Subject report: Endorsement

Geography — 2026 cohort

This resource identifies strengths and opportunities to improve the development and submission of internal assessment instruments for Geography (General subject and alternative sequence (AS)). Refer to *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v7.0*, Section 9.5.

Summary of endorsement for the 2026 cohort

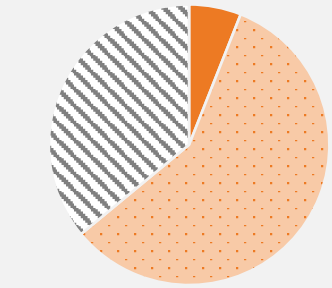
Number of internal assessment (IA) instruments submitted for endorsement

IA1	IA2	IA3
170	169	167

Note: Number of instruments may vary due to changes in schools offering the subject after the endorsement process started.

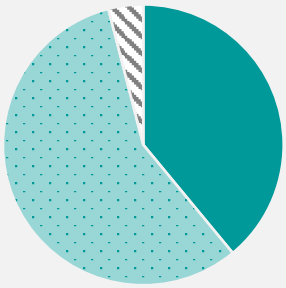
Percentage of instruments endorsed at Applications 1 and 2

IA1: Examination — combination response



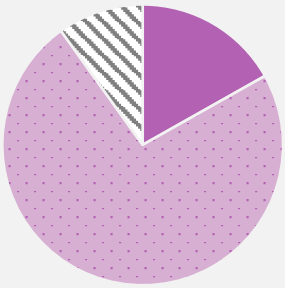
- Application 1: 6%
- Application 2: 58%
- Intervention: 36%

IA2: Field report



- Application 1: 39%
- Application 2: 57%
- Intervention: 4%

IA3: Data report



- Application 1: 17%
- Application 2: 74%
- Intervention: 10%

Note: Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers and, therefore, may not add up to 100%.

Validity: Reasons for non-endorsement at Application 1 by assessment priority

IA1		IA2		IA3	
Alignment	149	Alignment	81	Alignment	131
Authentication	0	Authentication	9	Authentication	5
Authenticity	18	Authenticity	8	Authenticity	3
Item construction	45	Item construction	65	Item construction	39
Scope and scale	125	Scope and scale	4	Scope and scale	31

Accessibility: Reasons for non-endorsement at Application 1 by assessment priority

IA1		IA2		IA3	
Bias avoidance	7	Bias avoidance	0	Bias avoidance	0
Language	16	Language	4	Language	6
Layout	32	Layout	2	Layout	4
Transparency	29	Transparency	2	Transparency	2

Note: A priority may be identified more than once in the endorsement decision for an assessment instrument.

Advice for assessment design

Endorsement is the quality assurance process based on the attributes of validity and accessibility. The following advice is based on the endorsement process for the 2026 completion year. In acknowledging effective practices and areas for refinement, it offers schools timely and evidence-based guidance to further develop valid and accessible assessment.

IA1: Examination — combination response (25%)

Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when they:

- included multiple opportunities across short response questions for students to address the Explaining and Comprehending criteria. Students were provided the opportunity to comprehensively demonstrate their understanding, using explicit terminology from the assessment objectives and/or performance-level descriptors in examination questions to ensure accurate assessment of the intended criterion **(alignment)**
- provided stimulus for the extended response that presented clear patterns, trends and relationships representing a geographical challenge related to climate change for a selected land cover type. The focus of the stimulus was a specific region or location, enabling students to effectively demonstrate the Analysing and Applying criterion **(scope and scale)**
- incorporated high-quality stimulus for short response questions (if included), and stimulus for the extended response question consisting of a variety of visual texts, e.g. maps, graphs, minimal text. Stimulus were presented clearly, free from unnecessary distractors and sized to ensure legibility and accessibility **(layout)**.

