



General Certificate of Education

Leisure Studies

8641/8643/8646/8647/8649

LS04 Leisure Facilities

Report on the Examination

2009 examination - January series

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

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What was particularly good

All candidates for this exam appeared to have prepared well, in that they seemed to have prepared at least two case studies for which they had studied most, or all, of the key themes that were shown as bullet points for study in the specification.

Then most candidates seemed to have thought sensibly about how to answer the questions as set in the exam. There were very few examples of the command words being misunderstood, so there were very few examples of candidates writing a lot of material that was irrelevant or of losing a large number of marks because of complete misinterpretation of the question.

As a result of this the best candidates scored very good marks, often scoring consistently well throughout all sections of the exam; and the least able candidates were still able to write sensible answers to most questions, even if these answers were often limited in scope.

What was not so good

Once again the files prepared by candidates at several centres were taken in for inspection by the board. There was great variation between the style and content of these files but there were two types of file that did **not** serve candidates well.

1. In some centres candidates seemed to have a mass of material that consisted almost entirely of printed handouts produced by the centre, sometimes clearly in consultation with the teachers at the centre. Whilst the information in these files was very interesting and almost entirely relevant to the topic being studied it seemed as though individual candidates in these centres had done very little work to personalise their files by selecting, organising, adding to or otherwise developing the printed notes.

As a result, in the exam the best candidates in those centres spent a lot of time rewriting a lot of information and putting it into their own words - but they were unable to then bring their own ideas and understanding to the information. As a result their answers did not appear to develop as far as these candidates were probably capable of developing them. These best candidates almost seemed constrained in their answers by the volume of material in their folders.

At the same time, the lowest ability candidates in these centres had so much information available that they were unable to cope with selecting what was relevant to the questions from what was irrelevant. These candidates almost became bogged down in the volume of their notes.

2. Other centres appeared to have collected little, if any, information about the leisure facilities that they had studied. Their files contained a few class exercises, sometimes answers to past papers and sometimes responses to teacher-set questions. However, these did not provide candidates with the detailed, structured knowledge about the facilities studied that was needed to provide the hard facts needed to support the candidates' answers in the exam.

Assignment Task 1

Part (a)

To gain both marks, candidates had to consider a large range of food providers from restaurants and hotels to burger bars and leisure facilities with just a few vending machines. Unfortunately a large number of candidates limited themselves by just looking at the range of food provided within the two leisure facilities that they had studied for the exam.

Candidates must be aware that the exam can test the full range of the leisure industry and not just the two main facilities.

Part (b)

During the last ten years internet cafés have grown and declined in different areas at different rates in different areas. It was very difficult for examiners to know where and how fast growth or decline had taken place, so candidates' suggestions had to be taken to be correct for the area they were writing about.

Most candidates were able to give good justifications for the changes that they observed. Growth had occurred as the technology first developed and as people needed easy access to the internet when it was not available to them at home or in a portable form. Decline had occurred when the internet became easily and cheaply available to all. However, decline had not been so rapid in areas with a lot of tourists, or students and other poor people, or in areas where internet café owners were able to provide other attractions to bring in customers.

Part (c)

Most candidates had good knowledge of the range of entertainments in pubs and bars.

Then most were able to give at least one or two simple reasons for the expansion of entertainments, including the competition from cheaper alcohol from supermarkets and the competition from home leisure systems. However, only the better candidates were able to elaborate and develop these explanations in the detail required to raise their marks to Level 2. These better candidates could give a range of reasons for the change and elaborate on how and why each of these reasons had become important over the last few years.

Assignment Task 2

Part (a)

Most candidates were able to gain good marks for describing the design of their reception area, but it was again disappointing that many limited their answers to 'layout' and did not discuss the full range of aspects of 'design'.

Those who had just thought about layout were limited in what they could write in their discussion of the image presented by the area's design. Those who could also consider lighting, furniture, floor surfaces, uniforms etc. were able to write far more rounded answers about the image created.

