



**General Certificate of Education (A-level) Applied  
June 2011**

**Travel and Tourism**

**TRPA**

**(Specification  
8651/8653/8656/8657/8659)**

**TRPA: Portfolio Units**

***Report on the Examination***

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## **General Comments for AS Units**

AS Travel and Tourism is a mature specification. Summer 2011 was its sixth moderation season. It was clear that candidates had benefited from teacher guidance in line with AQA recommendations made in previous editions of this report, at Teacher Standardising meetings and through contact with Portfolio Advisers. 2011 candidates have benefited from the expertise and experience of the Specification that has built up in centres over the past six years.

### **What was particularly good**

- The great majority of candidates chose appropriate travel and tourism organisations/destinations and went on to produce well-ordered portfolios structured into four distinct Assessment Objective sections.
- There was further evidence this year of increasing willingness by many candidates to make explicitly clear what research they have personally done for AO3 research and analysis tasks.

### **What was not so good**

- In some instances work was credited in the wrong mark band. Most commonly clear work that should have been credited in Mark Band 2 was awarded a Mark Band 3 score. Mark Band 3 is reserved for work that is not only a clear and correct response to the task but which is also detailed. Unit 2 AO1 below gives an example of what detailed work may be.
- To score at the top of a Mark Band a candidate must completely satisfy the relevant descriptor. Sometimes candidates didn't address a sentence (such as an instruction to evaluate their evidence for AO4) and lost marks as a consequence.

## **TT02 – A People Industry**

### **What was particularly good**

- Many portfolios were clearly structured into 4 separate Assessment Objective sections, focussing clearly on induction and training procedures in AO1 and on product knowledge in AO3 (saving customer service skill evaluation for AO4).
- Frequent use was made of the AQA witness statement proforma to provide clear evidence of the quality of oral role-plays in AO2.

### **What was not so good**

- The same travel and tourism organisation must be used throughout Unit 2. Some candidates lost marks because they used different organisations for AO2.
- AO2. An absolute minimum number of role-plays (not all of which need to be oral) for AO2 is three. However, four or five are more likely to allow candidates to demonstrate a wide enough range of customer service skills to gain high marks.

AO1 is about induction and training procedures at the chosen travel and tourism organisation. Successful candidates reviewed these procedures clearly for a Mark Band 2 score, in detail (MB3) or critically and in-depth for the highest (Mark Band 4) marks. Detailed, or better, reviews were often structured into sets of procedures used to induct and train different members of staff or else in terms of the different phases of the organisation's induction and training procedures.

Candidates who wrote about induction and training in general or who did not clearly focus on induction and training procedures used by the chosen organisation scored in Mark Band 1. This lower level of achievement also applied to a minority of less successful candidates who wrote about customer service practices or quality at the chosen organisation without concentrating on induction and training. Such submissions were not a clear response to the task (as set in the banner of the unit assessment grid) and did not reach MB2.

Witness statements must be provided, signed, for each oral role-play. Such witness statements tell the moderator the quality of the customer service that has been delivered. An AQA proforma is available in the AQA Teachers' Guide on the AQA website, [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk). Use of the AQA form is not compulsory (teachers may design their own) but it does clarify to the moderator what each customer service situation was, what took place and how well the candidate performed. Any substitute custom-produced form must do the same. Tick boxes alone provide insufficient evidence. Some justification comment is required. Candidates must evidence a variety (at least three, more appropriately four or five) of role-plays to cover a range of customer service skills. Successful candidates often present evidence of one or two face-to-face oral situations, a telephone dialogue, an e-mail/memo and a letter.

The Mark Band 4 descriptor requires evidence of the candidate role-playing unfamiliar customer service situations (at least two). Such situations should be unfamiliar both to the candidate (i.e. they should be unrehearsed) and to the member of staff s/he is role-playing. A successful approach here is to play the role of a recently inducted trainee member of staff. Such a person may well find the unexpected (hard-of-hearing, non-English-speaking or plain awkward) customer unfamiliar. It is essential that the unfamiliarity is explained to the moderator. Centres should note that the handling of complaints is not in itself an unfamiliar situation to a member of staff in a travel and tourism organisation.

