maps also lacked a scale and a north point.
- Teachers should spend time developing depth of understanding with students with respect to ecosystem structure and dynamics, the effects of biodiversity loss and interactions between natural systems.
- Students need more depth on the internal and external morphology of the selected megacity. Teachers are advised to keep up to date with more recent strategies that are being applied within the megacity. Liveability should be taught distinctly and not as an add on to sustainability.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Section One: Multiple-choice (20 Marks)
The mean for Section One was 71.58%, slightly higher than 2018 (69.28%). Questions 1 to 14 were based on the topographic map and/or the interpretation of aerial and ground photographs. Questions 15 to 17 were based on Unit 3, with two of these being source-based, while Questions 18 to 20 were based on Unit 4, with one being source-based.

Questions requiring calculations, interpretation of contour lines and reference to land cover change were the most challenging for candidates. Most basic mapping skills were well managed by candidates, with an improvement in those requiring the application of scale.

Section Two: Short response (40 Marks)
In this section, Questions 21 to 23 were based on mapping skills and photographic interpretation, while Questions 24 to 27 were based on Unit 3, with two being source based. Questions 28 to 31 were based on Unit 4, with two being source based. The mean for this section was 57.76%, which was slightly lower than 2018 (59.20%). The analytical nature of some of the questions in this section could account for this slight decrease in the mean. For example, Questions 24, 27 and 29 required greater analysis of the sources by candidates than in previous years. These questions were good discriminators and provided the opportunity for more capable candidates to demonstrate their understanding and ability to interpret and analyse data.

Section Three: Extended response: Part A: Unit 3 (20 Marks)
The mean for the Part A: Unit 3 Extended response decreased in 2019 (46.80%) compared to 2018 (51.65%).

Section Three: Extended response: Part B: Unit 4 (20 Marks)
The mean for the Part B: Unit 4 Extended response increased in 2019 (50.30%) compared to 2018 (42.95%). In 2019, candidates finished the paper strongly with more detailed answers, indicating that candidates did not run out of time and/or were better prepared to answer the questions. This is reflected in the mean for Questions 34 and 35 compared to Questions 32 and 33.