



National
Qualifications
2025

2025 Geography

Global Issues and Geographical Skills

Higher

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

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General marking principles for Higher Geography

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

- (a) Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.
- (b) If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- (c) Where the candidate does not comply with the rubric of the paper and answers two parts in one section, mark both responses and record the better mark.
- (d) Marking must be consistent. Never make a hasty judgement on a response based on length, quality of handwriting or a confused start.
- (e) Use the full range of marks available for each question.
- (f) The detailed marking instructions are not an exhaustive list. Award marks for other relevant points.
- (g) Award marks only where points relate to the question asked. Where candidates give points of knowledge without specifying the context, award marks unless it is clear that they do not refer to the context of the question.
- (h) Award marks for knowledge/understanding where points are:
 - relevant to the issue in the question
 - developed (by providing additional detail, exemplification, reasons or evidence)
 - used to respond to the demands of the question (for example evaluate, analyse).

Marking principles for each question type

There is a range of question types in this question paper. For each question type, the following provides an overview of marking principles, and an example.

Describe questions

Candidates gain marks for making relevant, factual points. These should be key points. The points do not need to be in any particular order. Candidates may provide a number of straightforward points or a smaller number of developed points, or a combination of these. Candidates must provide more than an outline or list to gain marks. They could refer to, for example, a landscape feature, a landscape formation process, a situation or facts demonstrating geographical knowledge.

Explain questions

Candidates gain marks for explaining or suggesting reasons for the cause or impact of something, or for referring to causal connections and relationships. Candidates must do more than describe to gain marks here.

- Where the question asks about a landscape feature, candidates should refer to the processes leading to landscape formation.
- For a source-based question, candidates should make use of these and refer to them within their answer for full marks.

Where candidates provide a purely descriptive answer, or one where development is limited, award no more than half the available marks for the question. Other questions look for candidates to demonstrate higher-order skills and will use command words such as analyse, evaluate, to what extent, and discuss.

Analyse questions

Candidates gain marks for identifying parts, the relationship between them, and their relationships with the whole; and for drawing out and relating implications. Award an analysis mark where candidates use their knowledge and understanding or a source to identify relevant components (for example of an idea, theory, argument) and clearly show at least one of the following:

- links between different components
- links between component(s) and the whole
- links between component(s) and related concepts
- similarities and contradictions
- consistency and inconsistency
- different views or interpretations
- possible consequences or implications
- the relative importance of components
- understanding of underlying order or structure.

Where candidates are asked to analyse they should identify parts of a topic or issue and refer to the interrelationships between, or impacts of, various factors. Eg where a question asks for an analysis of the soil-forming properties which lead to the formation of a gley soil, candidates should refer to how the various soil formatting properties contributed to its formation.

Evaluate questions

Candidates gain marks for making a judgement of the success, failure, or impact of something based on criteria. They should give a brief description of the strategy or project being evaluated, before offering an evidenced conclusion.

Account for questions

Candidates gain marks for giving reasons which are often (but not exclusively) from a resource, for example: for a change in trade figures; a need for water management; or differences in development between contrasting developing countries.

Discuss questions

Candidates gain marks for exploring ideas about a project, or the impact of a change. They should consider different views on an issue or argument. This might not be a balanced argument, but they should give a range of impacts or ideas within their answer.

To what extent questions

Candidates gain marks for considering the impact of a management strategy or strategies they have explored. They should give a brief description of the strategy or project being evaluated, before offering an evidenced conclusion. They do not need to offer an overall opinion based on a variety of strategies, but should assess each separately.

