Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCE
in Travel and Tourism (6989)
Paper 01 Destination Europe

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General Comments

Some excellent portfolios were seen reflecting a good understanding of the requirements. In general work was well organised, contained appropriate evidence and marks were justified by assessors. It was evident that students had worked hard and that guidance offered to centres was being accessed. There were still a few instances were evidence submitted was not entirely appropriate and where annotation and justification of assessment decisions were not supplied. It was felt that this may be centres still quite new to the qualification.

Those new to the qualification are advised to access the previous reports for each series via the Pearson Edexcel website www.pearson.com; these offer invaluable assistance including suggestions on improving performance and classroom activities.

Centres that have submitted work for moderation can also access their own E9 Moderator Reports; these are centre specific and comment upon the accuracy of marking and whether specification requirements have been met. Centres are strongly advised to access their individual reports through their exams office to obtain this guidance. In addition, Pearson Edexcel offers a range of support services for centres.

Assessment Evidence Requirements

The tasks for the unit are set within the specification (see page 36, Issue 2). There are no requirements for how evidence of completing these tasks is presented except that in task a) maps are required. There are four tasks for the unit. Each task targets one of the Assessment Objectives (AOs) for the qualification. Further details of these AOs can be found in the specification (see page 166).

Task a)

This task targets Assessment Objective 1 (AO1): the student's knowledge and understanding.

It is in three parts:

1. Six maps, one for each category of destination (listed in the specification). Each map should locate the appropriate European travel destinations *popular* with UK tourists and highlight the *relevant* gateways, road and rail routes from the UK.

2. For each category of destination, an explanation of the features that differentiate them with examples.

3. An explanation of the difficulties in categorising some destinations, with examples.

Student Performance

Although a wide variety of maps were seen overall maps have improved. Most had a title now and were more easily interpreted where students used colour/keys etc as opposed to lots of writing all over the maps.

Some superb work was seen and some maps were of a very high standard being accurate, clear and detailed showing appropriate key destinations, routes and access gateways in the UK and Europe. Others were quite basic lacking any detail. One issue with maps were those with the same routes on each map which did not show any understanding of the routes that were most relevant to the category (for example road routes being most appropriate for tourists travelling to countryside areas). Some maps showed lots of routes with no details or relevance/link to the destinations located. Overall the weakness was in selecting appropriate routes for each category. This series many maps located emerging destinations, it aided moderation when students had clearly differentiated these though the use of a key. There were very few 'downloaded' maps seen which is an improvement.

The second part of the task also varied in quality. The explanation of how features are used to categorise destinations was addressed thoroughly and in great detail by some students and very briefly by others. A common weakness noted in some samples was excessive description of perhaps one to three destinations in each category without any explanation or link to the features given in the specification; understanding of categorisation was not always apparent. Higher marks were often awarded for detail, ie including 'examples', however to be in the higher mark bands examples should be used to support the explanation of how features can be used to place destinations into different categories. The most competent explanations were those where students had clearly stated which features where the most important in each category.

There were some very clear and detailed explanations of the difficulty in categorising destinations with valid examples. Some students explained why they had found it hard to categorise the destinations and did not really express understanding of the concept.

Task b)

This task targets Assessment Objective 2 (AO2): the student's ability to apply their skills and understanding.

It is in **two** parts:

1. A description of the *key features* that give the selected European travel destination *appeal* to different types of tourists.

2. An explanation of how the *recommended destination* meets the needs of a tourist whose needs and circumstances are given to the student by the tutor in the form of a pen portrait.

The emphasis of this task is key features of destinations and their link to appeal.

It assesses whether students can **apply** their knowledge of key features and appeal to **one** destination and whether they can make recommendations to show that the destination is suitable in meeting tourists' needs. The students should be provided with a pen portrait that offers opportunities to consider complex as well as straightforward needs and circumstances. A destination, not an island or country, should be chosen.

Students should research the features of their selected destination. They need to discriminate between features that exist and those that contribute to appeal. They need to concentrate on these 'key' features (ie those that contribute to appeal).

Features and different types of tourists are given in the unit specification (see 3.2, page 34). Examples of pen portraits with complex needs are found on pages 44 and 42.

Student Performance

As reported previously there are a number of common issues with this task. There were still instances where pen portrait details were not supplied with the evidence for this task and assessing the extent to which tourists' needs have been met was problematical for moderators. The majority of students did not refer to the destination's appeal to different types of tourists and instead focussed on the tourist within the pen portrait throughout. Some produced 'tourist information' or travel guides/brochures. Others described or recommended a selected holiday for the tourists. Some students had described the appeal of destinations to different types of tourist in general but did not apply their knowledge to their chosen destination. Generally, where evidence for the tasks was merged descriptions lacked detail and differentiation of key features was absent, explanations tended to be simplistic and brief. Students were therefore not achieving the higher marks available. Where pen portrait details were supplied most included complex needs. Some excellent work was seen where pen portraits were appropriate and where students had supplied appropriate evidence in two discreet tasks and these tended to gain the higher marks.

Task c)

This task targets Assessment Objective 3 (AO3): the student's ability to research and analyse.

The task is in **two** parts:

1. Evidence of research undertaken for *all* tasks a, b, c and d.

2. An analysis of the factors that have led to the growth in popularity and appeal of one European travel destination **including an analysis** how the destination has controlled factors to maximise their appeal and popularity.

Student Performance

There were some excellent examples of bibliographies where students had evaluated their sources which clearly showed independent research; however there were also examples where bibliographies had not been produced. Referencing varied in quality and some excellent skills demonstrated where there was referencing within the body of the text as opposed to just giving a full URL address after every paragraph. Some samples contained no referencing of work.