All AO3 tasks are research and analysis tasks. Each candidate must make explicit the research s/he personally undertook to generate information to analyse. Some candidates investigated employees' product knowledge requirements through a questionnaire. This is fine but the research must identify what product knowledge was required of those employees interviewed. As with AO1, detailed (MB3) work is likely to break the analysis down into separate sections for each employee or type or grade of employee at the organisation. Analysis (not mere description) is required. Customer service skills are irrelevant for AO3. They are the subject of AO4.

Many candidates produced well-structured clear (MB2) or detailed (MB3) evaluations of what were often wide ranges of interpersonal and technical skills that staff members at the chosen organisation

need in order to deliver excellent customer service. More successful candidates genuinely evaluated the significance of skills rather than simply describing them. To completely satisfy (and therefore score at the top of) the MB3 and MB4 descriptor boxes, candidates must also evaluate the evidence that they have collected.

## ***TT03 – Travel Destinations***

### **What was particularly good**

- Many candidates produced good welcome scripts that clearly linked tourist facilities and major attractions in the destination (as opposed to in the hotel) with customer types.
- Greater numbers of candidates approached AO4 correctly. That is to say they addressed it directly by making clear recommendations to a range of customer types, rather than evaluating the range of attractions to be found at their chosen destinations in general terms unconnected to specified customer types.

### **What was not so good**

- AO1 is about the physical setting of the destinations. Landscape is part of that setting. Some candidates again referred to tourist attractions rather than landscape. This is at best an irrelevant waste of time and at worst a significant cause of mark loss when attraction descriptions are presented in place of landscape information.
- The key to success in AOs 2-4 is frequent linkage to customer/tourist types. Less successful candidates again wrote in general terms that did not make such linkages clear. This limited their marks to the MB2 ranges.

AO1 is about destination location, climate and landscape. Climate and location were generally dealt with appropriately allowing stronger candidates to access MB4 by producing detailed climate and landscape descriptions on top of clear location information and developing that detail by linking it to the needs of UK-based tourists. Weaker candidates avoided tackling landscape. As has been stated previously, a successful approach to the landscape component is to begin with an aerial photograph (such as those that are available on the internet, for example on Google Earth) or a relief map of the destination and then pick out major landscape features (hills, valleys, rivers, lakes, woodlands, beaches, bays and so on) to name and describe. In this way successful candidates were able to build clear written accounts of the physical setting within which each destination has developed.

AO2. Good welcome meeting scripts applied detailed knowledge of the chosen destinations to link tourist facilities to customer types. They avoided becoming bogged-down in long and unnecessary accounts of what the hotel has to offer. Weaker candidates found themselves stuck at mid-MB2 or below because they wrote generalised scripts referring to what 'everyone' would like instead of clarifying what attractions would most likely suit clearly delineated customer types.

Through both AO3 and AO4 successful candidates again focused on a variety of different customer types. They researched and then analysed the transport options that would most likely suit their clearly identified customer types in AO3. Weaker responses to AO3 simply presented a series of descriptive options not especially linked to the needs of any particular customer type. MB2 is the likely upper limit for such work.

Turning to AO4, the first important thing is to clearly give recommendations (based on an evaluation of destination appeal) to a series of distinct customer types (4 or 5 as a rule of thumb). Successful candidate began this section of their portfolio by referring directly and immediately to their customer types. Secondly, successful candidates genuinely evaluated the likely future popularity of their destinations. Weaker accounts tended to refer merely to recent (i.e. past) trends and simply did not get to grips with the future at all.

## ***TT04 – Working in Travel and Tourism***

For Double Award candidates this unit is mandatory. They must investigate a travel and tourism job.

### **What was particularly good**

- AO1 was especially well tackled and most candidates were able to report successfully on seven key areas of the chosen travel and tourism job.
- Many candidates had clearly undertaken the necessary workplace observation enabling improved descriptions of interactions between the job-holder and colleagues for AO2.

### **What was not so good**

- Some candidates used only a narrow range of sources of information – on occasion restricted to little more than watching or talking to a member of the organisation's staff.
- In AO4 some candidates concentrated on the requirements of the job or on their own strengths and weaknesses to the exclusion of the other. Both are required. The task is to evaluate the latter against the former.