Practices to strengthen

Schools can improve the validity and accessibility of assessment instruments by:

- explicitly aligning short response questions to the performance-level descriptors for the Explaining criterion, ensuring questions require students to explain the interactions between biophysical and anthropogenic processes that result in land cover change and a changing climate **(alignment)**
- ensuring short response questions allow students to address all performance-level descriptors for the Comprehending criterion, with particular attention to questions that require the recognition of indications of climate change **(alignment)**
- ensuring the extended response question aligns with the Analysing and Applying criterion and provides opportunity for students to demonstrate all characteristics in the instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG). The question should explicitly require students to analyse data and information to infer how patterns, trends and relationships represent a geographical challenge in relation to climate change for a selected land cover type (or, for the AS, a megacity in the developing world), and to apply geographical understanding from this analysis to generalise about impacts on biophysical and anthropogenic environments **(alignment)**
- ensuring stimulus for the extended response focuses on the causes of a geographical challenge in relation to climate change for one specific land cover type. This will enable students to infer how the patterns, trends and relationships in the stimulus represent a geographical challenge. Stimulus should be sufficiently complex to support astute inferences and sophisticated generalisations about the impacts of the challenge on biophysical and anthropogenic environments **(scope and scale)**.

IA2: Field report (25%)

Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when they:

- specified a field investigation conducted at a local scale, centred on a specific land-management or water-management challenge **(alignment)**
- identified a field study location that had a known challenge suitable for a student investigation and enabled students to address the task within the prescribed word length **(scope and scale)**
- provided structured and purposeful instructions that guided students through each stage of the investigation, with an emphasis on the collection and analysis of primary fieldwork data **(item construction)**
- used precise and contextually relevant geographical terminology throughout, and were written with grammatical accuracy to ensure clarity for all students **(language)**.

Practices to strengthen

Schools can improve the validity and accessibility of assessment instruments by:

- ensuring the task section includes instructions for completing the task that are aligned with the assessment specifications, and that these are not repeated elsewhere in the instrument **(item construction)**
- providing scaffolding that aligns with the report writing structure for Geography, as detailed in the additional subject-specific information in the syllabus **(alignment)**
- ensuring opportunities for primary data collection are the focus of the investigation, with data transformation and analysis applied to field-collected data to meet the requirements of the Analysing and Applying criterion. Secondary data should be used sparingly, if at all **(alignment**).

IA3: Data report (25%)

Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when they:

- communicated context and task requirements using concise, accurate language and appropriate geographical terminology **(language)**
- identified a challenge that was a consequence of the demographic characteristics or rate of population change for the selected place. The challenge had significant implications for particular population groups, typically in relation to the capacity of services or infrastructure to meet community needs, providing an authentic context for the investigation **(alignment)**
- included initial datasets that established a clear demographic profile or population change for a place. This allowed students to identify a relevant challenge (e.g. ageing, youth concentration, decline, rapid growth) and supported a meaningful analysis of patterns, trends and change over time **(alignment)**
- presented initial data that was clearly referenced and in a structured and accessible format (e.g. tables) to enable transformation with relevant technologies **(layout)**.

Practices to strengthen

Schools can improve the validity and accessibility of assessment instruments by:

- providing an explicit context statement that reflects the focus of the investigation on population and demographic change for a place in Australia, and aligns with the instrument specifications, without identifying the causes of the challenge or suggesting potential responses. This ensures students have the opportunity to demonstrate the upper performance-level descriptors across all criteria **(authenticity)**
- ensuring scaffolding aligns with the report writing structure for Geography, as detailed in the additional subject-specific information in the syllabus. An appendix is not a required component for the IA3 and should not be included in the scaffold **(alignment)**
- providing an initial dataset that reflects a clear demographic or population challenge for a place in Australia and is formatted to appropriately represent the data, e.g. demographic data (ageing or youth populations) presented as age or age/sex data, population change data presented as over time data that typically identifies the change in Statistical Area designation by the Australia Bureau of Statistics **(alignment)**
- providing an initial dataset that reflects a place where there is a known geographical challenge associated with either the demographic profile or rate of population change. Suitable challenges are typically framed around the capacity of services or infrastructure to meet the needs of a specific group of people. Locations such as mining towns are not suitable for investigation as they typically have services and infrastructure that adequately meet the needs of their population **(scope and scale)**.

Additional advice

- When developing assessment instruments for all IAs, ensure that the tasks are aligned with the specifications of the syllabus.
- Before submitting an instrument, check the formatting using the Print preview function in the Endorsement application (app). This helps ensure assessment instruments are well presented with appropriate page breaks and other formatting features.