Marking instructions for each question

Section 1 – Global issues

| Question | | | General marking instructions for this type of question | Max mark | Specific marking instructions for this question |
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| 1. | (a) | | Award 1 mark for interpreting data from the resources where it is used to support an explanation. | 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • population increase would require additional water for domestic use (1 mark) • the projected figure for 2050 is almost double the population in 2020 (1 mark) • the dam is located around 100km from two large cities (1 mark) • Madagascar is a low-income country and needs to increase its GNI (1 mark) therefore more water is needed to support its main, energy hungry, industries (1 mark) • irrigation would be required for crop production throughout the year to feed the population (1 mark) • textile industries use large volumes of water therefore a reliable water supply is required (1 mark) • average monthly flow is uneven, and the dam will ensure a more regular flow (1 mark) • a lack of rainfall from May to September increases the need for water to be stored (1 mark) to ensure year-round availability of water (1 mark) • heavy rainfall in January and February of over 250mm (1 mark) means that there is a requirement to prevent flooding (1 mark) • only 34% of the country has access to electricity, HEP from the dam could be used to improve the standard of living (1 mark) • improved sanitation means that far less of the population will be at risk from water related diseases eg Cholera (1 mark) • high temperatures, greater than 20°C from October to May (1 mark) leads to higher evaporation rates which increases the need to store water (1 mark) <p>Or any other valid point.</p> |

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| | (b) | | <p>Award 1 mark for each negative consequence and award further marks where the candidate has developed this. Candidates must include both socio-economic and environmental negative consequences.</p> <p>Award a maximum of 8 marks if only one is discussed.</p> <p>Award 1 mark where candidates give specific named examples within the case study area, which develop the answer.</p> <p>Award a maximum of 9 marks if the answer does not clearly relate to a specific named water management project.</p> <p>No credit should be awarded for positive consequences.</p> | 10 | <p>For Example – The Diamer-Bhasha Dam – Indus River, Pakistan.</p> <p>Socio-economic Negative consequences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the displacement of over 45000 plus people from the site of the dam and reservoir (1 mark) who received cash amounts for their home from the WAPDA (Pakistan’s Water and Power Development Authority) (1 EG mark) in resettlement costs (1 mark) those forced to relocate were mainly farmers with limited education, who found it difficult to find jobs (1mark) resulting in less income and a poorer quality of life (1 mark) many displaced people were from cultural minorities and experienced a loss of family’s traditional culture/customary lifestyle (1 mark) loss of over 33000 culturally significant rock carvings and inscriptions through submergence by reservoir (1 mark) construction costs were very high (1 mark) cost for specific project started at \$12 billion USD (1 mark) delayed construction and increased costs now have it estimated at around \$14 billion USD (1 mark). This money could have been spent on improving education/healthcare within the country (1 mark) less silt downstream, which is used as a fertiliser, means farmers will need to buy expensive artificial fertiliser (1 mark) with increased threat of water pollution and danger to human and aquatic life (1 mark) groundwater is contaminated with arsenic (1 mark) from intensive irrigation associated with water storage (1 mark) concern over flooding of 100kms of Karakoram Highway (1 EG mark) which could damage transport infrastructure (1 mark) <p>Environmental Negative Consequences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> greater evaporation rates from larger areas of water (1 mark) 0.1 billion cubic metres per year can alter weather patterns in region (1 mark) and accelerate the melting of Himalayan glaciers (1 EG mark) which can cause increased flooding downstream (1 mark) with more saline water in the river and farmland from increased evaporation (1 mark) this also leads to changes in local hydrological cycle (1 mark) |

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| | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Himalayan Pheasant (1 EG mark) populations are in severe decline due to reduced habitats and increased human contact through water management projects (1 mark) • farmers downstream may be forced to change to more salt tolerant crops (1 mark) • loss of many habitats caused by change in river regime (1 mark) and decline in animal species such as the Indus River Dolphin/Indus Baril/Indus Garua (1 EG mark) occurs due to altered fresh/saltwater balance (1 mark) • blocked movements of fish by water management schemes occurs (1 mark) such as the Hilsa Shad (1 EG mark) which come from the Arabian Sea to spawn in fresh water (1 mark) • constructions of dams on the Indus have increased coastal erosion (1 mark) and could be detrimental to Indus delta mangrove forests (1 EG mark) causing a reduction in native biodiversity (1 mark) • there has been an increase in invasive non-native species in the Indus River and delta region (1 mark) <p>Or any other valid point.</p> |