Many candidates were able to score MB2 or MB3 marks by providing clear or detailed information on all seven key areas of the chosen job. Those able to gain marks at the top of the respective mark bands maintained a consistent level of performance across all seven. Few candidates were able to develop their report by relating desk research to practical experience, limiting their achievement to top MB3 at most.

Most candidates this year dealt properly with AO2 by reporting on how the skills and qualities of the job-holder are applied in their interactions with other staff members. In the past some candidates have misinterpreted 'other people' as meaning external customers. There was little evidence of that this year.

In responding to AO3, successful candidates were able to clearly link their own desk research to observations of workplace practice. The least successful showed little evidence of undertaking direct observation. It is hard to progress beyond MB1 without such evidence.

Successful candidates considered the demands of the chosen job for AO4 and evaluated their own strengths and weaknesses against its demands. Relatively few candidates properly assessed their own strengths and weaknesses in different contexts. This precluded MB4 access for some otherwise strong candidates for this Assessment Objective.

## ***TT06 – Tourism in the UK***

Double Award candidates may complete **either** Unit 6 **or** Unit 7 (Overseas Destinations Study).

### **What was particularly good**

- Many candidates produced clear PowerPoint presentations about tourism in their chosen region for Task C (AO2). Detail was often appropriately achieved by the use of Presenter Notes – good preparation for A2's Unit 8.
- Appropriate UK tourist regions such as Northumbria and the South-West of England (usually local to the candidate) were chosen.

### **What was not so good**

- A requirement of AO2 is to compare local provision to that in the UK as a whole. Unfortunately, some candidates overlooked this and lost marks as a result.
- While there was great evidence in support of AO4 this year, it remained rather downplayed by some candidates, with a tendency to try to incorporate it in the same presentation as AO3. This frequently resulted in lower marks for AO4 than might have been achieved had it been covered in its own right.

Tasks A and B of Unit 6 address AOs 1 and 3 respectively. Both concern tourism in the UK on the national scale. For AO1 the more successful candidates produced detailed written reports covering the variety of factors affecting the popularity of the UK that are listed in the Specification. Others achieved lower marks by describing attractions and other provision without clear reference to the factors underlying the picture they painted. Candidates had generally researched relevant statistics for AO3 and were able to go on to analyse the trends revealed by their data clearly for MB2 marks or in detail for MB3. A few high achieving candidates produced notably thorough analyses and accessed MB4 as a result.

Many candidates produced PowerPoint presentations for AO2 (Task C). It was common for these to be stronger than the work for AO4. Clear sets of slides typically scored in MB2 with more detailed presentation, supported by sets of Presenter Notes, achieving MB3 marks. Well-developed work that showed some critical understanding accessed MB4. It was again AO4 that was the issue this year. Although less prevalent than in the past there is still a tendency among a significant number of candidates to lump this AO in with AO2. All too often (not always admittedly, but all too often) this resulted in AO4 being short-changed and in the candidate being short-changed in terms of marks. Centres are advised to urge candidates to treat AO4 separately. One successful approach has been to prepare a taped oral evaluation suitable for a radio travel programme or podcast.



## ***TT07 – Overseas Destination Study***

Double Award candidates choose **either** Unit 7 **or** Unit 6 (UK Tourism).

### **What was particularly good**

- Detailed AO1 destination profiles provided a sound foundation for many candidates' Unit 7 portfolios. Most successfully included explicit reference to distinct tourist regions and to the availability of internal transportation within their chosen countries.
- The majority of candidates concluded with a clear recommendation of which country tour operators should include in their future programme.

### **What was not so good**

- AO2 requires comparison. Some candidates under-achieved by laying out descriptive accounts of travel options and costs that did not clearly compare.

Most candidates tackled AO1 successfully. They produced detailed destination profiles that responded well to the descriptor requirements (regions, internal transport, features, facilities and attractions). The most successful MB4 candidates were able to not only describe in detail but to discuss effectively the availability of internal transport in their two countries.

AO2 is a comparison task. Successful candidates genuinely compared the cost and options for travel to their two chosen countries. Candidates who only described options, without comparison, scored fewer marks. To access MB2 a clear comparison is required. Those who produced detailed or well-developed true comparisons were able to achieve scores in MB3 or MB4.

