

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

GCE Travel and Tourism 6992
Unit 6: Resort Operations

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General Introduction

This report provides general guidance and a summary of the key messages from the June 2011 series, along with comments regarding the accuracy of assessment and the administration process.

It was evident that all centres had carefully considered the demands and requirements of this unit.

Task A

This task was much improved specifically the explanation for the need for the resort office to liaise with the UK.

Task B

Observation forms were generally easy to follow and provided clear detail of the candidates' performance.

Task C

Candidates did often show evidence of a range of research however referencing was still predominantly focused on websites and was not consistent across all tasks.

Task D

This task was much improved. Now many candidates are starting to evaluate the significance of induction, training and product knowledge rather than describe each.

Assessment Evidence

This section of the report will comment on the assessment evidence requirements and the accuracy of the marking.

The tasks for the unit are set within the specification. There are no requirements for how evidence of completing these tasks is presented except that in task B candidates are required to organise and present a welcome meeting, sell an additional service including completion of appropriate documentation and effectively handle a problem situation for a customer whose needs and circumstances are given. There are four tasks for the unit as shown on p73 of the specification. Each task targets one of the Assessment Objectives (AOs) for the qualification. These AOs are given on p155 of the specification.

The tasks are already pre-set by Edexcel.

Task A

A description of how tour operators organise resort operations to prepare and deal with customers in a resort and an explanation of situations that require the resort office to liaise with their UK office.

For task A there is no specific scenario. Marks are awarded for how well the candidate describes and explains the resort operation. A good example of this task is when candidates consider the operation rather than simply the role of the resort representative. When candidates did not achieve many marks for this task it was often due to descriptive answers only, i.e. the candidate described the situations when the resort office has to deal with the UK office rather than explain them.

The evidence expected for this task would therefore be a description to show knowledge of how tour operators organise resort operations. Evidence for the description should focus on the operation of the resort office rather than just the types of resort representatives employed.

Candidates are also expected to include an explanation of situations that require the resort office to liaise with their UK office. This should be an explanation showing understanding of the topic. This aspect of the task is an explanation rather than a description. Marks in the higher mark bands should not be awarded when only descriptions are given. Examples accepted could be any situation where the resort office liaises with the UK office. For example an emergency in the resort such as a hurricane, a death in resort, building work updates, rooming lists, cancelled flights due to volcanic ash, etc.

There was an improvement in the descriptions of how the resort operates. Many did give some detail. Most candidates this series did consider the operation of the overseas resort rather than simply the duties of the different overseas representatives.

In terms of the explanation the evidence varied, however, most candidates this series did give some explanation and generally a variety of situations were considered. The level of detail in the explanations varied but it was good to see more explanatory evidence. There were a few good detailed explanations of the situations that require the resort office to liaise with their UK office. This series, centres really focused on the requirements of the task, and evidence throughout was in line with the requirements of the specification. Overall examples used were appropriate and covered a range of situations where the resort office would need to liaise with the UK office.

Task B

Organising and presenting a welcome meeting, selling an additional service including completion of appropriate documentation and effective handling of a problem situation for a customer whose needs and circumstances are given.

For task B the scenarios selected varied between centres. Frequently the candidate selected the destination for the welcome meeting and used the same destination for the context for the selling situation and problem. Most tended to be European destinations. For the selling situation all samples included sold reps excursions. The types of excursions varied based on the resort selected. The problem situations varied. Marks were awarded for how well the candidate dealt with each practical situation.

Evidence expected would be in three parts:

- One that demonstrates the organisation and presenting of a welcome meeting. The type of evidence to support the task could include an individual observation record linking to the assessment criteria, copies of welcome meeting invites, room plans, a map used to show customers where excursions are located, excursion leaflets, welcome meeting notes, etc. Please note that notice boards and detailed information booklets are not required. Self-evaluations are also not required.
- The second evidence could include an individual observation record linking to the assessment criteria of how well the candidate dealt with the selling situation, copy of the excursion booking form, excursion leaflet, car hire booking form, etc. There must be a pen portrait that identifies a customer, their needs and circumstances, so that candidates can meet the customers' needs for the **one** selling situation. The candidate should sell a situation to the customer based on the requirements highlighted in the pen portrait. It is useful if the pen portrait is included so that the moderator can see how the candidate met the needs of the pen portrait. Observation records should give sufficient detail to explain how the candidate met/did not meet the needs in the pen portrait. If the selling situation is completed at the end of the welcome meeting then the evidence must relate to the one-to-one selling situation. Promotion of excursions or car hire within the welcome meeting is not sufficient evidence for this part of the task.
- The last evidence could include an individual observation record detailing the complexity of the problem situation and documenting the performance of the candidate, dealing with the problem in relation to the assessment criteria. Evidence should also include a complaint form or similar documentation if the problem is to be dealt with effectively. Assessor feedback must make it clear why the problem is complex if awarding higher mark bands. General comments just stating this was met (e.g. 'interacted with the group well' or 'effectively used materials') is not sufficient to award higher marks within Mark Band 2 or 3. Feedback must detail why the assessor made the judgements, e.g. how were the materials to be used effectively etc?

