

UK ANTARCTIC PLACE-NAMES COMMITTEE

PLACE-NAME PROPOSALS

GUIDELINES FOR DERIVING COORDINATES

The coordinates for any given feature should provide an indication of its position that clearly distinguish the feature from any other, while providing a level of precision appropriate to the size of the feature. Single sets of coordinates are required for gazetteer purposes and should be provided in DMS format, with 2 or 3 decimal points of seconds where precision is required. The descriptions can describe the extent of large features more accurately by including two to four sets of coordinates and a description of the position of the feature relative to other topographical features.

In general, coordinates mark the exact position of a feature, or the central position of a feature. However, this can involve a wide level of interpretation.

- 1) *Point Features*** For features where an extremity forms the focus of the feature, such as a Peak or Point, coordinates should mark that position with a level of precision down to two or three decimal points of a second. Hence, the highest position of a Hill, Peak or Mountain should be chosen. When considering coastal features, the outer-most position of a Point, Cape or Head is chosen.
- 2) *Areal Features*** For small to medium sized and some large features such as rocks, islands, spurs, peninsulas, nunataks, cliffs, passes, ice domes, mountain ranges, bays, inlets, and reefs, the central position is used. The size of the feature will determine the level of precision required. Rocks will require a precision of seconds to two to three decimal points. Small islands require a precision of the nearest second whereas large islands, such as Adelaide Island, require a much lower level of precision down to about 5 minutes of latitude. For very large features it might be suitable to use an even lower level of precision, to the nearest degree or 5 degrees for large islands or groups of islands and landmasses such as Alexander Island, South Shetland Islands and Coats Land. For marine features such as passages, channels, and straits the central position as defined by any delimiting land masses is used.
- 3) *Linear Features*** For linear features such as glaciers, ice streams, valleys, ridges, rivers, beaches, and coasts, the central position is used. However, as most geographical features are of variable dimensions and bearing, the shape of a feature might make it difficult to provide a central coordinate. For example, where the central coordinate does not fall on an irregularly shaped coast but in the water bordering it, or on a rock that protrudes through the ice in the centre of a glacier. In such cases select a position which is on the main body of the feature and central to the general shape and bearing of the feature.