For AO3, candidates were often able to collect a range of data appropriate for an analysis of visitor trends. Many went on to produce a clear or detailed analysis of that data. Those who drew some relevant (MB3) or truly valid (MB4) conclusions were able to score high marks.

Candidates generally fared well on AO4 when they truly evaluated the suitability of each of their two destinations for inclusion in future tour operator programmes and came to a justified decision. Pleasingly, many did this well or at least made a sound attempt to do so.

## **Overall Summary for AS Units**

Candidates do well when they produce well-ordered portfolios clearly divided into four discrete Assessment Objective sections. Explicit clarification of the research done for every AO3 task is important, as is careful reading of each descriptor wording to ensure that all aspects of each task are fully addressed. Candidates who did these things scored marks likely to be commensurate with their abilities; those who didn't scored fewer marks than they might otherwise have done.

## **General Comments for A2 Units**

### **What was particularly good**

- Portfolios were generally well ordered. They were clearly sub-divided into four discrete sub-sections – one for each Assessment Objective task.
- Most work reflected the differing purposes of the four Assessment Objectives in that AO1 gave information to demonstrate knowledge, AO2 work evidenced application, AO3 displayed clear evidence of both research and analysis and AO4 was truly evaluative.

### **What was not so good**

- Appropriate choice of subject was an issue for a minority of centres and candidates. This affected Units 8 and 10.
- Unit 8 must be a travel and tourism project – leisure events run at the centre (however laudable as charity-raising occasions) are not travel and tourism.
- The chosen issue for Unit 10 must be a bone of contention for the stakeholders concerned and must be current in the sense that it is unresolved. Centres are strongly advised to check the appropriateness of titles with Portfolio Advisers before candidates begin work on Unit 10.

## ***TT08 – Travel and Tourism Project***

### **What was particularly good**

- The majority of candidates produced their own individual clear or, with Presenter Notes, detailed presentations of their group's business plans for AO1.
- Most candidates organised successful travel and tourism trips. They produced clear, often detailed records (AO2), sometimes with commentary (MB4) and evaluated (AO4) the visit's success, the contributions of team members and the role of ICT well.

### **What was not so good**

- AO3 requires research and analysis of the feasibility of the chosen project. This should be carried out before the trip happens. Some candidates clearly wrote their analysis after the event and, as result, struggled to separate the content of this task from that for Task D for AO4.
- A minority of candidates organised events at their centre that did not clearly involve travel beyond the local area nor, therefore, tourism. Local leisure events are not appropriate.

Presentations for AO1 were almost invariably PowerPoint presentations. Many were accompanied by Presenter Notes, which added detail to access the higher marks (MB3 and above when well developed and showing critical awareness). The most successful candidates were well able to link aspects of their business plan and show their inter-relationships and achieve MB4 marks as a consequence.

For AO2 most candidates produced a clear record of their involvement in the project, usually as a diary/log or as minutes from the meetings. Many chose to do this in tabular form which made it clear to read but sometimes limited the development of some of the points because of the restrictions of the size of the spaces in their tables. Generally those presented in landscape format were more successful – giving extra column width. Detailed records scored within MB3 with clear ones at MB2. Candidates scoring MB4 marks additionally produced commentaries to accompany their records – frequently as an extra column in their tables.

AO3 was well done when written in advance of the project actually happening – i.e. as a real analysis of what would be likely to work or not and why. Some candidates explained how and why they had decided to choose the particular project and others why they had rejected other options. Either approach was valid. Successful candidates produced good evidence, in the form of figures and prices, of the research they themselves had undertaken and which informed their analysis.

Some less successful candidates had a problem with AO4 because they failed to address every aspect of the criteria, omitting one or other of the roles of other members, the candidate's personal role or the role of ICT.

## **TT10 – Current Issues in Travel and Tourism**

### **What was particularly good**

- ‘Many’ stakeholders (AO2, MB2) were identified by a large proportion of candidates. Typically ten or more stakeholder groups may have an interest in a current travel and tourism issue (organisations from each of the six sectors of the industry, local and national government, pressure groups, local residents, non-travel and tourism businesses and tourists themselves).
- The majority of candidates appropriately separated the AO2 and AO3 tasks. The former concerns what stakeholders think about the issue and the latter what they are doing about it.

### **What was not so good**

- Too many candidates did not begin by clearly stating a current travel and tourism issue that they had chosen. This led to confusion and consequent under-achievement. Candidates need to say:
  - what the issue is – in so many words
  - why there is a debate or conflict between different sets of stakeholders
  - why the issue is one for the travel and tourism industry
  - how it is that it is unresolved (and therefore current rather than past).
- Some candidates again overlooked the AO4 requirement to evaluate ‘*the extent to which (their own) values and attitudes... influenced their perception of future impacts*’. The top mark in any of the mark bands cannot be given to candidates who omit this essential element of the task.

Centres are strongly advised to seek guidance from their Portfolio Adviser about the choice of issue for this unit. Inappropriate choice of topic was the main problem for less successful candidates. The investigation must be into a travel and tourism issue which is controversial, i.e. one about which stakeholders hold different points of view. Some less successful candidates chose inappropriate topics leading to descriptive accounts that were only loosely connected to travel and tourism. Among those investigations that were most successful were a number that looked into clearly located developments. Such choices (into a named proposed airport expansion for instance) enabled candidates to access detailed information and make informed judgements. With access to the Internet, nowhere is inaccessible to research so successful issues such as airport runway extensions are perfectly viable even when centres are far away from the airport in question.

AO1. When subjects for investigation were well-chosen, current travel and tourism issues there were some excellent accounts of the changes in travel and tourism, which had brought the chosen issue to a head. However, others merely gave a descriptive historical account of a development and failed to relate it to changes in travel and tourism. Such less successful sections struggled to gain much credit even in MB2.

Many candidates successfully managed to identify a variety of stakeholders with an opinion, and so those candidates who had been less successful in AO1 were able to recover a little in terms of marks scored for AO2. Unfortunately some candidates did identify too few to allow access to the higher bands of the mark scheme. Even MB2 requires ‘many’ stakeholders.

Most candidates showed clear evidence of research in AO3. Successful candidates had properly researched the response and actions of their chosen issue’s stakeholders (i.e. what they are doing about the issue). Unfortunately, on more than one occasion research was directed at stakeholder opinion (the stuff of AO2 – what they think about the issue). Such inappropriate research caused loss of marks for some candidates.

In general, candidates made creditable attempts to evaluate their chosen issue’s impacts, both current and future. Many were also able to give their views on the issue but often failed to address the aspect of how their views had affected their perception of the issue. It was usually confined to the fact that ‘I did not know much about this topic beforehand but now I know a lot more and think...’. Only a relatively small number of candidates were able to successfully tackle this element of AO4. A successful approach adopted by some centres has been to ask candidates to record their views on the issue before they begin their investigation and to compare their views afterwards, asking themselves how and why they have changed and whether their conclusions were shaped by the evidence or by their (changing or not) personal opinions.

## ***TT12 – Business Operations in Travel and Tourism***

This is mandatory for Double Award candidates.

### **What was particularly good**

- AO1. Nearly all candidates gave a clear (MB2) or detailed (MB3) account of the five specified key areas of operation. The most successful candidates also commented on the use of skills, which helped them access MB4.
- More candidates than has previously been the case gave clear or detailed accounts in AO2 of how the examples they had described in AO1 interact to solve problems.

### **What was not so good**

- AO3 focuses on the aims of the example practices. Some candidates did not initially clarify what aims the practices were designed for. This caused their analysis to lose direction.

Most candidates gave proper and appropriate accounts of the operation of the specified five key areas in their chosen travel and tourism organisation. These were often clear (MB2) or detailed (MB3). Some, that were well-developed with commentary on necessary skills and discussion of problems, achieved MB4.

A successful approach to AO2 taken by some candidates was to research examples of actual problems or issues by talking to someone within the organisation. They then went on to apply their knowledge and understanding to giving an account of how the example practices they had described in AO1 interact in the solving of these problems. Less successful candidates described the solution of problems without referring to the necessary interactions between practices.

The key to AO3 success was clarity about the aims of the example practices. Those candidates who were not clear about the aims of their practices became confused and wrote generalised and rather unfocussed accounts. Successful candidates clearly stated practice aims at the outset and then went on to produce clear, detailed or developed and in-depth analyses of how the practices meet their aims.