Most students included a list of websites which limits access to the higher marks. Therefore it was good to see some students accessing a range of sources besides the Internet; these gave evidence of brochures, maps, atlases and some conducted primary research. The main weakness in the research part of the task was that sometimes research evidence was only supplied in task c) whereas it should be evidenced across all tasks.

In the analysis aspect it was pleasing to see some very detailed and appropriate analyses. However some students unfortunately continued to focus on why the destination was popular rather than looking at the reasons for its growth in popularity. There were a number of examples where this task was presented as tourist information and often descriptions of popular features were given, but there was no analysis of why the destination had grown in popularity and appeal. Most students chose suitable destinations, however some made their task harder by choosing destinations which have been popular for many years, although some had included statistics to show recent growth in visitor numbers which is acceptable for the higher marks to be considered. Coverage of controllable factors varied. Some centres had responded to guidance provided on previous reports on what should be considered such as attracting investment, tourism planning etc; perhaps the newer centres, still consider it under 'destination management' with limited understanding evident.

Task d)

This task targets Assessment Objective 4 (AO4): the student's ability to evaluate, draw reasoned conclusions and make justified recommendations. The quality of written communication (QWC) is also assessed in this task.

There is only one part:

1. An assessment of the suitability of different modes of transport to *one* European travel destination for a tourist whose needs and circumstances have been given to the student in the form of a pen portrait. This will include details of their departure point and destination.

Student Performance

There has been a significant improvement in this task which is evident in those centres that are now providing appropriate pen portraits with some degree of complexity in the tourists' needs and a journey with a departure point outside of the UK and some difficulty in access to the destination. These allowed many students to access the higher marks. Some pen portraits were inappropriate, for instance those that referred to a holiday as opposed to a journey and those with very few or very restrictive tourist needs such as 'they want to travel in their own car'. This could limit student achievement in terms of accessing the higher mark bands. A few centres still used the journey from Barcelona to Florence despite the advice given in the published Principal Examiner reports that this journey is now straightforward being accessible by direct flights. Some students provided a lot of screen shots and downloaded route planner information with very little assessment of the suitability of the routes/modes matched to needs. Others gave generic assessments of different transport modes with no specific detail of the actual routes and factors.

Overall however, it was felt that the students are performing much better in this task if guided correctly by the centre. They are making assessments, considering a range of factors and modes in detail and making justified recommendations linked to the tourists' needs. Some excellent work was seen for this task.

Accuracy of Marking

Improvements continue to be seen with regards the accuracy of marking. The most common issue this series was where marks had been awarded at the top of a mark band yet the evidence did not contain characteristics of the higher mark band and so the marks could not be justified.

Centres are reminded this qualification uses the 'best fit' assessment model and so assessment decisions should be holistic. Details of how to apply the best fit model are well documented in previous reports.

Student evidence should be assessed solely against the criteria in the specification. The tasks to be completed are detailed on page 36 of the unit specification, Assessment Evidence. For each task there are three marks bands. Furthermore centres are cautioned not to rely entirely upon the mark band statements when setting tasks. These statements only outline the assessment criteria. Moderators frequently observed that when the task requirements were not met, particularly in tasks b) and (c) this limited achievement and marks.

Administration

Overall administration was generally very good this series. The majority of centres submitted work by the deadline date and included the correct sample. There were fewer administration and calculation errors in the samples and all had included some form of authentication of work by students and assessors - either on authentication declarations or signatures on the Mark Record Sheets. Centres are reminded that where additional support has been provided to a student this should be made apparent to the moderator. Where a student has made overuse of material from websites or large sections from text books, assessors should ensure these are not credited – the work should be entirely that of the student.

There were a few issues with the yellow copy of the Optems form not being supplied or else work included the top copy of the Optems which had to be sent to Pearson for student marks to be recorded; these were in the minority.

The newer centres are advised that they can download specific Mark Record Sheets and Assessment Feedback sheets for this unit from the Pearson Edexcel website. When these are completed in detail with reference to the assessment criteria and where justification of assessment decisions are included these are extremely useful to moderators. The vast majority of work received included helpful feedback on assessment decisions.

In addition to supplying feedback sheets for moderators, all centres are reminded that annotation on coursework to show how assessment decisions have been reached is a JCQ requirement. Comments should focus on the mark band descriptors/assessment criteria to highlight key evidence to support marks awarded. Without annotation moderators can have great difficulty in locating the appropriate evidence especially where high marks are awarded.

General Comments

Pearson Edexcel does not require students to submit their portfolios in a file, or plastic wallets. It is sufficient for students to provide all work tied with treasury tags, providing it can be easily identified and accessed. In addition to the student authentication, there should ideally be a front cover stating name of student, centre and student number. Evidence for each task should 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).

This unit allows the opportunity for oral communication in presenting a suitable destination to a customer. If this format is used, all supporting evidence such as visual aids, notes, documentation etc must be included. Students' portfolios should include the assessment checklist or observation statement and a detailed witness testimony (exemplars can be found on the Pearson Edexcel website). The assessor should describe the student's performance in detail to clearly justify the marks awarded. Statements should relate to the task requirements and the mark band criteria. This evidence should be signed and dated by the assessor.

Summary

It was very pleasing to see so many superb samples of work this series, many were of a very high standard indeed and reflect the hard work that both the students and assessors have made in raising achievements and acting upon feebdack and guidance provided. Many students gained high marks in mark band 3 and these were well deserved. Through seeking clarity from the published and individual centre reports it is hoped that these improvements can be maintained. The vast majority of work received was well organised, with evidence appropriate for the tasks and supported by the correct paperwork and detailed assessor comments and annotation to justify marks awarded and this very much aided the moderation process.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx