



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

Leisure Studies

LS09

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

Unit 9: Working in the People Business

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

What was done well

There was a noticeable improvement in the quality of most candidates' answers about one particular job that they had studied. Not only was there much better evidence of specific knowledge, but there were also relatively few inappropriate non-leisure jobs chosen.

What was not done so well

On equal opportunities, candidates showed good subject knowledge but tended not to apply it to the specific question set.

Question 1

Most candidates mentioned that a leisure facility would find volunteers enthusiastic and not need to pay them, but a disadvantage is that the volunteers could leave at any time. However, these points amount to little more than a definition of a volunteer! Higher marks were reserved for improving such answers (for example, by saying the museum is not given the normal notice period when volunteers choose to leave). Better candidates came up with points which showed insight such as that, while some retired volunteers bring invaluable expertise from their previous careers, some will try to impose their own ideas about how the facility should be run; or that an incompetent volunteer can be difficult to get rid of.

Question 2

On the whole candidates knew the meaning of 'staff turnover' although some misinterpreted it as being a financial measure. Incorrect definitions did not always prevent candidates from picking up marks on the question about why staff turnover is a significant issue. However, relatively few students referred sufficiently to the characteristics of employment in the leisure industry, where many employees are often young and likely to be changing jobs, still making their mind up about their careers or leaving for higher education; and that leisure often requires working in unsocial hours.

Question 3

Many candidates were able to explain the features of an organisational chart in the *vertical* direction and wrote about lines of command, communication, reporting, accountability and so on. However, a key to understanding the advantages of an organisational structure is the way in which the work is divided into small teams within departments, which are able to specialise and define which tasks should and should not be carried out by their team. This leads to efficiency and avoids duplication. So centres should make sure that candidates also look at the *horizontal* dimension of such charts.

Question 4

Candidates showed that they understand the requirements of equal opportunities legislation and knew quite a lot of detail. However, most were not disciplined enough in their writing, either referring only slightly to the recruitment procedure or else not linking specific requirements of the legislation to an action taken by leisure organisations when they recruit. For example, there must be no racist or sexist language (such as his/her, he/she or sexist job titles) in a job advertisement and interview panels should try to ensure a balance of sexes amongst interviewers wherever possible to counter any suspicions of gender bias. Organisations should retain shortlisting and interview notes so that they can justify their decisions later against any challenge of unfairness. Websites such as www.businesslink.gov.uk provide advice about such matters.

Question 5

Very few candidates chose an unsuitable job which was not part of the leisure industry, but centres are reminded that answers about jobs such as retail manager or school teacher cannot score well.

Many candidates confused skills with personal qualities (which were not asked for). A skill is an ability acquired through education and training so skills would not include punctuality, friendliness or reliability. Answers about qualifications were generally well-informed but, with regard to experience, candidates needed to demonstrate what the job-holder is able to do as a result of their previous experience. Writing that, to be a manager, you need previous experience as a manager does not get anywhere. A better answer would give details of how activities at school, work experience placements, interacting with customers in retail work and working your way up all helped provide the necessary experience.

Question 6

It was pleasing that few candidates confused bonus with other motivational methods (as has previously been the case) but on the other hand few discussed how difficult it is to measure performance fairly in a service industry such as leisure. While selling a certain number of memberships was a sensible example to give, the problems of measuring performance in other tasks in a leisure job was barely addressed. Candidates generally came up with sound justifications for a leisure organisation offering its employees free and discounted use of facilities but few mentioned the points that there is very little cost to the organisation or that otherwise the facilities would be standing idle.

Question 7

Candidates defined annual leave well enough but some struggled to make clear what flexible working arrangements are. Once an arrangement is in place (such as that the employee may be absent one day per week and complete their hours on other days), it would not change on a weekly basis or this would give employers real headaches. Indeed, an important aspect of flexibility is that anyone (such as parents and students) can ask for their preferred arrangement but the employers can have justifiable reasons for not granting them; having suitable staff on duty at all times is likely to be such a justification.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates

1. Candidates often take several lines of their answer space paraphrasing the question and outlining what they will write about before earning any marks. It is evident from this summer's answers that lengthy answers do not necessarily score higher marks than more succinct ones.
2. Again, an appeal is made that some candidates should strive to write larger and that all should write using a black pen. There were a number of almost indecipherable scripts simply because the handwriting was so small or that the candidate was using a pen with faint, greyish ink.

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