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Travel and Tourism

TRPA

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

TRPA: Portfolio Units



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General Comments for AS Units

This was the penultimate series for moderation of portfolio units for this AS qualification. Most centres submitted Single Award units only (TT02 and TT03). Double Award units were welcomed from some centres. Portfolios for Double Award units TT04 and TT07 only were submitted for moderation this time.

What was particularly good

- Portfolios were, for the most part, structured well. Generally speaking each unit portfolio was appropriately presented in four separate AO sections; one for each of the four tasks identified in the banner of each unit assessment grid.
- On the whole, appropriate types of evidence were presented, including signed witness statements for oral role-plays in Unit 2 AO2 and what were clearly welcome meeting scripts for Unit 3's AO2.

What was not so good

- Work was sometimes over-leniently assessed, as a result of an over-optimistic judgment that the work was in the mark band higher than its quality justified. For example, work that was a clear response to the set task (Mark Band 2) was sometimes over-generously assessed as being of Mark Band 3 quality, and work that was worth MB3 marks was sometimes over-marked in Band 4. In general terms:
 - o MB1 is basic work that is less than a clear response to the task set in the banner
 - o MB2 is clear work that is a clear response to the task set in the banner
 - MB3 is not only clear, but also detailed, often accessed by the candidate's consideration of the chosen organisation's staff in terms of different job roles (TT02) or of customers in terms of type (TT03)
 - MB4 is detailed and developed work that shows critical understanding.
- AO3 is always a research and analysis task. It was again, sadly, not uncommon for some candidates to fail to reference the sources or clarify the methods they had used. It is vital for each candidate to make clear what research s/he has done in order to score well.

TT02 – A People Industry

What was particularly good

- Most candidates provided records of successful customer service role-plays (AO2). Witness statements, signed by the teacher, clarified for the moderator the quality of performance observed in each oral role-play. These referred directly to the wordings of the mark band descriptors. A witness statement proforma is available in the Teachers' Guide.
- AO4 submissions frequently evaluated a wide range of interpersonal and technical skills required by employees at the chosen organisation. Candidates operating at MB3 and higher detailed the skills required by a range of staff in different job roles within the chosen organisation.

What was not so good

- Some, otherwise successful, candidates produced a minimal range of three role-plays that were, as a result, sometimes insufficiently varied in nature to allow access to Mark Band 4, where demonstration of a wide range of customer service skills is required.
- Task C (the AO3 task) was sometimes misinterpreted as being about skills that staff need, but that is AO4's preserve. In fact, this AO3 task is concerned with the level of knowledge of the chosen organisation's product offering that staff need.

For AO1 successful candidates properly focussed on the actual induction and training procedures used by the chosen travel and tourism organisation. The highest scoring candidates were able to show how the organisation benefits from these procedures and genuinely to review the appropriateness of the organisation's induction and training procedures.

AO2 oral role-plays were largely evidenced, appropriately, by signed teacher witness statements that made clear the quality of the candidate's delivery and which referred to words in the Mark Band descriptor boxes (for example, *detailed*, *effective* and *appropriate* at MB3). The highest achieving candidates evidenced customer service in unfamiliar situations. Such situations are unfamiliar in two senses:

- 1. unfamiliar to the role-holder being role-played situations that person would not normally face on a day to day basis, such as unexpectedly facing a customer who does not speak English or being 'dropped in at the deep end', for example in a more complex situation that they had not been trained to deal with
- 2. unfamiliar to the candidate that is to say an unrehearsed scenario with which s/he is suddenly presented.

For AO3, simply, it must be made apparent what research has been done. Successful candidates provided clear evidence of researching and then analysing the product knowledge required by various staff at the organisation. Questions they were able to answer included, 'What and why do the holders of different job-roles in the organisation need to know about its product(s)?' Candidates lost marks when they did not make explicitly clear what research they had done.

So far as the AO4 evaluation task is concerned, most candidates dealt with a range of interpersonal and technical skills that the organisation's staff need to deliver good customer service. Those scoring at MB3 and above detailed, and evaluated, the skills expected of a range of different staff. Basic work, provided by lesser achieving candidates, described, rather than clearly evaluated, skills.

TT03 – Travel Destinations

What was particularly good

- In AO1, many candidates clearly described destination locations and gave key climatic information. However, this was less often the case with *landscape* see below.
- AO4 work showed greater awareness to the requirement to make explicit recommendations to potential customers. Many candidates did well to attack this part of the descriptor head-on and to focus on the destination's appeal to 4 or 5 clearly different customer types.