For all the three parts, scripts should not be encouraged, as candidates' marks will be restricted. Submitting one individual observation record covering all aspects of the task may also restrict marks unless evidence

clearly shows that all three tasks were carried out and feedback relates to the performance in each of the three situations.

Many candidates did demonstrate traits of the higher mark bands for their welcome meeting in terms of structure and welcome meeting knowledge, i.e. welcome meeting content and presentation of information. The use of materials such as maps, excursion leaflets etc, were commonly used by candidates. There was more assessor evidence to support the use of materials, which was helpful. Furthermore, there was improved evidence relating to how effectively candidates engaged the audience. Assessors did make clearer reference to this in the feedback.

There was an improvement in candidates meeting customer needs (given in the pen portrait). The candidate should use the information presented in the pen portrait. The assessor's feedback did generally detail what needs were met and how the needs were met.

The candidate's involvement in dealing with a problem did vary. The less able still tended to deal with straightforward situations, e.g. overbooking and a solution of a new hotel. The complexity, e.g. a new resort, irate customer, etc. was more common in the more able samples.

Task C

Research must be undertaken to complete all tasks.

There should be evidence of research undertaken for all tasks although opportunities to reference will mainly be in tasks A and D.

Evidence expected for this task is a bibliography or terms of reference indicating the sources used in research for all tasks. For higher marks awarded, at least some sources would be referenced in the evidence submitted. At the higher marks, this should be used in the body of the text not just a reference at the end of a statement. It is not expected that candidates use the Harvard referencing system precisely, although some similar format would be expected. There should also be evidence that the candidate has obtained sources independently. This could be a statement from the candidate or the assessor indicating how the sources were obtained to confirm the independence.

Most candidates submitted a bibliography. In some samples this was per task in others this was one bibliography covering all tasks. Some assessors provided a statement on feedback sheets explaining how the research was undertaken independently and some samples included a statement from the candidate. In some samples a statement against each source was given, i.e. when the source was used and for what purpose. In many samples there was a range of sources evident and some attempt to reference in the body of the text. Much of the referencing was limited to websites rather than a range of sources which appeared in the bibliography. The references were often limited and often references were only in one task.

It should be noted that the use of examples is credited in tasks A and D. It is the sources used to find these examples that form the evidence for this task.

In some samples only examples were given which are credited in tasks A and D and therefore evidence in this case is more characteristic of Mark Band 1, as evidence is simply a bibliography.

Task D

This task involved an evaluation of the significance of induction, training and product knowledge of overseas representatives delivering high quality customer service.

For task D there is no specific scenario. Marks are awarded for how well the candidate evaluates the significance of induction, training and product knowledge in relation to delivering high quality customer service. When candidates did not achieve many marks for this task it was often due to limited detail, theoretical responses or limited links to delivering high quality customer service.

Evidence for this task is expected to address the significance and be an evaluation. Much of the evidence submitted for moderation was much improved, as evidence was in many samples evaluative rather than descriptive. Overall, the conclusions were varying in detail and reasoning. Generally, few candidates substantiated their conclusions.

Marking

Marking was more in line with the national standard. Candidate evidence should be assessed against the assessment criteria in the specification. For each task there are three marks bands. Assessors should first determine the mark band statement that 'best fits' the evidence submitted. A note should be taken of command verbs and discriminators for each statement. For example, where task D requires an evaluation then if work is descriptive then Mark Band One applies, Mark Band Two could only be considered appropriate if candidates show some evaluation with some reasoned conclusions. 'Best fit' would need to be considered where there are descriptions and some evaluation to determine if Mark Band One or Two is the best fit. Strengths and weaknesses in evidence can then be taken into account when awarding marks from within the mark band. Taking the example above, there are clearly weaknesses if mark band two is considered best fit and low marks from the mark band should be applied. If Mark Band One was considered best fit then higher marks can be awarded to credit the conclusions that are made. At Mark Band Three there must be an explanation. At Mark Band Two, if there is no explanation however, and the rest of the evidence is best fit, then the lower end of the mark band could be considered depending on the level of description of the overseas operation.

