2016 Global Politics examination report

General comments

The 2016 Global Politics examination was the first examination based on the revised *VCE Global Politics Study Design 2016–2017*. Overall, the examination was completed well by the majority of students; however, there appeared to be some confusion regarding specific requirements in several of the Areas of Study.

The majority of students completed the examination in the allotted two-hour time period, but several students did not complete the examination. Time management is a critical skill and needs to be practised on a regular basis. Students can make best use of the 15-minute reading time by considering how they will respond to each of the questions and developing a specific plan for their Section B response.

Good examination technique is essential for examination success. When a student wants to continue their response and all the lines provided have been used, students need to know that, where appropriate, they can complete their answer in the blank space below the lines. Where a student has continued their answer on the extra pages at the end of the examination booklet, they must clearly indicate this on the question page as well as on the extra page(s). Students should respond directly to short-answer questions; for example, high-scoring answers to Questions 2 and 12 needed only a few concise sentences.

Students who were well prepared were able to clearly structure their responses more thoroughly, make explicit reference to the question asked and write in a cogent style, including relevant and accurate evidence to support their answer. Students are reminded that they should not use prepared responses; prepared responses typically do not directly address the requirements of the question.

Most students appeared to have understood the underlying concepts and demonstrated a sound grasp of the course content; however, some students did not appear to have read the instructions carefully, particularly for the questions in the section Power in the Asia-Pacific region. For example, despite this section of the examination specifying at the beginning that 'the types of power used by specific Asia-Pacific state must be within the Asia-Pacific region', in Questions 8a. and 8b. some students included examples from outside the Asia-Pacific region, such as China's foreign policy initiatives in Africa and/or the Caribbean; Australia's relationship with India or Sri Lanka; and the involvement of either Australia or the United States in a military conflict in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. The states that are included within the Global Politics definition of the Asia-Pacific region are listed on page 6 of the study design.

Specific information

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding errors resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

Section A

Global actors

Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	39	61	**0.6**

This question asked students to state one aim of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Overall, it was well answered. Responses needed to clearly outline one of the aims listed on the IMF website, such as:

- promote exchange rate stability
- promote international monetary cooperation
- assist in maintaining a multilateral system of payments
- provide resources to members experiencing balance of payments difficulties
- promote high employment and sustainable economic growth
- reduce poverty around the world.

Responses that included a truncated aim that missed some or all of the elements of the aim were not awarded a mark.

Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	7	16	29	31	18	**2.4**

The power of the IMF resides in its ability to dictate economic policy agendas to the member states that seek assistance from the IMF. Known as the 'lender of last resort', the IMF is an option that most states would prefer to avoid using.

High-scoring responses included a full explanation of 'conditional loans', with a specific example(s) from the 21st century and an emphasis on 'conditionality' – limits on public spending, pressure for the privatisation of state-owned assets, the expedited implementation of trade liberalisation measures (cutting tariffs and/or subsidies), lowering budget deficits, increased taxation and greater oversight of the operation of government departments. Responses that then included a specific example – for example, assistance to Greece, Ireland, Bolivia or Egypt – scored more highly.

Some responses included an example but no direct answer to the question.

Some responses included the IMF's use of its structural adjustment programs (SAPs). This is technically incorrect as the IMF officially stopped using SAPs in 2009.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The IMF has demonstrated the power to provide aid to states in need such as both Iceland and Greece. In the case of Iceland, in 2008 Iceland entered a $2.1 billion package with the IMF as part of a broader $10 billion European package aimed at restoring confidence and stability in the Icelandic economy. Now in its 5th consecutive year of growth, Iceland was able to repay its debt thanks to IMF loans and has now also repaid the IMF for its assistance.

