**General Certificate of Education (A-level) Applied
January 2012**

Travel and Tourism   **TT09**

**(Specification
8651/8653/8656/8657/8659)**

Unit 9: Travel and Tourism – People and Quality

Report on the Examination

General Comments

This was the eleventh paper for Travel and Tourism – People and Quality.

What was particularly good

1. Candidates had clearly studied a range of travel and tourism organisations. Candidates had relevant documents in their preparatory folders, enabling them to answer questions on all parts of the *Specification*. It was good to see that teachers had ensured a full coverage of its *Specification*.

2. Many candidates showed good evidence of critical thinking. For example when they had to present *both* the advantages and disadvantages of a method to collect customer feedback, (question **09**), or when they were asked to discuss the limitations of motivation techniques, (question **12**). Those higher cognitive skills fully correspond to A2 level expectations.

What was not so good

1. All too often, candidates did not really answer the question asked. It seems that candidates were ready for a cognate question (most probably because a similar question had been asked in a past TT09 exam paper); consequently they did not address the demands of the question asked this time. For example, instead of evaluating the risk posed by terrorism to their chosen organisation, candidates just described the procedures in place in case of a terrorist alert.

2. As noted in several previous reports, many candidates still presented their answers as pages and pages of text without any break, without any paragraphs or without any indication of structure – not even when they were asked for *two* specific elements in an answer (for example question **01** 'outline *two…*', question **07** 'suggest *two...*'). Candidates should organise their text in sections and sub-sections, thereby showing the logic and the plan of their answer, and also realising that their pages of text are a means to communicate with the examiner.

ASSIGNMENT TASK A

This task was about security in travel and tourism. Candidates were initially asked to outline two security hazards (other than terrorism) that are particularly important for a travel and tourism organisation that they have studied. Most candidates answered well; examiners were pleased to see precise answers duly paying attention to the context of the organisation (for example its location in a specific part of town in the case of drugs-related incidents). Some answers, however, remained a little too vague or generic. Candidates were then asked to explain the procedures in place to deal with those two security hazards; again, most candidates answered quite well, as they had carried out relevant research and had the necessary information in their preparatory folders. Weaker answers were descriptive rather than explanatory (i.e. when candidates described *how* the procedures were implemented, but did not explain *why* they were in place). Candidates were eventually asked to evaluate the risk posed by terrorism. Some very good answers were duly evaluative (about a low risk or a high risk, with justification), though many candidates often described what the organisation would do in case of a terrorist alert, which was not the question asked.

ASSIGNMENT TASK B

This task was about provision for customers who have special needs. Candidates were asked to explain the specific needs of a wheelchair-bound customer of their chosen organisation. Some answers were clear and precise, however many candidates did not sufficiently focus on the question. Instead of taking the perspective of customers' needs, they described what the organisation provides. It was however good to see, in many scripts, a good awareness of the issue of special needs' provision beyond just parking and toilet access, for example, about walk-in showers in a hotel bedroom, or about the height of a desk at which to interact with customer-fronting staff. Candidates were also asked to outline the key intentions and requirements of the DDA. All candidates had some information about the DDA in their preparatory folder, though some answers remained superficial, for example addressing *only* employment or *only* access to services such as travel and tourism. Few candidates covered *both* intentions and requirements. Some answers correctly mentioned the fact that the DDA has now been replaced by the 2010 Equality Act; this showed good understanding that legislation changes and evolves – though candidates were not expected to refer to the Equality Act in their answers. Having outlined the DDA, candidates had to analyse how it affects operational practice in their chosen organisation. Many candidates described what their organisation offers to disabled visitors (for example vibrating pillows in a hotel or a wider lift in a museum), however all too often candidates did not refer back to the DDA and, consequently, could not score into the higher mark band for that question. On the topic of provision for customers who have special needs, candidates were finally asked to suggest two improvements to their chosen organisation. Most candidates made at least one clear suggestion, though some answers lacked clarity or cogency. It was the first time that such a question was asked for TT09 and it seemingly surprised many candidates who had not thought about it before. It required applied knowledge and critical thinking in a professional context – as may be expected at A2 level.

ASSIGNMENT TASK C

This task was about customer feedback. Candidates were asked to describe how their chosen organisation collects feedback from customers. The best answers were precise, showing clear knowledge of the organisation; other answers remained generic, without any sense of place. Examiners noted some misunderstanding about websites such as tripadvisor.com: some candidates seemingly believing that it is a tool designed and controlled by hotels. On the one hand, it was good to see candidates' awareness of such websites, but on the other hand, the underpinning principles need to be explained to candidates, for example about issues of reliability and validity. Candidates were also asked to explain the advantages and disadvantages of one of the methods used by their chosen organisation to collect customer feedback. Most answers were balanced and easy to follow; it was good to see a range of choices by candidates (questionnaire, comment cards, mystery shoppers...) even within the same centre. A small number of candidates did not always understand the principle of a 'mystery shopper', it might be an aspect of the *Specification* worth clarifying. On the topic of customer feedback, candidates were finally asked to show how their chosen organisation uses it in order to improve customer service practice. Unlike earlier TT09 exams where many candidates failed to link customer feedback and changes in customer service, that link was now clearly understood by the majority of candidates. It was good to see precise examples in many scripts, demonstrating both knowledge of travel and tourism organisations and the ability to link ideas and concepts – so a higher order of cognitive skills.

ASSIGNMENT TASK D

This task was about management and motivation of teams. Candidates were free to choose one of the five approaches/techniques listed in the *Specification* (for example 'positive physical working environment' or 'financial and other incentives'). All five approaches/techniques were equally chosen by candidates; even within centres, different candidates chose different ones: this showed that candidates had been taught the entire *Specification* and each individual candidate just felt more comfortable with one theme or with the other. Using examples, candidates were asked to explain how their chosen approach/technique is used by the travel and tourism industry to motivate staff. Most answers showed good knowledge of approaches/techniques, however candidates did not always refer back to motivation: all too often, they just described a high number of practices (bonus, employee of the month, discounts etc) without linking that to motivation, which limited the number of marks they could score. The final question invited candidates to be more critical and to discuss the possible limitations of their chosen approaches/techniques: many candidates answered quite well, though it proved more difficult for some, especially the expectation of a discussion - a more demanding type of answer, closer to what is expected at University level.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future TT09 candidates

1. Stress that examiners are not looking for *quantity* but *quality*: concise and focused answers are often better than pages and pages where candidates copy everything remotely relevant they have in their preparatory folder. This was mentioned in previous reports but it is still a problem in many cases.

2. Advise candidates to focus on the precise questions asked, paying close attention to the wording: they may have similarities to previous TT09 questions, but slight variations may be significant (especially with command terms such as 'describe' or 'explain' or 'evaluate').

3. Emphasise the importance of the layout and presentation of the answers: the exam script ultimately remains a tool of written communication. This has been mentioned in previous reports but it is still a problem for some candidates.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results statistics page of the AQA Website.

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