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| 2. | (a) | | <p>Credit should be given for explaining why single indicators such as GNI are less reliable for a country or may fail to reflect the quality of life within the country.</p> <p>1 mark should be awarded for each explanation.</p> <p>Care should be taken to avoid crediting reverse points.</p> <p>Credit should also be given for the benefits of a composite indicator.</p> | 6 | <p>Points may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • single indicators are too broad; they are averages which disguise wide internal variations (1 mark). Eg cities may have better healthcare services than rural areas (1 mark). A few immensely wealthy families but the majority of the population may be living at subsistence level (1 mark). Gender inequalities mean girls have lower literacy rates in many countries however overall figures would disguise this (1 mark) • high GNI figures do not show where the money is being spent (1 mark) it may not be going towards improving health and education (1 mark) • single indicators only show one aspect of development (1 mark) • certain indicators are perhaps irrelevant to the real quality of life in many low-income countries (1 mark) • subsistence agriculture/barter economies are not included in wealth indicators (1 mark) • exchange rates fluctuate making comparison unreliable (1 mark) • HDI is a combination of health, wealth and education indicators (1 mark), as a combination it is a more balanced measure of development (1 mark) <p>Or any other valid point.</p> |

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| | (b) | (i) and (ii) | <p>Award 1 mark for each description of a strategy.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for each evaluative point.</p> <p>Award a maximum of 10 marks for either part (i) or part (ii).</p> <p>Candidates may discuss malaria in this question however only strategies which could be considered PHC should be credited.</p> <p>Award up to 2 marks where candidates give appropriate named examples which develop the answer.</p> <p>A minimum of 2 strategies must be discussed for full marks.</p> <p>Award a maximum of 8 marks for any one strategy.</p> | 14 | <p>Primary Health Care (PHC) Strategies may include:</p> <p>Oral Rehydration Therapy is the mixture of salt and sugar with clean water (1a mark) it is very effective as it is cheap for low-income countries (1b mark) and it can be administered by untrained staff (1b mark). The WHO estimates 1 million babies' lives are saved each year from this (1b mark).</p> <p>Vaccination programmes for preventable diseases like Polio (1a mark) run by UNICEF (1 EG mark) were delivered to rural areas as people here find it more difficult to access healthcare (1a mark). By 2022 polio was endemic in only 2 countries (Afghanistan and Pakistan) (1b mark).</p> <p>Charities such as Water Aid (1 EG mark) improve water and sanitation by installing facilities such as pit latrines (1a mark). The number of people without access to improved drinking water had decreased (1b mark), and the ash compost from latrines can improve crop yield therefore decreasing malnutrition (1b mark).</p> <p>Play Pumps International (1 EG mark) provide roundabouts which extract ground water (1a mark) and having only two moving parts use an appropriate level of technology (1b mark).</p> <p>SODIS (1 EG mark) is solar water disinfection. Water is collected in plastic bottles and left out in sunlight to kill the pathogens that cause diarrhoea (1a mark). This is suited to many low-income countries as they experience long hours of sunlight (1b mark) However bacteria can reform if bottles are taken into shaded areas (1b mark).</p> <p>Barefoot doctors provide health education and administer basic first aid (1a mark) they can then refer people to local health care centres/hospitals if needed (1a mark). This is suitable for developing countries as many rural people find it hard to travel to the hospitals which can be many days walk away (1b mark) this takes pressure off the busy hospitals (1b mark) and can treat illnesses earlier before they become more serious (1b mark). Healthcare workers also educate through play and songs (1a mark) suitable due to low levels of literacy in some low-income countries (1b mark).</p> <p>Or any other valid point.</p> |