In the instance of Greece, the IMF provided a $40.1 billion assistance package to help the state repay sovereign debt. In 2013, Greece reached a 1.5% surplus on its primary budget from a 10.5% deficit in 2009, however are now back in recession, with debts stocks projected to reach 200% GDP. Thus as Iceland's debt was mostly private, the IMF demonstrated the capacity to help state's with private debt, but has failed to provide assistance to those with sovereign debt such as Greece, thus demonstrating limited power.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	14	22	64	1.5

In this question, students were required to outline the role of one of the following non-state actors: a legal organisation or a global terrorist movement.

Responses needed to provide a clear identification of a legal organisation (for example, Amnesty International, MSF, Action Aid) or a global terrorist movement (for example, al Qaeda, ISIS, Boko Haram) and an outline of what the non-state actor does (or has done). Emphasis should have been on the non-state actor's function and actions rather than its nature or aims.

An intergovernmental organisation (IGO) such as the UN, ICC, IMF or WTO is not an example of a non-state actor; this is clearly stated in the study design. A transnational corporation (TNC) is also not a non-state actor. Such examples could not score marks.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The role of Amnesty International as a legal non-state actor is to lead campaigns, lobby governments and report on ethical issues in order to promote the acceptance of human rights standards and to mitigate their violation. This has been illustrated through Amnesty International's 20-year lobbying campaign for the Arms Trade Treaty, which was signed in 2013, and their so far unsuccessful "#freedonfromfences" campaign in Australia against offshore detention.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	4	11	32	52	2.3

For this question students were required to clearly explain how the terms 'nation' and 'state' differ in global politics.

High-scoring responses were able to emphasise the differences and give a comparison of the terms, rather than just define the actual terms. Answers could be either theoretical in nature or include accurate and specific examples.

Some responses provided an accurate identification of at least one difference, based on a 'nation' being linked to a sense of community (sometimes a political community) and a shared culture,

history and identity, and a 'state' having sovereignty and effective executive political control, a defined population and national borders recognised by other states.

Japan appeared as an example of a 'nation' often, suggesting that the concept of sovereignty is not completely understood.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

A nation refers to a group of people who have common bonds based on religion, ethnicity, culture, language and / or history, but does not have defined borders and sovereignty, for example 'Kurds'. A 'state', on the other hand, differs in that it has recognised sovereignty, defined territory and a permanent population, for example Australia.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	4	5	15	31	30	16	3.3

The stimulus material prompted students to look critically at the role of transnational corporations (TNCs) in global politics. However, very few students used the prompt in the correct context, to examine both predatory behaviour and how TNCs can be drivers of progress. Many responses engaged with the prompt in a more superficial manner, electing to broadly talk about a strength and a weakness of a specific TNC. Responses that just discussed the good or bad behaviour of a TNC did not fulfil the requirements of the question.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

A TNC is a company whose operations and investments extend beyond the boundaries of the state that they are registered in. Depending who is receiving their benefits, different perspectives emerge. To those who receive economic growth, TNC's are considered "drivers of progress". This can be seen in South Korea in regards to Samsung, which has annual revenue larger than 101 states in the world, making up 20% of South Korea's GDP. To President Park, Samsung is "pivotal to the development of our nation and to economic progress". To those who don't benefit from their actions however, TNC's are usually considered as predators. For example, in 2011, the Brazilian Ministry for Labour filed a lawsuit against Samsung for $107 million due to "precarious working conditions" imposed on 6,000 workers. As the workers did not benefit from Samsung's operations as a TNC, they called the institution a "predator". The view on TNC's depends on who benefits from it.

Power in the Asia-Pacific region

Question 5

Marks	0	1	Average
%	17	83	0.9

Cultural power can be defined as 'desirable' and transportable culture that states can use to achieve ends that might not be achieved through military and political means. Many students answered this question very well by using a specific example – for example, Confucius Institutes, G'day USA, panda/koala diplomacy, Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) and specific sporting events. Other students provided examples of military power and political power such as banning certain languages being spoken or taught, but these examples did not score marks.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	1	14	40	44	**2.3**

Some students seemed to have a very basic understanding of the terms 'soft power' and 'hard power'. Soft power seemed to pose more of a problem, and responses often lacked words such as 'attraction', 'culture', 'un-coercive' or 'policies'; hard power seemed to have been far better understood. Too many students just defined each term and did not focus on the difference between the terms. Defining the terms was not sufficient for a student to gain full marks.