What was not so good

- Destination choice. Some candidates chose destinations outside the scope of the Specification. They could not score marks for such a choice. Centres are reminded that the maps at the end of the Specification document show the areas of Europe and North America from which candidates may choose their destinations.
- The description of the landscape of destinations continued to challenge many. Descriptions of separate built attractions did not constitute a description of the destination's topographical setting. Candidates lost marks for providing inappropriate descriptions under the heading of *landscape*. It was clear that some would have benefited from further guidance on this point when they were compiling their portfolios.
- Some candidates did not keep referring to customer types throughout AOs 2 to 4. Those that did score significantly higher marks.

Landscape, as referred to above, remained the most challenging aspect of the AO1 task and the most frequent cause of lost marks. Candidates who produced a genuine landscape description were able to access the top of the appropriate mark band when their location description was clear and their climatic information sufficient to cover key elements. Those whose landscape description was of a lower quality were not. The point of this AO1 task is to assess candidates' knowledge and understanding of the settings of their destinations. Candidates cannot score well when they clearly know and understand little about landscape.

The vast majority of candidates wrote genuine welcome meeting scripts for AO2. As in previous series, however, some candidates became bogged down in describing lots of hotel facilities. The focus of this task is the facilities and attractions of the destination itself. A brief scene-setting is all that is advisable about the hotel. Information about the hotel scored no marks. Some candidates included attractions distant from their destination. While, depending on the choice, some attractions in the immediate hinterland may occasionally be appropriate, an attraction such as Niagara Falls, for example, is not a facility or attraction in New York City. Centres are advised to consult their portfolio adviser in case of doubt.

Successful scripts referred clearly and explicitly to a range of customer types. Scripts that simply matched a facility/attraction, one at a time, with a customer type (typically in a series of short paragraphs) were not able to achieve the top of Mark Band 2, where there must be an attempt to link one facility to more than one customer type. Higher scoring candidates were able to consider how a range of facilities and attractions each appealed to a range of customer types.

The key to success in both the AO3 and AO4 tasks is customer types. Candidates who analysed transport choices to their destinations in terms of tourist type scored well for AO3, those who made few or no links to customer types scored lower marks. Similarly, in AO4, explicit recommendations to a range of clearly identified customer types separated stronger from weaker portfolios.

AO4 also requires an evaluation of destinations' likely future popularity. As in previous series, a significant number of candidates wrote instead about recent trends. Bluntly, the past and the present are not the future. Candidates who wrote little or nothing that was explicit about the future did not score well. Successful candidates made appropriate recommendations to a range of potential customer types and valid likely future popularity predictions.

TT04 – Working in Travel and Tourism

Those candidates aiming for the Double Award had to produce a portfolio based on an investigation of one travel and tourism job. The clear majority of these candidates did just that.

What was particularly good

- Work that was submitted for moderation for this unit and for TT07 was characterised by its relatively higher typical quality. Evidence was, in virtually all case, noticeably well focused on the AOs.
- The great majority of candidates chose an appropriate job in Travel and Tourism and showed clear evidence of first-hand investigation.

What was not so good

- While all seven required areas were almost invariably reported, some candidates' reports rather tailed off with markedly less detail provided for feedback and personal qualities. This did lower some marks.
- AO4 is a composite task. As in previous series, some candidates became too focussed on the evaluation of their own strengths and weaknesses while others concentrated too much on assessing the requirements of the job. A balance of the two was needed to score well.

Aside from the comment above, AO1 was generally appropriately addressed. There was clear evidence of first-hand as well as desk research in this and in the other AOs.

There was a marked improvement to AO2. Most candidates dealt directly with the interaction of skills and qualities with the roles of other job-holders in the organisation. Successful candidates reported examples of the chosen job-holder's interactions that they had themselves observed. It is absolutely essential that candidates undertake workplace observation if they expect to score above MB1 and most clearly had this year.

AO3 higher scoring candidates, and there were quite a number of these, provided detailed source analyses and commentaries. Successful candidates showed clear insight into the usefulness and limitations of the sources they had chosen and used. The standard of written communication was generally pleasing.

AO4's evaluation task effectively asks two key questions:

- How well does the candidate match the requirements of the chosen job?
- What are the candidate's strengths and weaknesses compared to the job's demands?

Candidates who scored higher marks answered both. Some less successful candidates tended to dwell more on one than the other.

