

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCE Travel & Tourism (6991)
Paper 01

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Summer 2012

Publications Code UA031713

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GCE TRAVEL AND TOURISM

PRINCIPAL EXAMINERS REPORT JUNE 2012

UNIT 5: TRAVELLING SAFELY

General Comments

The paper followed the format of a question and answer booklet. Candidates were required to respond in the spaces provided. There were 5 questions and 90 marks were available.

The questions only related to the travel and tourism industry. All questions linked to the information under 'what you need to learn' in the qualification specification.

The questions were linked to the assessment objectives. Candidates therefore needed to demonstrate knowledge and understanding and skills in vocationally related contexts. Candidates needed to use appropriate research techniques to obtain information to analyse vocationally related issues and problems. Finally candidates were required to evaluate information to make reasoned judgements, draw conclusions and make recommendations about vocationally related issues and problems.

Most candidates attempted all questions and consequently they picked up marks across the paper.

Question 1

Q1 (a)

Most candidates scored 2-3 marks here. There were some good responses relating to the financial protection role of ABTA, however sometimes responses were quite general which restricted marks. For example, 'ABTA works with tour operators and travel agents.'

One response that gained the four marks available:

'ABTA provides financial assistance. For example in the event of a tour operator going bust, ABTA will protect those abroad by paying for them to return home.'

'ABTA has a role in advertising and promoting the interests of its members and policies at government level.'

Q1 (b)

The vast majority of candidates scored the two marks available here for Civil Aviation Authority.

Q1(c)

This question clearly differentiated between candidates. Some did not appear to fully understand the role of IATA and the information given on ICH. They provided answers saying that the airlines would all gain more passengers now that they were all flying together. However others were able to provide much more insightful answers. For example:

'The advantages of ICH for the customer is they will be able to make one payment for their flight which is less confusing because they won't have to worry about different amounts of money for different flights. There is also an advantage for the airlines as it allows all airlines to pay and invoice other airlines who use different currencies across the world which is an advantage because airlines will be able to claim their share of the flight cost meaning they will all be getting revenue in.'

Question 2

Q2 (a) (i)

This was a well answered question. Candidates were able to use the information provided to give the correct information.

Q2 (a) (ii)

Again this question was generally well answered with most candidates gaining the full four marks available.

Q2 (b)(i) Most candidates did score at least two marks here. However fewer managed to provide enough information to gain all three marks available. One response that did gain all three marks:

'The cause of yellow fever is when someone gets bitten by a mosquito; the saliva from the mosquito that has the yellow fever virus goes straight into the person's bloodstream.'

Q2 (bii)

Most candidates did score 2-3 marks for this question.

Question 3

Q3 (a)

Most candidates correctly identified the Fair Trading Act or the Enterprise Act.

Q3 (b)

Responses to this question were generally weak. Often candidates provided further suggestions in the justification section, rather than justifying suggestions made.

Most were not able to think of generic-type solutions such as training and improving communication and then applying these to the scenario provided.

One response that did gain the eight marks available:

'Retrain staff to deal with the situation properly or provide new staff with more in-depth training.

By training the staff they will be able to help all customers and have the knowledge and confidence to assist disabled people and also get better customer satisfaction.

Have clearer sign posting and Braille on every sign.

This will then make the airport a much more appealing place for people with disabilities because they are treated equally.'

Q3 (c)

This was another question that differentiated between candidates. Many wrote that the no-frills airlines policy was wrong and repeated much of the stem which limited the evaluation they provided.

Better candidates were able to provide evaluation of both sides of the debate. One level two answer can be seen below.

'Although the airlines are no frills the airlines should still show the full pricing as it is false advertising otherwise and by failing to comply with legislation they may be pushing customers away rather than drawing them in. Showing the price along with the tax would be more attractive to a customer as they would know what they were paying for. I would think that although no frills airlines are constantly competing on price, people would be more likely to go with the one that does show things like APD tax rather than a fare that seems ridiculously cheap, but it seems I may be wrong and most people would always go for the cheapest option which is why the airlines are fighting to price drop in this way.'

Q3 (d)

Candidates generally scored well here. Most could come up with valid suggestions and provide justifications. One example answer that scored 7 marks;

'Ask for people's ages and medical history and ask if they have any disabilities before booking these seats for them.

This will prevent airlines from breaking important safety regulations because all passengers that sit in the exit aisle seats must be fit enough to help open the aircraft door in an emergency.

Do not charge extra for these seats in planes.

Then cabin crew can make a judgement on the most suitable people to put in these seats so they do not break safety legislation.'

Question 4

Q4 (a)

This question was not well answered in many cases. Some candidates gave answers along the lines of 'so that if an emergency was to happen the tour operator would not be liable for anything.'

