



General Certificate of Education

Travel and Tourism

8651/8653/8656/8659

TT09 People and Quality

Report on the Examination

2007 examination - January series

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GENERIC COMMENTS

This was the first operational paper of Unit 9 Travel and Tourism – People and Quality. Overall, candidates' performance was satisfactory, which augurs well for future series, as teachers and schools can build upon this first experience and feedback.

What was particularly good:

1. Candidates had chosen suitable travel and tourism organisations; it seems that many centres had organised visits to these organisations, which is a good way to prepare candidates for this unit and to develop good links with such professional partners.
2. Candidates had collected relevant information about their chosen organisations and had seemingly covered most, if not all, aspects of the syllabus, thereby showing a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the theme of the unit.

Widespread weaknesses:

1. Many candidates wrote in generic terms, without making specific references to their chosen organisations (although they were explicitly and unambiguously asked to do so). This explains some relatively low scores, as answers that failed to refer to precise examples from the chosen organisations would rarely score above level 1.
2. Many candidates seemed to answer the questions without paying sufficient attention to the command words (such as 'describe' or 'evaluate' or 'analyse'); these command words are very carefully chosen, they frame and direct the expected answer.

TASK 1

This task was about customer feedback. Overall, candidates displayed a sound knowledge and understanding of the method(s) used by their chosen organisations to collect customer feedback (such as exit questionnaires or 'mystery shoppers'), yet more precise data would have been helpful (for example: **not** 'thousands of questionnaires' **but** '5,000 questionnaires every summer'; not 'only a few people replied' **but** 'a 7% return rate'). The best answers to the third part of the task linked customer feedback and improvements: the most able candidates explained that monitoring customer feedback is not an end in itself, but a professional research activity aimed at identifying, proposing and implementing appropriate improvements.

TASK 2

This task was about managing complaints. Again, candidates showed a sound knowledge of their chosen organisation, both with regard to complaints and to the procedures in place to handle these complaints. Some candidates struggled to differentiate between types of complaint; complaining about the bad weather is hardly a complaint directed at the organisation. Too many candidates wrote about stereotypical or hypothetical complaints (very often: a soup that is too cold, a steak that is undercooked) rather than real, pertinent, precise examples. Many candidates found the third part of the task difficult; some good answers endeavoured to refer to racism, sexism or homophobia, but the area of the syllabus about employees' own values and attitudes could be further emphasised and better illustrated.

TASK 3

This task was about health and safety and the law — more precisely: about the implications, for the managers of the chosen organisations, of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) or of the Data Protection Act (1998). All candidates showed some knowledge and understanding of the Acts and their remit, but few candidates paid enough attention to the particular angle of the question: the implications for managers. Only a minority of (very good) answers addressed that aspect (for example in terms of cost or time, or with regard to managers' roles and responsibilities by department or section). All too often, answers remained generic, about safety policies in general, about the requirements of the DDA or about good practice with regard to computers and passwords. In many cases, candidates failed to see or to explain the interesting potential of their chosen organisations; for example, with regard to health and safety or access, an airline or a zoo offer particular challenges for managers, yet many candidates did not appreciate that and only wrote about generic aspects.

TASK 4

This task was about management and the motivation of teams. Many candidates did well for the second part of the task (about techniques of staff motivation, displaying a good knowledge of the topic and of a wide range of motivational techniques), yet the majority struggled with the first part of the task, as they did not understand the concept of 'positive physical working environment'. This is another area of the syllabus that could be further emphasised and better illustrated. Some candidates were able to refer to motivational theories such as the work of Frederick Herzberg or Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y – such theoretical references are much appreciated and very welcome, as long as candidates are able to apply them to precise contexts and organisations, instead of just summarising the gist.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future TT09 candidates:

1. Teachers could help candidates to think more about their chosen organisations in order to understand the rationale behind their professional practices: Why these particular methods (and not others) to collect customer feedback? Why these particular techniques (and not others) to motivate staff? Why these particular procedures (and not others) to handle complaints?
2. Teachers could help candidates to think (and write) in a more elaborate way: motivation is not about 'keeping staff on their toes' (sic), customer service is not just about 'being nice and friendly' (sic); at A2 level, one expects a more mature language, for example with reference to professionalism.

After the examination itself, several centres were asked to send candidates' preparatory folders to AQA. In most cases, the preparatory folders included useful and sensible documents, such as research notes written by candidates (for example notes taken during an interview with a representative from the organisation) and original materials (for example copies of their Health and Safety policy). In one case though, candidates' folders included photocopies of several chapters of a textbook. Please note that this is against the rules.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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