Task A

Marking of this task was usually within the appropriate mark band. When marking was marginally generous this was due to marks awarded mid or above the Mark Band 2 mid-point when the candidate's evidence was overall descriptive with limited explanation. Where marking was harsh it was usually at Mark Band 1.

Task B

Marking of this task was in most cases appropriate; however there were a few samples where marking was felt to be marginally generous. In some samples, the problem dealt with appeared straightforward and details as to how effectively candidates dealt with the problem were limited. Where high marks were awarded at the top of Mark Band 2 it was difficult to agree with the judgements where the evidence of the differentiating traits of the mark bands was missing, such as the problem appeared straightforward.

Task C

Marking of this task was generous in some samples. Mark Band Two requires candidates to use different sources for their research. This should be from different types of sources, e.g. guides, textbooks, websites, etc. Candidates this series did show a range of sources used in a bibliography but the referencing tended to be mainly focused on websites. In some samples, evidence of research equated to a number of examples with no referencing of the sources used to find the examples given. Examples are credited in tasks A and D. In some cases the evidence was more characteristic of mark band one, i.e. mainly through a bibliography rather than referenced in the body of the text

Candidates are required for Mark Band 2 and 3 to have researched independently. Evidence of independent research was still in some centres a basic assessor statement. See comments above regarding the type of evidence required. For Mark Band 2 and 3, evidence should include the appropriate selection of resources and show some synthesis.

Task D

More marking was in line with the requirements set in the specification. At Mark Band 2 there was however some evidence which was descriptive in parts and lacking depth. Marking in these cases was marginally generous as the higher end of mark band one was felt to be more appropriate.

Administration

Centres met the deadline for submission of portfolios for moderation. OPTEMS forms were generally completed correctly.

Samples submitted were correct. Centres submitted asterisked samples. Where candidates were withdrawn, alternatives were sent. Where highest and lowest marks were not asterisked these were also sent.

Centres did submit Candidate Authentication Records. This is a JCGQ requirement. Exams Officers have copies of generic forms that can be used but these are also available on the Edexcel website at <http://www.edexcel.org.uk/quals/gce/travel/as/879one/>.

All centres submitted task feedback sheets as provided on the Edexcel website.

Annotation on coursework was limited in some cases. Please note that this is now a JCGQ requirement. Annotation should highlight where key evidence could be found, e.g. specifically where descriptions, explanations, referencing of research, evaluation, etc. could be found. This is helpful to the moderation process.

In task A annotation could be used to highlight clearly where candidates show detail of the resort operation description and show where candidates had explained, rather than described.

In task B individual observation forms should be completed for each situation and should refer to the assessment criteria.

In task C annotation could highlight where the candidate had referenced sources and specifically where candidates had researched independently.

For task D the assessor could highlight where the candidate had evaluated and drawn conclusions. When higher mark bands were awarded assessors could have highlighted examples and where conclusions were substantiated.

General Comments

Edexcel does not require candidates to submit their portfolios in a file. It is sufficient for candidates to provide all work tied with a treasury tag, providing it can be easily identified. In addition to the Candidate Authentication, there should ideally be a front cover stating name of candidate, centre and candidate number. Evidence for each task would be clearly separated, ideally by a task feedback sheet.

Only evidence used to determine the mark awarded need be submitted in a portfolio. That evidence should be for tasks A, B, C and D. Class notes and activities should not be sent in their portfolios.

This unit allows the opportunity for oral communication in presenting work. If this format is used, candidates portfolios should include a witness testimony, assessment checklist or observation statement. This should describe candidates' performance and highlight how this leads to the mark awarded. It should be signed and dated by an assessor. Any supporting

evidence such as visual aids, notes, documentation, etc. should also be included. Video evidence, audiotapes and computer discs and CDs are not required as forms of evidence. Where centres and/or candidates have used these forms of technology, a witness testimony, assessment checklist and/or observation record is required (see above) and it is this that should be sent to the moderator. Printed versions of documents can be sent in support.

Further guidance and support

Support materials for assessors including a marking portfolio guide are available on the Edexcel website.

Further details can be found at Edexcel Online:

www.edexcel.com/resources/training

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