TT06 – Tourism in the UK

Double Award candidates may complete **either** Unit 6 **or** Unit 7 (Overseas Destinations Study). In 2012, no portfolio submissions for moderation were made for TT06.

Centres are referred to Examiner Reports for previous series.

TT07 – Overseas Destination Study

Double Award candidates chose this unit, in preference to Unit 6.

What was particularly good

- Most candidates submitted portfolios of a length sufficient to provide clear or detailed profiles for AO1 that avoided the excessive length of some seen in previous series. The strongest candidates realised that access to MB4 was achieved by critical consideration than by writing more and more descriptive material.
- The great majority of portfolios seen made a clear recommendation at the end of AO4. In effect, the scenario nature of the unit task was well understood.

What was not so good

- Not all candidates grasped the comparative nature of the task in hand. Some less successful candidates presented two separate accounts (one for each chosen southern hemisphere country) without coming to grips with similarities and differences. This limited some marks since the MB2 descriptor calls for these to be included.
- In AO3, some candidates provided little in the way of quantitative data to support their analysis. This is a requirement to earn marks from MB2 upwards.

For AO1 candidates often wrote detailed destination profiles about appropriate southern hemisphere countries. These were frequently well balanced and commented on internal transport availability. Only the highest achievers went on to access MB4 by developing critical overviews.

AO2 is a comparison task. Successful candidates genuinely and clearly compared costs and options for travel to the two chosen countries. They pointed out similarities and differences. The less successful portfolios were characterised by juxtaposition rather than true comparison. Such work scored lower marks.

As always, AO3 involves research and analysis. It is necessary to provide evidence of each. Stronger portfolios drew on appropriate and recent visitor trend data. Weaker ones rather skated over this part of the task requirement and lost marks in consequence. To score well, candidates' work should satisfy all aspects of the relevant descriptor.

The clear majority of candidates reached reasoned conclusions for AO4. That is pleasing. Much of the submitted work was written in some detail and marks for this AO were often relatively high.

Overall Summary for AS Units

Single Award units (TT02 and TT03) tended to be properly structured into four separate AO sections and, for the most part (though not always) to address appropriate travel and tourism organisations and destinations.

The use of witnessing and evaluation of skills in TT02 (AOs 2 and 4) were well done by a large number of candidates. TT03 was more problematic for some. Areas where there is scope for future candidates to produce better work are the description of destination landscapes (AO1) and the consistent application of responses to a range of customer types throughout AOs 2 to 4.

Candidates who submitted Double Award portfolios typically produced quite strong work in compiling portfolios for Units 4 and 7. Detailed work was not uncommon. Higher scoring future candidates may do well to explicitly address the critical expectations of Mark Band 4.

Centres are reminded that summer 2012 was the final availability for the double award portfolio units.

General Comments for A2 Units

This has been the penultimate series for portfolio submission for moderation for AQA A2 Travel and Tourism.

What was particularly good

- Most portfolios were correctly structured into four separated AO sections.
- Candidates submitting work for the Double Award generally produced relatively high quality work that met the Assessment Objectives head-on and often did so economically, without much extraneous material.
- Of the two Single Award units, work submitted for Unit 8, The Travel and Tourism Project was typically appropriate in content, of a similarly relatively high standard and assessed broadly in line with the AQA standard.

What was not so good

Unit 10 was, again, problematic for some candidates. Appropriate issue choice is absolutely
vital for this unit. Many successful candidates' centres took advantage of the Portfolio Adviser
service and confirmed the suitability (or otherwise) of project titles at the outset. They then
acted upon the advice offered. However, others, including a number of less successful
candidates did not.

TT08 – Travel and Tourism Project

Units 8 and 10 were the mandatory portfolio units.

What was particularly good

- As always, a trip was the typical project. Many candidates successfully produced detailed Powerpoint presentations, accompanied by Presenter Notes, for AO1 and evaluated each of the project's success, their own and other team members' roles and the contribution of ICT for AO4. The standard of record keeping for AO2 was also pleasing this year.
- It was clear from many candidates' evidence that they had enjoyed the experience of managing a real travel and tourism project.

What was not so good

- AO3 is a research and analysis task. The subject of the research and analysis in this case is the feasibility of the chosen project. In less successful submissions there was a marked absence of explicit research evidence. Moderators struggled in such cases to identify what research into feasibility each of the candidates had actually done themselves. Successful candidates, by contrast, provided clear evidence, often concise accounts, of how they had gone about researching feasibility and what evidence they themselves had collected.
- In a few cases, candidates did not explicitly make clear what their own contribution (separate from the team as a whole) had been. Successful candidates used the AO2 record to clarify their own and other team members' contributions.