However if candidates had been taught about booking conditions in detail they did score well here. One four mark answer:

'So they agree to all aspects of the holiday and know about what will happen if something goes wrong. Also it shows what will happen if something goes wrong. Also it shows that the customers agree to the conditions that are set so if they break the conditions they know what may or may not happen such as being able to cancel due to certain reasons.'

Q4 (b)

The vast majority of candidates gained the mark available here.

Q4 (c)

Most candidates gained at least two of the three available marks here. One response that gained all marks available:

'The Shah's booking would be classed as a normal booking because they booked it 8 months in advance which is more than 14 weeks in advance which is when a booking becomes a late holiday.'

Q4 (di)

Most candidates scored the two marks available here. Some missed off the point that it was the lead passenger who needed to cancel in writing.

Q4 (dii)

All candidates were able to provide the correct answer 70%

Q4 (diii)

Candidates scored well on here. One response that gained the four marks available:

'Because in such an event as having to go to hospital it could make a big difference to the amount of money they get returned from having to cancel their holiday. If they had travel insurance they would have received back most of the money from the insurance company because they cover you'.

Question 5

Q5 (a)

Many candidates repeated parts of the stem rather than tackling the question asked. Practice with these types of questions may help them move away from description. It may also help if they think of the common issues that occur in any emergency situations –communication, planning, training, and look to see if any of these should have been addressed.

One example of a level two response:

'I think that the actions taken by British Airways and BMI were justified. I think this because it was dangerous for staff and passengers to fly to Libya where open warfare had broken out. This would have been putting more people at unnecessary risk. However from the passenger's point of view I think they were unjustified. I think this because British Airways and BMI left 3,500 British citizens stranded in a dangerous environment. This would also leave British citizens unsatisfied with the efficiency of the airlines.'

Q5(b)

Not many candidates used the terminology from the specification when identifying two small-scale emergency situations e.g. holiday cancellations, holiday curtailments, medical problems, lost passport, lost money, lost luggage, theft and muggings or arrest and punishment. Instead they tended to provide examples of situations. These were credited.

Q5(c)

Most candidates scored well here. A typical response:

'A small scale emergency situation is one that will only happen to an individual or will not affect many people such as loss of luggage and a large scale emergency situation is one that affects many people and can destroy a destination.'

Q5 (d)(i)

This question tended to differentiate between candidates. Those who had undertaken research could provide reasonable detail about their chosen emergency situation and they tended to have occurred in the last five years. Some candidates are still using the 9/11 terrorist attack which is no longer recent. In many instances the candidates who choose such events do not provide sufficient detail to gain the marks available. One response that did cover a recent event and scored three out of the four marks available:

'The tsunami in Japan after an earthquake occurred in 2011. This was a geophysical large scale emergency that killed many people and destroyed many towns and cities. The tsunami was the biggest in Japan's recent history. The earthquake that caused it scored 9.8.'

More detail on actual numbers killed and the names of areas destroyed or more emphasis on the effect on travel and tourism would have enabled the candidate to score the fourth mark.

Q5 (d)(ii)

This question is challenging. The emphasis of the question has changed from recent series. Candidates should refer to a number of emergency situations and identify where lessons could be learned so that the travel and tourism industry can improve its response in similar situations in the future.

Some candidates referred solely to the situation they outlined in Q5(d)(i) and mainly included further description of the event – see example below:

'The travel and tourism industry reacted poorly to this natural disaster as thousands of people were left stranded in the airport waiting to fly and others were stranded abroad hoping to fly home. Some of these people included teachers, policemen etc. so people back in the UK were suffering, for example children at school having no teachers and emergency services being very low on staff. A hotline was set up so people could phone the UK or in some cases ABTA to find out the whereabouts of loved ones or people wanting refunds etc.'

Any responses that referred to just one situation were not answering the question posed.

A better response that gained level two marks can be seen below:

Severe weather conditions:

'The big freeze during December 2010 in the UK halted flights departing and arriving in major UK airports. They need to bring in more staff and have better more effective equipment.

Staff should have more training on how to deal with the vast numbers of passengers stranded at airports. Airlines should be aware to constantly update their passengers online or on websites, through mobile apps and direct contact as during the severe weather passengers were confused and not made aware of arrangements.

Also during hurricanes like Hurricane Thomas the industry needs to make contact with passengers so they can advise. Contingency plans and training would be a good idea.'

This response gained marks from level two but with a little more planning of structure and reference to more situations with a similar lack of planning (or one where planning was excellent) would have moved the response towards level three.

In preparing candidates for the exam, centres are reminded to advise candidates to read the first page of instructions. Centres are advised to ask candidates to ensure that they have attempted all questions. Candidates must make sure they follow the instructions of the question i.e. describe, explain, assess, analyse etc.

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Summer 2012

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