A theoretical response that clearly distinguished between the terms could have achieved full marks.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Hard power utilises coercion - often through economic and military means - in order to extract a desired outcome from another global actor. One example of China's use of hard power is its creation of a 'Air-Defence Identification Zone' in the East China Sea in November 2013, despite the fact that Japan controlled the islands. Conversely, soft power uses the force of attraction in order to influence the actions of other global actors. Hence the hosting of the Beijing Olympics in 2008 was a form of soft power as through its depiction of china's culture and its success (it won the most gold medals). China was able to increase its international standing and boost regional relationships in a non-coercive, indirect way. The distinction therefore lies in whether the power is coercive (hard) or attractive (soft).

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	3	6	18	29	27	17	**3.2**

For this question students needed to first outline the meaning of the selected national interest (international standing or economic prosperity) for their chosen state. To gain full marks, students then needed to clearly explain, including precise evidence, why the national interest element is of importance to their chosen state. Students who simply stated that the element of national interest 'is important' did not gain full marks.

The word 'importance' was neglected or misunderstood by some students. This word should have been used by them to help structure their response.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The role of the state is to meet the needs of citizens, and the pursuits of economic prosperity is important to fulfil this role. Economic prosperity refers to an increase in national wealth and citizens' access to resources, ensuring that all citizens enjoy a dignified standard of living.

The 2003 White Paper reports that 'security and prosperity is Australia's top national interests, and this is evidenced by Australia's use of economic power to achieve economic prosperity. Australia signed ChAFTA in 2015, reducing tariffs for fruit, wine and dairy and improving market access for these agricultural goods in China. Often times the measure of good governance is how well fiscal policy is used and the role of economic growth and thus the "Jobs and Growth" rhetoric was constantly at the centre of the current Turnbull government's campaign. Thus the pursuit of economic prosperity is of utmost importance in the 21st Century.

Question 8a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	16	84	0.9

Students were required to provide a specific example of the use of military power as a foreign policy instrument in the Asia-Pacific region.

An appropriate example since 2000 could have been one of the following: actual military engagement between global actors, the signing of defence and security agreements, organised military exercises, troop build-ups/mobilisations and/or deployment, missile testing, increased defence spending, militarisation of border protection or conducting military exercises with another state through disputed territory.

Students who did not gain a mark for this question used a less specific example that was not clearly military in nature, or a specific example of military power from outside the Asia-Pacific region such as activities in Libya, Afghanistan, Iraq or Syria.

Question 8b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	8	6	18	28	23	17	3

As clearly stated in the question, students had to use the example they provided in Question 8a. as the basis of their analysis. Within their answer students needed to include an explicit explanation of the aims/intentions of the use of military power and the identification of relevant national interests, and a detailed analysis of the example's impact(s) and overall effectiveness.

Higher-scoring responses contained a more substantial yet nuanced analysis, with at least two national interest elements examined.

Students that examined foreign policy instruments from outside the Asia-Pacific region or within a state could not score any marks.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

> *China's militarisation of the South China Sea aims to pursue territorial integrity as part of its national security, upholding the '9-dash line' claim. Land reclamation and the construction 3,500m runway on Fiery Cross Reef, as well as building advanced air defence systems strengthens China's ability to exercise effective control within the region, strengthening its claims. These actions, however, have weakened China's regional relationships with opposing claimants such as the Philippines, and China's rejection of the Permanent court of Arbitration ruling in 2016 in favour of the Philippines has had negative effects on its international standings.*

Ethical issues and debates

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	7	8	17	32	36	2.8

An addition to the key terms in the revised *VCE Global Politics Study Design 2016–2017,* cosmopolitanism refers to the idealist belief that humanity is one single community, regardless of state, culture or levels of economic development. All humans are equal and should be treated equally and global actors should act with this motivation.