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| 3. | (a) | | <p>1 mark should be awarded for each valid point.</p> <p>No credit should be awarded for physical causes of climate change.</p> | 8 | <p>Points may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the build-up of greenhouse gases such as Carbon Dioxide results in more heat being retained in the atmosphere than would usually be the case naturally (1 mark) increasing burning of fossil fuels eg coal, for energy releases CO₂ into the atmosphere (1 mark) increased global wealth has led to increased car ownership has resulted in more petrol and diesel being used to fuel cars (1 mark) increased car exhaust emissions have resulted in more Nitrous Oxide (1 mark) deforestation has resulted in less CO₂ being absorbed (1 mark) and the burning rapidly releases more CO₂ (1 mark) increased waste/throw-away society means more methane has been released from landfill sites as waste decomposes (1 mark) and methane is a by-product of oil/natural gas extraction (1 mark) methane emissions have increased as rice production has increased to meet the demand for food in rapidly growing countries (1 mark) decomposing rice plants in padi fields (1 mark) more cattle are being reared to support protein-rich diets in increasingly wealthy countries which produces methane (1 mark) cattle digesting grass releases methane (1 mark) methane is more than 20 times as effective in trapping heat than CO₂ (1 mark); it accounts for 20% of the enhanced greenhouse effect; and it remains in the atmosphere for 11-12 years (1 mark) the increased production of fertilisers also adds to the amount of Nitrous Oxide in the atmosphere (1 mark) Nitrous Oxide is 200-300 times more effective in trapping heat than CO₂ (1 mark) cooling units/older refrigerators were not disposed of correctly and released CFCs (1 mark) when the foam insulation inside them was shredded (1 mark) <p>Or any other valid point.</p> |

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| | (b) | | <p>Award 1 mark for an impact of climate change.</p> <p>Award further marks for development of each impact.</p> <p>Award a maximum of 2 marks where candidates give specific, appropriate named examples which further develop the answer.</p> | 12 | <p>Possible answers may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sea level rises caused by thermal expansion of the oceans (1 mark) and by the melting of glaciers and land-based ice caps (1 mark) • low-lying coastal areas will suffer flooding (1 mark) eg Bangladesh (1 EG mark) • leading to large-scale displacement of people (1 mark) and loss of land for farming and destruction of property (1 mark) • climate change refugees/people are forced to move to higher ground or to other countries (1 mark) from areas such as Tuvalu or the Maldives (1 EG mark) and will exert more pressure on resources such as housing, water and power supplies in the receiving area (1 mark) • there will be more extreme and more variable weather such as flooding and droughts (1 mark), and more frequent and intense hurricanes due to increased sea temperatures (1 mark) • there will be an increase in precipitation, particularly in the winter in northern countries (1 mark) increase in extent of tropical/vector borne diseases, as warmer areas expand (1 mark) • possibly up to 40 million more people in Africa being exposed to risk of contracting malaria (1 mark) • predicted extinction of some land species eg polar bears, due to lack of sea ice (1 mark) • an increase in sea temperature leads to coral reefs bleaching (1 mark). Coral expels the algae causing it to turn white (1 mark) • changes to ocean current circulation may mean the thermohaline circulation starts to lose impact on north-western Europe, resulting in considerably colder winters (2 marks) • a more frequent El Niño/La Niña (1 mark) leads to changes in the monsoon (1 mark) • a prolonged dry season can lead to forest fires (1 mark) eg Australian bushfires (1 EG mark) • prolonged hot and dry spells in European summers causes an increase in deaths from heat stroke for the young and elderly (1 mark) <p>Or any other valid point.</p> |

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| 4. | (a) | | Award 1 mark for each reason. | 8 | <p>Possible answers might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most of the global economic growth is happening in middle and low-income countries (1 mark) • this has led to a growth of infrastructure eg roads, buildings (1 mark), requires energy-hungry materials such as concrete and steel (1 mark) • population growth is greater in developing countries (1 mark) • leading to increased demands for electricity for lighting and appliances (1 mark) • the populations of these countries are also becoming wealthier (1 mark), driving consumer demand for more appliances such as fridges and TVs (1 mark) • however, these products tend to be less energy efficient when compared to the more expensive options in high-income countries (1 mark) • car ownership rates have also increased eg due to higher disposable income (1 mark) this increases the use of petrol and diesel to power vehicles (1 mark) • much of the economic growth in developing countries is based on energy-hungry manufacturing industries (1 mark). Many manufactured products are sold to developed countries and therefore need to be transported (1 mark) • along with a large increase in passenger air travel (1 mark) which has led to the construction of a large number of airport terminals and airplanes use, particularly in Southeast Asia (1 mark) concrete production for urbanisation uses huge amounts of energy (1 mark) energy is required to produce fertilisers and pesticides (1 mark) due to increased food production (1 mark) <p>Or any other valid point.</p> |