Successful candidates had collected information about the efficiency of their example systems from a source within the organisation. This enabled them to properly evaluate the efficiency of these systems. High achieving candidates drew conclusions, which, if valid and substantiated, could allow MB4 access.

## ***TT13 – Management in Travel and Tourism***

Double Award candidates choose **either** Unit 13 **or** Unit 14 (Special Interest/Activity Holidays).

There was no Unit 13 candidate work submitted for moderation this year. That was a shame. Combining their research effort for Units 12 and 13 into one could enable those candidates who had good access to a travel and tourism manager in Unit 12 to achieve success in Unit 13 with greater time-efficiency than in the alternative Unit 14.

Centres wishing to consider adopting Unit 13 for 2012 submission are advised to refer to previous editions of this report.

## ***TT14 – Special Interest/Activity Holidays***

Double Award candidates choose **either** Unit 14 **or** Unit 13 (Management in Travel and Tourism).

All 2011 candidates chose Unit 14 in preference to Unit 13. Whether it was always the better choice is debatable. Unit 13 does enable candidates to do well if they have good access to a manager in their chosen organisation for Unit 12. Unit 14 candidates can under-achieve by producing long and time-consuming descriptions of special interest/activity holidays which don't necessarily address the specific requirements of the unit's descriptors.

### **What was particularly good**

- Health and safety provision and tourism flow patterns were frequently explicit and clear in candidates' responses to the AO1 task, enabling marks to climb towards the top of mark band ranges.
- Many candidates used a variety of appropriate sources to undertake their research.

### **What was not so good**

- Some portfolios were very thick. They contained lots of descriptive material, especially for AO1, and must have taken candidates a lot of time (too much time?) to produce, possibly at the end of their course. Successful candidates often produced reports that were more concise. They focussed very clearly on satisfying the stated requirements of the unit.
- AO4's task has a number of elements. Some candidates did not address them all and lost marks as result.

AO1. The best work was tightly focused, for example on truly specialist cruising holidays (e.g. to hostile environments or on rivers) rather than tackling cruising holidays as a whole – a vast market tempting candidates into producing voluminous material in order to try to do it justice. A popular and often successful activity holiday choice was skiing. Most candidates successfully incorporated health and safety provision and tourism flow patterns into their work.

AO2. The future seemed to perplex a number of candidates. Many were able to describe changes in their chosen markets over the last 10 years or so but notably fewer extrapolated current trends into the future or successfully predicted likely future changes. Awareness of changing values and attitudes is an element of the descriptor wordings that must be addressed to allow credit at the top of all mark bands from MB2 upwards. Unfortunately, a significant number of candidates failed to explicitly address this part of the task and limited their marks as a result.

Unit 14's AO3 is about the research that candidates have undertaken to support the remainder of the unit. Many candidates showed good practice by dealing with this AO's task separately and in its own section of their portfolios. They explicitly stated the sources and methods they had used and did well when they successfully analysed these sources and methods showing how they had allowed them to achieve their aims.

AO4 is a composite task. All elements of the task have to be done if marks at the top ends of the mark bands are to be awarded. Successful candidates produced a balanced response that both compared the chosen markets and evaluated the investigation undertaken. Their less successful peers tended to concentrate on either the comparison or the evaluation – at the expense of the other.

## Overall Summary for A2 Units

Candidates generally produced sound reports for Unit 8. Where there were shortfalls in levels of achievement they mostly related to AO3 and the analysis of feasibility. As commented upon earlier, this should be undertaken before the actual project event takes place. Unit 10 creates more issues. Primarily these arise because of poor choice of theme. Candidates simply must investigate a genuinely travel and tourism issue that really is controversial and debated among a number of stakeholders. The guidance of Portfolio Advisers is crucial and centres are urged to seek this before embarking on the unit with their candidates.

Double Award candidates did well on Unit 12 when they had good access to a travel and tourism organisation and to a manager that they could question. Although this access would have been a useful springboard for success in Unit 13 they chose Unit 14 instead. Candidates did better on Unit 14 when they chose appropriate markets to investigate and when they produced evaluations that addressed all the elements of the AO4 task.

## Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

UMS conversion calculator [www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)