Students also needed to explain, either theoretically or with a precise example, how this definition and example relate to realities – how (and how far) the principle may conflict or be consistent with other pragmatic or realist perspectives or aims, and general national interests.

Students who struggled with this question confused cosmopolitanism with the concept of idealism.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Cosmopolitanism refers to an ideology which depicts humanity as one single community, regardless of state boundaries or levels of economic development. From a cosmopolitan perspective, states should therefore respect this common humanity and act in favour of all humanity's interests in global political arena. One example of cosmopolitanism in global politics has been Germany's acceptance of over 1.1 million refugees in 2015, as it recognised the common humanity of the predominantly Syrian (but also Iraqi and Eritrean) refugees that it accepted. Cosmopolitanism therefore may necessitate undertaking actions which harms a state but benefit the broader community, with the rise of the Alternative für Deutschland Party in Germany and the 75% disapproval rating of the open border policy (Die Poltik der offenen Tűr) highlighting this potential harm to Germany resulting from adopting a cosmopolitan approach.

Question 10

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	12	11	25	31	22	**2.4**

To answer this question successfully students needed to identify a specific international treaty relevant to the ethical issue chosen. (Note that declarations, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the Millennium Declaration, are not international treaties; the Rome Statute is also not an international treaty.) The enforcement mechanism(s) also needed to be identified and, finally, more than one global actor to the treaty (and its enforcement methods) had to be included, but the coverage did not need to be balanced.

Students struggled with this question if the word 'enforce' was neglected or misinterpreted; for example, students needed to answer how do global actors 'enforce', and not 'ignore', a specific international treaty.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which came into force in 1970 has been enforced specifically by it 190 signatories and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA has had mixed success in enforcing the treaty. On the other hand, the core tenet of the treaty - Non Proliferation – has been quite successful, with only 4 powers (DPRK, Israel, India and Pakistan) acquiring nuclear weapons apart from the P5 powers that were permitted to possess them. However, the exploitation of "dual-use technology" which allowed the DPRK to leave the NPT in 2003 and convert its peaceful nuclear capacities into an estimated 12-20 nuclear bombs highlights the lack of success of the IAEA in preventing this sort of process, predominantly due to its inability to monitor and control all states use of nuclear technology. Conversely both the USA and Russia has dealt with nuclear disarmament through various agreements, START 1, SORT and New START. These agreements have been critical as these states control 93% of the world's nuclear warhead supply. These agreements have led to a reduction of some 55, 000 warheads. Hence, both states and the IAEA have had some success in reducing and monitoring the world's nuclear warhead supply.

Question 11

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	5	2	6	11	17	22	22	15	**4.6**

For this question students needed to use an ethical issue that was different from the one selected in Question 10. To gain full marks, students needed to identify two specific and relevant global actors and, with the use of clear evidence, explain and analyse the effectiveness of their responses to the selected ethical issue.

The word 'effectiveness' was not clearly addressed in some responses, which led to a more descriptive (storytelling) response. Effectiveness can take many forms and ideally the word should have appeared throughout a response.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

> *Jordan has accepted over 630,000 refugees since the Syrian conflict began, which amounts to 10% of its population. This has been effective as over 20,000 Syrian children are enrolled in Jordanian schools and this has been effective in that the suffering of their refugees has been minimised.*
>
> *However, the number of refugees it has accepted since 2013 has decreased when they chose to patrol their borders more. This was done in order to preserve their economic prosperity and the reality that Jordan may not be able to sustain itself under the weight of too many refugees. Now Jordan only allows a "trickle of refugees" from a place on their border that is "arduous to get to" (Reuters 2014), thus limiting Jordan's effectiveness in responding to future or new refugees.*
>
> *Another global actor is the UN. It has been effective in minimising the human suffering in the crisis. As the UNHCR has helped over 4 million Syrian people by providing basic necessities such as food, shelter and basic services. However, this has taken a toll on the UN's budget, especially as the number of people of concern has increased from 34 to 64 million over the last five years, increasing the funding gap to around 49%. This will hinder the UN's response in the future to the crisis and its ability to respond effectively to future refugees. Thus the state is the more effective actor with the potential to become more effective, especially if more states increase refugee intakes. This is because the state is not dependent on external funding in the same way that the UN is.*