| Question | | | General marking instructions for this type of question | Max mark | Specific marking instructions for this question |
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| | (b) | | <p>Award 1 mark for each point on effectiveness.</p> <p>Candidates must discuss a renewable source of energy. Award 0 marks for non-renewable sources of energy.</p> <p>Award 2 marks for specific, appropriate named examples which further develop the answer.</p> | 12 | <p>Possible answers for all renewable energy sources might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • renewable sources are infinite/can't run out (1 mark) • independent production of energy reducing the need for reliance on imports of fuel (1 mark) • struggle to meet demand of energy at peak times (1 mark) such as early evening due to rise in use of home appliances for evening meals (1 mark) • cost of living crisis and the war in Ukraine in is pushing up oil and gas prices across the world which means the demand for renewable energy has never been greater (1 mark) however this may lead to blackouts in winter as renewable energy creation cannot keep up with demand (1 mark) <p>For hydroelectric power (HEP) other possible answers could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • countries like Norway have to import electricity from Sweden during drier months (1 mark) • run-of-the-river power stations rely on the flowing water of a river (1 mark) and when the river is in spate potential power production is lost (1 mark) • conventional HEP stations dam the river to create capacity, however these flood large areas of land (1 mark) such as Three Gorges Dam (1 EG mark) which has social consequences such as displacement of people which may prevent the development of new dams (1 mark) • turbines can be easily and cheaply added to water storage reservoirs (1 mark) allowing power to be generated from pre-existing infrastructure (1 mark) • pump-storage dams effectively allow power to be stored, (1 mark) eg Ben Cruachan (1 EG mark), as water is pumped to an upper reservoir at times of low demand (1 mark). This water can then be released at times of higher demand to generate energy (1 mark) • electricity may be lost in transferring from areas of production to areas of higher demand/population (1 mark) |

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| | | | | | <p>For wind power other possible answers could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in countries with a windy climate and large areas of exposed upland (1 mark) eg The Eaglesham Moor (1 mark) • winds in Scotland can be strong enough to power the equivalent of all electricity needs for 1 day (1 mark) • wind energy may reduce energy bills (1 mark) • as power from onshore energy is now cheaper than electricity produced from any other source in the UK (1 mark) • wind power can be irregular and intermittent (1 mark) • during high pressure, for example, there can be periods of no winds or very low speeds (1 mark) leaving turbines motionless, producing no or very little power (1 mark). This may coincide with very cold periods in winter when demand is higher (1 mark) • currently wind energy cannot be stored (1 mark) • wind farms are usually found in rural locations far from areas of high demand (1 mark) • electricity may be lost in transferring from areas of production to areas of higher demand/population (1 mark) • output is variable and depends on the weather conditions (1 mark). This means that there are times when more energy is available than is required which might be difficult to store, (1 mark) whilst at other times turbines may be switched off due to over-production (1 mark) <p>Or any other valid point.</p> |

