



**General Certificate of Education (A-level) Applied
June 2011**

Leisure Studies

LS04

**(Specification
8641/8643/8646/8647/8649)**

Unit 4: Leisure Facilities

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

Candidates and their supervising teachers are continuing to show an improved understanding of the demands of this paper and to produce work that shows both knowledge and understanding. The application of this knowledge and understanding in a vocational context is also improving in many centres.

However, the particular circumstances of this paper, with its prepared folder of information that can be taken into the examination and with the opportunity to see and discuss the questions before the examination has to be taken, mean that everyone involved has to be very careful not to cross the line between sensible preparation and malpractice. This line appeared to have been crossed in one incidence this year and the two candidates concerned were referred to the malpractice unit at AQA.

The nature of the examination also presents teachers with an opportunity to 'over prepare' their candidates in a way that is completely fair but which may not allow all the candidates to demonstrate the best of their abilities. Quite clearly some groups of students have been given quite firm guidelines as to how to plan their answers when they go into the examination. In some cases the examiner felt that this might have limited their scope for originality and individuality in their answers. It was sometimes felt that the least able candidates struggled to understand a tight answer plan that they had been given, and so their answers became confused. In other cases very able candidates seemed limited by the structures into which they felt that they had been advised to write.

However, in general the examiner enjoyed reading the work that candidates had produced and was aware that a lot of care and thought had gone into preparing for and answering the paper.

What was particularly good

It is clear that the large majority of candidates had prepared well for the examination by visiting two suitable leisure facilities and/or receiving visits from representatives of leisure centres. In addition quite a significant minority of candidates appeared to have made a good personal study of a leisure facility which had not been studied by the rest of the group. This latter group of candidates were able to write original, interesting answers, which often stood out from those of their class-mates and gained good marks.

As usual the most popular type of leisure facility for study was the sports centre/gym/swimming pool type of facility. It seemed as though those facilities with swimming pools as part of their attraction provided candidates with particularly good opportunities to answer this paper. However, it was probably even more noticeable that the best answers usually came when the teacher in charge of the group had a particularly good working relationship with a contact in the leisure facility concerned.

What was not so good

It was noticeable in this session that a large minority of candidates lost a significant number of marks because of a failure to read the questions carefully and to follow the instructions in those questions precisely. Particular problems occurred with:

- **04** – '...resources... needed to maintain (the) facility for its day-to day use.'
- **07** – '...design of the main leisure areas....'
- **09** – 'Evaluate....'

In the first example many candidates strayed right away from day-to-day maintenance and wrote in very general terms about everything in the facility. In the second example many candidates wrote about areas that were peripheral, such as car parks and reception areas. In the third example many of the weaker candidates ignored the 'evaluate' command and seemed to substitute 'describe' when they planned their answers; whilst some went even further and substituted 'list' in the question.

Assignment Task A

01 and **02** were generally well done.

03 produced a full range of outcomes and differentiated well. All candidates made use of examples and almost all of these examples were relevant and reasonably well or very well chosen.

In their answers the better candidates wrote about the general attractions and drawbacks of town centre locations and compared these with the general attractions and drawbacks of suburban and/or rural areas. Then they referred to a range of different facilities to illustrate the points that were being made. For instance they often discussed the general features of the club and entertainment sector or of fashion clothes shops and made the point that, for these types of facility, the attractions of the high footfall in the town centre outweighed the problems of high rent and taxation. Then they compared the needs of theme parks or multiplex cinemas where the attractions of cheap land drew the facilities to out of centre locations, where the owners expected that the specialised attractions of the facilities would be enough to attract sufficient customers to make a profit.

On the other hand weaker candidates made reference to just one facility in a town centre and one facility outside the centre and then wrote purely about those two facilities. Such answers were often quite good – as far as they went. However, such narrow based answers were not able to develop in enough depth or detail to access the full range of marks.

Assignment Task B

Answers to **04** almost all fell into one of three categories. These were:

- a generally moderate group, where the candidates wrote about the resources of the facility in very broad terms and did not focus on the day-to-day running of the facility. These answers mostly gained some credit but the lack of focus on the question limited them to Level 1 or low Level 2;
- a competent group, probably the majority, who concentrated on resources for maintenance and cleaning of the building and resources for meeting the everyday needs of customers, including food and drink and other consumables. This group generally gained L2 marks;
- a very thoughtful group of candidates who extended their answers to include not just hardware and consumables but staff working directly to meet the day-to-day needs of the customers, and even the financial resources that have to be brought into the facility to ensure its day-to-day operation. This group generally gained high Level 2 marks.

The answers to this question showed just how important it was to think carefully about the precise meaning of the question and then to plan exactly how the question needed to be answered.

05 was probably the least well answered question on the paper, although even this question produced a minority of excellent answers.

The first common problem was a lack of clarity from candidates about the precise meanings of 'public sector' and 'private sector'. These definitions need to be learned more carefully and applied precisely to the case studies in the candidates' folders.

The second problem was that many candidates could run through a theoretical list of possible sources of funding for leisure facilities but then could not explain which of those sources were available to their case study examples, nor could explain the relative importance of those sources.

Thirdly many candidates ignored the obvious day-to-day cash flow from customers. Instead they wrote mainly about grants for public sector facilities and loans of different types for the private sector.

Of course the examiner is aware that this is a sensitive topic and it may well be difficult for candidates to obtain precise figures for the different sources of funding in case study facilities. However, they still need to try to get some more precise outlines of the different sources actually available and the different proportions of total funding that each source provides.

Assignment Task C

Both parts of this Assignment Task were generally well done and there are few points that need to be made here. However:

- in **06** the better candidates often referred to the suitability of the design for staff when they were working, whereas the weaker candidates restricted themselves to the off-duty areas, such as staff rooms, car parking and lockers
- in **07** the best candidates compared their two facilities very directly and often made their comparisons in a clearly structured way, point by point, throughout their answers. The moderate candidates often described one facility and then described the other and just made some comparisons in passing. The weakest candidates just wrote two descriptions and often forgot to compare, leaving the examiner to pick the comparisons out.

Assignment Task D

Questions about facilities for the disabled have generally been very well done in the past. On this paper the answers in this Assignment Task were more variable.

In **08** the weakest candidates spent too long copying out large sections of the resource, without adding much comment of their own.

However, the most obvious point of comment is the difference between candidates who wrote about one aspect of the topic and candidates who gave a much broader coverage of a range of issues. The 'narrow' candidates sometimes wrote very good answers by writing in great depth and showing sensitivity and understanding. On the other hand, some of the 'broad' answers were very good with enough detail on each topic to gain good marks.

The broad answers usually developed ideas based on:

- moral responsibility and inclusiveness
- legal responsibility under the DDA
- financial opportunity, as presented by Emma in the resource
- reputation in the community, the need to safeguard this and the possible repercussions of being seen not to care.

In **09** the strength of the evaluation by candidates was the main discriminator. It was good to see that the quality of evaluation is improving. The best organised candidates made a series of points in which they described the specific needs of particular groups of customers, described what the management had done (or not done) to meet each of those needs and then made a clear comment on the extent to which each perceived need had been met.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates

1. The main suggestion is that centres continue to note the contents of Reports on the Examination. This will help to maintain the steady improvement that is being seen in candidates' work.
2. Preparatory folders that have been seen are usually good, but some could do with more care in organisation. The majority of the best folders have clear sections for information linked to the different headings in the specification. This is useful as these headings are often also used as headings for Assignment Tasks in the exam.
3. Ensure that folders only contain notes produced by the candidate and material provided by the facilities studied. They must never include model answers produced by the teacher or by the class working together, as these will be interpreted as malpractice.
4. Encourage all candidates to think very carefully about the precise demands of each question. They need to look very carefully at the command words and at other key words in each question.
5. By all means help candidates with the planning of their answers but do not try to restrict them too much. The best answers all seem to be produced when the candidates have scope to develop ideas of their own and are not too tied down by a 'group plan'.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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