Global crises

Question 12

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	9	22	69	**1.6**

In this question students needed to outline one specific proposed solution to a global crisis that they had studied in 2016. This required students to accurately identify a proposed 'solution' (it could not be a made up or imagined solution) and then demonstrate a direct connection to the crisis – that is, how the specific measure may have contributed to a 'solution' to the crisis.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

> *United Nations Security Council Resolution 2042 outlined how UN Special Envoy Kofi Annan would conduct peace negotiations with President Bashar al-Assad hoping to end the Syrian armed conflict. This diplomatic proposal aimed to end the conflict between Assad and the rebel*

opposition, yet failed to do so due to the lack of international cooperation, leading to Kofi Annan to resign from the role soon after.

Question 13

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	5	11	36	48	**2.3**

For this question students could have used the same crisis that they wrote about in Question 12, but this was not a requirement.

Firstly, students needed to demonstrate a very clear understanding of the concept of globalisation. Many students chose to demonstrate that understanding by clearly defining the term. Secondly, students needed to clearly link the concept of globalisation to the selected crisis; for example, how has globalisation contributed (helped cause) the crisis, or what was the extent to which it contributed to the crisis, or how has globalisation made resolution of the crisis more challenging or difficult to achieve.

Lower-scoring answers simply referred to the concept of globalisation as being 'the internet'. This clearly limited the scope of the student's response and therefore it could not gain full marks.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Globalisation has been a strong facilitator of the creation and the growth of terrorist organisation, Islamic State (IS). The increases in communication catalyzed by globalisation have allowed IS to spread its extremist ideology around the world across social media platforms and subsequently recruit an estimated 22,000 foreign fighters from up to 100 different countries to strengthen its force. Furthermore, globalisation has allowed IS to carry out attacks and spread its message abroad through assertions of terror such as the 2015 Paris attacks. Thus globalisation has allowed IS to grow into the strong force that it is today. Facilitating the recruitment of jihadists from around the world and terrorist attacks abroad.

Question 14

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	8	9	19	33	21	9	**2.8**

Again, in this question students could have used a different or the same crisis that they used in Questions 12 and 13.

High-scoring responses began with a clear, relevant and accurate identification of the 'aspect' and how it related to the selected crisis. This was then followed by a precise, in-depth and detailed explanation of how the identified aspect has produced one difficulty/problem in relation to the effective resolution of the crisis. Finally, high-scoring responses included an explanation of how the identified aspect has produced a second difficulty/problem in relation to the effective resolution of the crisis.

Low-scoring responses did not focus enough on the difficulties and instead just described the issue surrounding the crisis.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Capitalisms boom-bust cycle and economic instability are inextricably linked and it can result in difficulties in resolving a crisis because it is 'subject to the madness of crowds' (Krugman). Large fluctuations in economic activity are due to "asymmetrical information" and it means that when a downturn occurs difficulties in restoring the system can be seen. For example, Greece is in the middle of an economic crisis with debt to GDP levels of around 178% in 2016 and a 17%

contraction of the economy since 2011. Poor information and an extended bust period has evidently resulted in a failure to resolve its crisis. This can be seen via the IMF's failure to "shock and awe" markets (Gumble) with austerity and bailouts – it was a poorly informed decision and as a result economic instability persists in Greece and the boom-bust cycle reliant on perfect information has hindered resolution

Question 15

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	7	9	19	31	22	12	**2.9**

For this question students had to use a crisis that was different from the crisis they wrote about in Question 14 and almost all students did this. However, a few students used a crisis-related aspect – as was used in Question 14 – rather than a global crisis and this limited the quality of their response.

Students who answered this question well began with a clear definition or explanation of the concept of international cooperation and the identification of a proposed (or possible) form of international cooperation. They then provided a clear, generally balanced, and accurate identification of a specific and clearly explained difficulty to the achievement of international cooperation to their chosen crisis. Finally, they finished with an accurate identification of a second specific and clearly explained difficulty to the achievement of international cooperation to this crisis.

Low-scoring responses did not focus enough on the difficulties of achieving effective international cooperation and instead just described the issue surrounding the crisis.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Difficulties in achieving effective international cooperation in the Syrian armed conflict stem from competing national interests and Syrian sovereignty. This is evident in the Geneva Peace Conference in 2012. Geneva I was successful and produced the "Geneva communique" yet when the Assad government was invited to the follow up conference, Geneva II, it was halted early due to a failure of parties to agree upon the topics for negotiation. The Syrian government's sovereignty enable them to act in this way in pursuit of their national interests and therefore preventing international cooperation. Similarly, Syria's sovereignty allowed the government to refuse to cooperate with the UN Special Envoy Kofi Annan, further preventing an effective resolution to this crisis.

Section B

Question chosen	none	1	2	3	4
%	1	23	16	22	38

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	2	0	1	1	2	2	3	4	4	5	7	8	9	9	10	10	8	6	6	2	2	**12.3**

Many students wrote brief essay plans and this assisted them to structure their essay. Preparing a clear but brief plan can help students to better collect and order their thoughts, consider the structural approach they will adopt, and clearly identify the key knowledge elements they want to discuss in each paragraph.

Lower-scoring essays were characterised by a paucity of detail and relevant facts and did not clearly address the entire essay question, especially in regard to Question 3.

Higher-scoring essays clearly addressed the topic/contention directly in their introduction; comprised clear, precise sentences; and used the specific language of the study design throughout. These essays also supported analysis and discussion with appropriate examples and relevant evidence. The highest-scoring essays argued a position and discussed issues for and against.

To gain a high score, students needed to state a position and broadly agree or disagree with the prompt. They also needed to come to a reasoned conclusion through a discussion of both sides of the prompt.

Question 1

This was the second-most popular essay topic. This topic asked students to discuss the challenge of regional groupings to a state's sovereignty. Higher-scoring responses clearly and accurately identified one or more regional groupings (the European Union was a very popular choice), showed how a regional grouping(s) challenges or does not challenge state sovereignty, evaluated how this challenge compares with other challenges to state sovereignty, and finished with a developed overall evaluation of the contention.

In lower-scoring responses the concept of 'regional groupings' was either ignored or dealt with in a limited way. Although students seemed to understand the question, many did not develop an overall contention about whether regional groupings are the 'main' challenge or not. Some students claimed that regional groupings were no more serious challenges to state sovereignty than contested and changing borders or issues and crises that require multilateral resolution. While this is a valid approach, many students did not provide sufficient evidence that supported their approach.

The following is an example of a high-scoring introductory paragraph.

Under the Peace of Westphalia (1648) all states are awarded the power of sovereignty; the legitimate or widely accepted ability to exert effective control over territory within recognised borders. The ability of states to represent their territorial entity within the international community is challenged both internally and externally. The main challenges to state sovereignty include, regional groupings, contested borders and issues requiring multinational resolution. It has been proposed that perhaps the existence of regional groupings poses the main threat to the traditional Westphalian ideal of sovereignty. However, this proposition may in fact prove to be untrue when compared to other threats.

Question 2

This question was the least popular of the four essay topics. Some students who wrote on this topic found it difficult to respond to the topic in a detailed and precise manner. They struggled to understand the meaning of idealism and construct a clear contention that responded precisely to the question. Higher-scoring students were able to refer to pragmatism as a comparison, in order to evaluate the extent to which idealism is either limiting or not limiting the achievement of national interests. Examples were often not relevant, or didn't support the student's ideas well.

Some students ignored the question completely and just chose to write about how a state achieves their national interests.

This essay topic asked students to demonstrate an understanding of the meaning of 'idealism' as it relates to global politics. Students then needed to discuss idealism's relationship and application to the selected national interests (not just the four listed in the study design) of their chosen state. Finally, they needed to provide a detailed evaluation of the extent to which idealism is a limiting factor – most probably (but not exclusively) in relation to the role and importance of 'pragmatism' and the achievement of the selected state's national interests.

Lower-scoring responses did not clearly analyse the operation of (or lack of) idealism in achieving national interests, and provided examples that did not support their contention.

The following is an example of a good introductory paragraph.

China under the PRC have rarely been consumed by idealistic notions. Instead the state is firmly rooted in realism, willing to utilise all forms of hard and soft power to achieve their national interests. Therefore, idealism rarely limits the achievement of the PRC's national interests if only because they have little.

Question 3

In this question the word 'always' was critical to developing a coherent and clear response, but it should not have given a student licence to ignore the other key term in the question: realism. Some students chose to discuss two ethical issues, even though there was no requirement to do so. However, the most significant concern was the number of essays that either completely ignored or just very briefly examined a number of different ethical debates related to the selected ethical issue.

High-scoring essays engaged with several debates within one issue and examined the meaning of realism as it relates to global politics; for example, this could have been done in a broader analysis of the concept in relationship to cosmopolitanism. They also clearly specified how (the ways in which) realism is connected to the ethical issue via several specific ethical debates and included a detailed evaluation of the extent to which 'realism', probably in opposition to cosmopolitanism and/or 'idealism', was or was not a significant factor in outcomes.

The following is an example of a high-scoring introduction.

The presence of ethical debates in international society heavily undermines the true notion of cosmopolitanism. This is due to the fact that such debates suggest that there are other factors which are realistically more important than the universal implementation of human rights and thus that states should have the right to pursue the interests of their people and their own state before perusing those of an international society. Whilst the concept of cosmopolitanism is symbolically upheld through the existence of a number of international laws and treaties, realism ultimately triumphs over the enforcement of universal human rights standards as states are often forced to pragmatically protect their own people, interests or ideology.

Question 4

This was the most popular of the four essay topics. Some students found this topic challenging as they did not focus sufficiently on how a better understanding of the causes could lead to a better approach to trying to resolve the actual crisis. While a number of students wrote very well on the causes (both longer term and shorter term) of their selected crisis, they appeared to forget about the element of the essay 'resolve a global crisis effectively' and instead wrote narratives of what specifically caused the particular crisis. Discussion was limited and little if any analysis of developing ways to resolve the crisis was included.

A major weakness was that students could not evaluate the extent to which the causes had made the resolution more or less difficult to achieve. Some higher-scoring responses highlighted other factors, apart from the causes, that may have been more important in influencing the possible resolutions. This approach allowed students to evaluate causes and their impact and therefore these essays were more evaluative and analytical. Higher-scoring responses detailed several specific (longer-term or shorter-term) causes of a specific global crisis and provided an analysis of some endeavours to resolve the crisis. These responses also demonstrated a clear understanding of how some specific causes have made the resolution of the crisis more or less possible. Finally, these higher-scoring responses included a thorough evaluation of the extent to which causes made the resolution more or less difficult to achieve, or identified what other factors apart from the causes of the crisis have been more important in influencing a possible resolution.

The following is an example of a high-scoring introduction.

> *The causes of the Syrian armed conflict must be addressed in order for it to be resolved, however there are other aspects to this crisis that are also preventing an effective resolution. The causes of the Syrian civil war are still present today, acting as a challenge to an effective resolution including religious sectarian divisions and Syria's use of war as an instrument of state policy. Yet other factors to this crisis that must also be addressed include the competing interests that have led to foreign intervention by Russia and Iran. Other factors that prevent any effective diplomatic resolution include the influence of external powers and Syrian sovereignty enabling its refusal to compromise. So while it is true that the causes must be addressed in order to end this five year long armed conflict, so to must the other aspects preventing an effective resolution.*