Part (b)

Almost all candidates seemed well prepared for this question but it was clear that the best candidates had:

- i. considered more aspects of design than just layout and
- ii. thought seriously about how to evaluate 'suitability' before they went into the exam. Thus these candidates performed better than those candidates who just seemed to concentrate on paraphrasing very detailed handouts from the centres. These centre-produced notes obviously did not provide an unbiased evaluation of the facility.

Assignment Task 3

Part (a)

This was another short question that most candidates were able to do very well. Unfortunately it did not differentiate well as most candidates were able to score all four marks available.

Part (b)

Comparing two facilities proved to be more demanding. The weakest candidates were still able to write two good descriptions but remained in Level 1 because they did not make any comparisons between the two facilities.

Some candidates were able to scrape into Level 2 by writing two 'juxtaposed' descriptions; that is they described a feature of Facility A and then described that same feature in Facility B without making direct comparisons but making it very obvious that there was a difference.

The best answers made clear comparisons of a number of features in the two facilities. Phrases like "...better than B because..." or "...it is not as good because it serves a different market sector..." or "...A is not as suitable because the building is older and is in need of renovation to provide..." characterised these answers. One or two such comparisons could move an answer up through Level 2. To achieve a Level 3 marks a candidate had to include comparisons like this throughout his or her answer.

Assignment Task 4

Part (a)

The final Assignment Task proved to be a very good differentiator because it asked candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding to an unfamiliar situation. Some good candidates wrote their best answer here, perhaps because they were not confined to the detailed notes provided by the facilities that they had studied.

On the other hand some weak candidates found this a very difficult question because they were forced to "think outside the box". Of course such thinking is a very important part of an applied A Level course and it is important that the exam continues to encourage candidates to do that.

Part (b)

A Level 1 mark could be obtained by explaining some of the ways by which any facility, or one chosen facility, could use particular energy saving techniques. Many candidates limited themselves to those that were mentioned in the resource but some went beyond this and showed a wider knowledge. However, differentiation was largely dependent on candidates' explanations as to why it was in the interest of the managers to save energy.

Money saving was the most common reason given, although some candidates wrote really good, elaborated answers as to why money saving could improve things at the facility. Quite a few candidates also wrote about more idealistic reasons for saving energy, but the best of these candidates then linked that back to the applied nature of the course by showing how that might bring benefits to the facility in terms of improved image, greater customer loyalty and increased membership in the long run.

Part (c)

This question differentiated very well. All candidates were able to describe some energy saving measures taken (or that could be taken) at their chosen facility. However, the weakest candidates just said that this was a good thing without really explaining why.

Level 2 answers usually provided a fuller explanation as to why the measures were important and considered the balance between energy saving and providing a safe and pleasant environment. Such answers showed real evaluation skills.

Unfortunately almost all of the answers that limited themselves to saving on energy costs were limited to Level 2. There was just not enough new to say to justify a Level 3 mark. In fact the question referred to **all** running costs although only a minority of candidates went on from energy to consider staffing costs and the cost of consumables in the day-to-day running of the centre. When these wider costs were considered well the answers often reached Level 3.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates

Obviously the last point above shows that it is essential that teachers encourage candidates to read the questions very, very carefully. And though all teachers know that and all students are told that, it is still necessary to emphasise that obvious point.

More important though is the need to concentrate on producing clear, well ordered, detailed but not overwhelming files of information to take into the exam. These should contain the students' own notes along with any printed material from the centres.

They **should not** include teacher-produced material that elaborates on handouts from the facilities. However, there have been some cases where the facility-produced handouts were produced in consultation with the teacher and this is acceptable.

Then, having put together a good folder of notes, candidates need to be shown how to adapt those notes to suit a variety of different question types. They must be ready to select from and adapt their notes and to avoid trying to write too directly from the notes.

When all the answers from a centre follow a very similar template, examiners tend to think that the most able have been held back by that structure and that the least able have been confused by it. There are even some cases where the examiners think that there has been so much teacher guidance after the exam paper has been opened that this is almost crossing the border into unacceptable practice. If all students are encouraged to think for themselves and adapt their notes to fit the question and to work within their own limits those suspicions will be avoided.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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