



**General Certificate of Education (A-level) Applied
June 2012**

Travel and Tourism

TT09

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

Unit 9: Travel and Tourism – People and Quality

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

This was the 12th operational paper of Unit 9 Travel and Tourism – People and Quality.

What was particularly good

1. Most candidates used the subject terminology appropriately, displaying their command of terms such as “benchmarking” and “mystery shopping”, as well as “sabotage” and “compensation culture”. This shows that teachers have duly covered key concepts from the Specification and that candidates have acquired the vocabulary of the sector.
2. Candidates had collected relevant information from suitable organisations operating in the travel and tourism sector (for example transport providers, accommodation providers or tourist attractions). This shows that candidates do not study the topic at a mere theoretical level, but also visit businesses and learn about the sector that way.

What was not so good

1. Many answers remained too generic, lacking a sense of organisational context, as if the candidates were writing about any organisation, rather than a specific one (this was particularly noticeable for the answers to questions **01** and **02**).
2. Some answers lacked evaluation, even when the command term explicitly invited candidates to evaluate (for example question **07** and question **09**).

ASSIGNMENT TASK A

For Task A, candidates were asked questions about customer service standards. Most candidates described reasonably well how their chosen organisation sets its quality standards, however the answers were often very generic, without giving a sense of place, as if the same answer could be about any organisation. This prevented many candidates from accessing Level 2 for question **01** and also for question **02**, where candidates had to explain how their chosen organisation monitors and evaluates the quality of its customer service. Many answers remained superficial – and consequently many candidates could not access Level 2. A sense of organisational context is important to access higher marks, hence recommendation number 1.

At the end of Task A, candidates had to suggest two possible improvements to customer service; the quality of the answers varied hugely. Some answers were excellent, well contextualised and sensible. However, some candidates ignored the reference to “customer service” in the question while others did not realise that they were asked for “two”, although those requirements featured explicitly in the question, hence recommendation number 2.

ASSIGNMENT TASK B

For Task B, candidates had to define “sabotage”. It was very pleasing to see that most candidates knew this concept (which is explicitly mentioned in the Specification). Candidates were asked to describe one security hazard (other than sabotage and theft of electronic information) that is particularly relevant for their chosen organisation. Most candidates answered well, giving some details about the organisation context (for example the location or clientele of the organisation, as appropriate). The weakness often present for questions **01** and **02** (a generic answer) was largely avoided here; most candidates clearly were prepared for such a question; the examiners were impressed by some of the answers. The answer to the next question, however, proved disappointing. Candidates were asked to explain the procedures in place to deal with that security hazard. Usually, the procedures themselves were well described (often with many details), however the command term for question **06** was “explain” yet few answers were explanatory. It seems that, when candidates have a lot of information on a topic, they just start answering too quickly, without pausing to consider the exact wording of the question. This confirms the importance and relevance of recommendation 2.

At the end of Task B, candidates were asked to evaluate the risk of theft of electronic information from their chosen organisation. The quality of the answers was polarised: some were duly evaluative and scored very high marks, yet others did not contain any element of evaluation. A small number of candidates wrote about theft in general (for example theft of customers’ belongings), not theft of electronic information; this confirms, once more, the importance of closely reading the entire question, as mentioned in recommendation number 2.

ASSIGNMENT TASK C

For Task C, candidates were asked to outline the key intentions and requirements of two pieces of legislation, other than the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Candidates were well prepared for such a question and the answers were good overall; many were well structured, firstly about intentions and then about requirements. A small number were too concise. It was very good to see some candidates write about recent Acts (such as the Equality Act 2010), though most answers, as expected, were about the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

Having outlined the key intentions and requirements of two pieces of legislation, candidates then had to evaluate how one of them affects operational practice in their chosen organisation. Many answers were good, duly evaluating the impact upon operational practice, however many were too basic, either lacking evaluation, or failing to consider operational practice. It was clear that candidates had a lot of informative material in their preparatory folder, however many did not select the relevant elements. Many answers were several pages long yet remained just descriptive, or failed to answer the question about operational practice.

ASSIGNMENT TASK D

Task D was about complaints and serious situations. First, candidates were asked how the values and attitudes of employees may affect the handling of customer complaints. Some answers were very good, with precise examples of situations of prejudice (for example intergenerational misunderstanding, sexism or homophobia), however many answers remained weak and superficial. The topic of values and attitudes is still one that many candidates find difficult and that should be taught more explicitly, hence recommendation number 3. Candidates were then asked to explain why managers, rather than employees at a lower level, are required to deal with serious complaints and situations. Most answers were satisfactory, as this is a topic that candidates seem to understand well. The best answers offered a solid balance of “theory” and “practice” i.e. they integrated ideas (about responsibility, roles, experience etc) and examples (from a range of organisations).

Candidates were eventually asked to analyse how a growing compensation culture has affected travel and tourism organisations. It was good to see that the majority of candidates understood the meaning of “compensation culture”, however the quality of the answers varied. Some were very good (duly analytical, with references to passenger charters and disclaimers, as mentioned in the mark scheme) but others were just descriptive and even anecdotal, sometimes over pages and pages, without ultimately answering the question, hence recommendation number 4.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future TT09 candidates

1. Candidates must be taught how to give a sense of organisational context, in order to avoid answers that feel like “one-size-fits-all” and could apply to any organisation.
2. Candidates must pay closer attention to *all* the words in the questions (for example being asked to suggest “*two*” improvements (question **03**) or to “*evaluate*” the risk of theft “*of electronic information*” (question **07**).
3. Candidates need to understand *all* topics of the *Specification* (for example the topic of values and attitudes is still difficult for some candidates, as was benchmarking some years ago).
4. Candidates must be reminded that examiners are not after *quantity* but after *quality*: concise and focused answers are better than pages and pages where candidates copy everything remotely relevant from their preparatory folder. This was mentioned in previous reports but it is still a problem in some cases.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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