Section 2 – Application of geographical skills

| Question | | | General marking instructions for this type of question | Max mark | Specific marking instructions for this question |
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| 5. | (a) and (b) | | <p>Candidates should make reference to all sources, including the Ordnance Survey map, when discussing the suitability of the site and the social, economic and environmental impacts of the development on the surrounding area.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for each description of the site, or explanation of suitability of the site.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for each impact and award a further mark where the candidate develops this.</p> <p>Award 1 mark where candidates refer to the resource and award further marks where the candidate explains its suitability (beyond the wording of the resource).</p> <p>Award up to 4 marks for map evidence (EG), which may include correct and appropriate grid references and/or place/road names.</p> <p>It is possible that some points referred to as a disadvantage of the site will be interpreted by other candidates as a negative impact. Award marks for each point only once, where it is best explained.</p> | 20 | <p>Possible advantages of this site may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • area chosen for the development is flat (1 mark) which would keep construction costs down (1 mark) • the development site is close to 3 A class roads which makes it easier for construction vehicles to deliver materials (1 mark) or for future visitors to access it (1 mark) for example the A4165 (1 EG mark) • as it is a greenfield site around 5.5km from the CBD of Oxford (1 mark), the land is likely to be cheaper to acquire (1 mark) • there is already a superstore developed to the north of the site at 499125 (1 EG mark) which sets a precedent for large developments in the area (1 mark) and allows spectators to buy food and drink before the match (1 mark) • the site is free from any rivers or bodies of water reducing the need for expensive drainage (1 mark) • as the site is around 1.5km from a nearby solar farm (1 mark) it could be powered by clean, renewable energy fulfilling its proposal to be sustainable (1 mark) • there is a park and ride site around 500m from the development (1 mark) at 502118 (1 EG mark) which could provide visitors access from the CBD via public transport (1 mark) • a nearby motel at 495110 (1 EG mark) provides accommodation for travelling fans/construction workers (1 mark) <p>Possible disadvantages of this site may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whilst the roads provide easy access to the site both during and after construction, they also limit potential future expansion at the site (1 mark) • the edge of the development site sits next to an area of deciduous forestry which may need to be cleared (1 mark) • local residents in nearby Garden City (1 EG mark) may suffer from noise pollution during the construction phase (1 mark) • nearby farms such as Stratfield Farm (1 EG mark) may need to be compensated for any compulsory purchase of land (1 mark) |

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| | | | <p>Possible impacts on the surrounding area might include:</p> <p>Negative Environmental Impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the destruction of deciduous woodland at the southern edge of the site may cause habitat loss (1 mark) as the development is far from the CBD, it is likely that many visitors will drive to the site due to its accessibility by road increasing air pollution (1 mark) as it is a greenfield site, construction could face strong opposition from conservationists (1 mark) dust from the construction may settle on and hamper crop growth on nearby farms (1 mark) traffic levels on Oxford Road and the A4260 have risen since 2020 (1 mark) A4260 has risen from just under 10,000 to 11,500 in 2023 (1 mark). Oxford road has risen from about 13,000 to just over 16,000 (1 mark) meaning that air and noise pollution may increase further (1 mark) floodlights from the stadium may lead to light pollution for surrounding residents (1 mark) <p>Positive Environmental Impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a new railway station has been built at 501119 (1 EG mark) which will allow users of the stadium and the facilities to travel to the site in an environmentally friendly way (1 mark). This also allows for easy transport from the train station close to Oxford's CBD (1 mark) at 504062 (1 EG mark) the new train station and park and ride may reduce traffic so lower air and noise pollution (1 mark) the new water feature will increase biodiversity on the site (1 mark) gardens and wildlife will provide open space for the public encouraging healthy outdoor activities (1 mark) the new water feature will encourage sustainable drainage preventing flooding (1 mark) |

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| | | | | | <p>Negative Socio-Economic Impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the new stadium offers too large a capacity as attendance figures have only reached over 8,200 twice in the past eight seasons in 2021-2022 and 2023-2024 (1 mark) therefore it is likely to be too large and may not make any profit for the club (1 mark) the development may only produce seasonal jobs or part-time jobs if it is rarely at capacity (1 mark) <p>Positive Socio-Economic Impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> construction jobs will be created (1 mark) in addition to new jobs in the entertainment complex and new hotel as part of the development (1 mark) the new development would bring more sports fans to the area where they could spend more money (1 mark) especially at the nearby superstore or North Oxford Golf Club (1 EG mark) the new hotel may bring custom to the North Oxford golf club (1 EG mark) increasing profits there (1 mark) although attendance figures are lower than the new capacity (1 mark) this allows for the future growth of the club (1 mark) or use for alternative events such as concerts (1 mark) <p>Or any other valid point.</p> |

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]