



**General Certificate of Education**

**Leisure Studies**

**8641/8643/8646/8647/8649**

**LS04      Leisure Facilities**

**Report on the Examination**

*2010 examination - January series*

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## General Comments

### What was particularly good

1. There was only a small entry for this paper. Quite a large proportion of candidates who had been entered failed to sit the examination, either withdrawn or absent. It seemed as though a lot of these absent candidates might have been those who were less able and/or less well prepared, because the general standard of answers was good. There was a much smaller 'tail' of low performers in the distribution than has usually been the case in the past.
2. A large majority of candidates had prepared their case studies well and were able to provide good examples to support their answers.
3. Most candidates could also apply most of the key ideas of the specification to these case studies.
4. Knowledge and understanding of provision for customers with special needs was again shown to be very good and candidates seemed to use every opportunity to bring in references to this part of the specification.
5. Knowledge and understanding of computerised booking systems was also usually good, although many candidates seem to be very worried about 'all the data being lost' if their was a power cut or other interruption, which is very unlikely to be the case with most modern systems.

### What was not so good

1. Although knowledge of case studies is good only the very best candidates seem able to move on from their case studies to write in general terms about the industry as a whole.
2. Many candidates still interpret 'design and layout' rather narrowly and show little in-depth knowledge and understanding of any aspects beyond layout.
3. The different sources of funding that are available for different leisure facilities still causes problems for many candidates. Obviously it is difficult to get hold of sensitive information from the facilities that are used as case studies but candidates ought to be aware of the general nature and the problems and benefits of sources like '....lottery funding, local council funding and support from organisations such as Sports England....'.

### Assignment Task 1

The first two parts of the AT were generally done well. Most candidates wrote about arts and entertainment or sports and physical recreation facilities.

Part (b) produced a full range of answers. Most candidates were able to describe the layout well but discussion of the adequacy of the layout differentiated between the different levels. Some of the best answers were produced by candidates who were able to distinguish between the adequacy at low-use periods and at peak periods.

What was noticeable was that many answers concentrated on the layout of peripheral parts of the facility and did not pay as much attention to the area that was central to the functioning of the facility. For instance, they might have written in detail about the car park, entrance and reception, corridors, changing rooms and toilets but then not considered the gym area or the swimming pool in anything like as much detail. Such answers did not necessarily score badly – but it just seems a rather odd approach. It might also be more interesting for such candidates to switch the focus of their preparation, or at least widen it to include the key areas of the facility.

## ***Assignment Task 2***

Most candidates did well on part (a). Those who failed to score full marks often did so because they 'listed' rather than 'outlining' the main functions. Answers to this part had to show some detail to gain both marks.

Part (b) was also well done. However, some candidates lost marks because they tended to repeat their answer from AT1 on layout. As stated above, candidates need to think more generally about aspects of design. For instance many candidates said that lighting was 'good' or 'bright' or 'adequate for the sports that are played' but few discussed number or positioning of lights, whether they were strip lights or low energy bulbs, whether they were protected from damage or whether they had diffusers fitted and so on. Similarly candidates discussing signs did not often mention height of the signs, type of symbols or font and the clarity that these provided, colour used for backgrounds and whether this contrasted well with the lettering and so on. It would be good to see candidates broadening out their research into some, at least, of the aspects of design.

In part (c) it was noticeable that weaker candidates often considered the needs of staff as individuals – staff parking, rest rooms, storage space for personal belongings and so on – whereas the better candidates broadened their answers out to include a more vocational element. These candidates wrote about working conditions and whether staff were able to work well and efficiently in a comfortable environment which reduced the stresses on them as much as possible.

## ***Assignment Task 3***

Questions similar to part (a) have been set in the past and so candidates were well prepared and there were some very good answers to this.

Part (b) asked for a more general answer and it took some candidates by surprise and they did not seem as well prepared. Many made a reasonable attempt. They described the nature of town centres – accessible, busy, crowded, drawing people in from a wide area, but often with more expensive land and buildings and with a tendency to be noisy and maybe even slightly threatening in the late evenings. Then they were able to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of these characteristics for leisure facilities in general.

The better candidates were able to differentiate between the advantages and disadvantages for a range of different leisure functions. These answers showed an awareness that the locational needs of nightclubs are quite different from the needs of 'old men's pubs' and the needs of a traditional theatre are different from the needs of a modern multiplex cinema. There were a few good answers which referred to the locational needs of facilities such as nature reserves and canoeing courses being quite incompatible with town centre sites.

## **Assignment Task 4**

Both parts of part (a) were generally well done, despite the over-emphasis on the dangers of the total loss of data which seemed to worry a large proportion of candidates!

Part (b) was often the weakest answer on the exam. Very few candidates seem to understand the key principles of public funding. They need to learn that local authority financing is generally aimed at funding facilities for the whole community, rich and poor alike. The subsidies from central funds mean that entrance fees are much more affordable and entry may even be free for all or at least for those least able to pay. This brings obvious advantages but also means that facilities may not be up to quite the same standard as can be provided by privately owned and run facilities where higher, sometimes much higher, entrance and/or membership fees can be charged.

Lottery funding and funding from Sport England, the Arts Council, etc also often comes with conditions attached. These conditions are, to some extent, set by the politicians and the quango members they appoint, to meet specific objectives such as broadening participation, raising standards, introducing new work, encouraging experimentation and so on. The conditions that are imposed by all the providers of funds can be seen as a problem for the managers of the facilities that are funded. Perhaps discussing the conditions imposed by funding bodies and the opportunities and constraints that these present could form a greater part of students' research in future.

## **Suggestions for teachers to prepare future LS04 candidates**

There have been great advances in the quality and consistency of examination performance over the few years that the specification has been in existence. In order to continue to move forward candidates and their teachers might concentrate on:

1. Broadening their study of design in the leisure facilities that are studied in preparation
2. Gaining a greater understanding of the principles of private and public funding and the issues that arise from the various types of funding
3. Considering how the knowledge and understanding gained from the case studies can be applied to give a more general understanding of the leisure industry as a whole.

## **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.