For AO1 many candidates accessed Mark Band 3 by producing Powerpoint slides with Presenter Notes that covered the range of business plan elements (as listed in the unit specification). The highest achievers developed this work by critically assessing these elements and inter-relationships between them. Relatively small numbers of candidates scored lower marks as they provided presentations that were too limited in scope, covering only a small numbers of business plan elements.

As usual for AO2, most candidates produced diaries or logbooks, some others provided copies of the minutes of team meetings. Detailed (MB3) records included what the named, individual team members (including the candidate) had each done. Critical commentaries were more frequently attempted this year and when successful, allowed stronger candidates to access MB4. Such commentaries critically considered the significance of problems encountered and how well they had been overcome by the team. The best of these had clearly been compiled as the work was in progress, not as an after-thought, which, when it happened, caused confusion with AO4's evaluation.

AO3 is referred to above. It was the weak link in some portfolios. Candidates who scored well had clearly evidenced the research they personally had carried out into the feasibility of the project, before the event. It was clear from weaker submissions that some candidates had attempted to analyse feasibility after the project's completion. Work was then confused and lost marks. The more successful candidates detailed their analysis by considering individual business plan elements, accessing MB4 when they provided critical comment as development.

For AO4 many candidates appropriately evaluated all four elements required by the task: the project's overall success, their own, personal contributions, the contributions of named individual team members and the contribution made by ICT. All four evaluative elements have to be included to satisfy descriptor wordings. Some candidates either overlooked or under-played the evaluation of the success of the project. This element is additional to the other three (own and team member roles and ICT). Again, it was the presence of clear critical thinking that enabled the highest scoring candidates to access the top mark band.

TT10 – Current Issues in Travel and Tourism

What was particularly good

- Many candidates were able to include an explanation of the views and attitudes (AO2) and analysis of the findings of an investigation into the responses and actions of *many* stakeholders.
- Successful reports typically separated the work for all four AOs into separate sections. This good practice allowed higher scoring candidates to achieve an appropriate balance between the thoughts of stakeholders (AO2) and their deeds (AO3).

What was not so good

- Some candidates attempted to investigate topics that were not current (having been already resolved) or not issues; that is to say not the subject of a debate, conflict or unresolved question. These candidates would have been better served if the advice of the Portfolio Adviser had been sought and followed.
- AO1 is about processes of change in travel and tourism. Some candidates included irrelevant
 information about other changes, which did not score marks. Successful candidates were
 strongly focussed on what had happened within travel and tourism to bring their clear current
 issue to a head and were able to provide explanatory (at MB4, critical) accounts of a range (a
 comprehensive range for MB4) of such changes.

The key to success in AO1 was to focus on those processes of change within travel and tourism that were relevant to the chosen current issue. For example, a successful candidate investigating a clear issue surrounding the proposed building of a new airport runway dealt with those travel and tourism changes in technology, relevant socio-economic factors, consumer demand and product availability that had led to the development proposal being made. On the other hand, a candidate addressing a weakly defined title concerning terrorism and travel and tourism gained very little credit for providing a potted history of recent attacks and of terror groups. Sorting out exactly what the issue was and what had happened in travel and tourism to cause it to arise, again proved essential to the mark scoring process.

Even at the threshold of the Mark Band 2 descriptor, *many* stakeholders are needed. Successful candidates realized that a useful starting point was to consider each of:

- travel and tourism organisations belonging to each of the six sectors of the industry (as specified in Unit 1)
- affected non-travel and tourism businesses
- members of the public/local residents
- concerned pressure groups and politicians (local or national, as appropriate)
- local authorities/government
- tourists themselves
- any others.

By allowing for different individuals and organisations within such categories, successful candidates were comfortably able to detail the views and attitudes of numerous stakeholders that covered the breadth of the issue. The highest scoring portfolios evidenced full explanation and critical analysis of a comprehensive range of stakeholder opinions that weighed the extent of mixed views within stakeholder groups. The most successful A2 candidates did produce such sophisticated work, earning marks in the MB4 range.

AO3's task is not the same as AO2's. Most successful candidates followed past guidance in keeping this section of their portfolio from their AO2 work. Although both concern stakeholders, AO3 is about responses and actions (what stakeholders are doing about the issue) as opposed to AO2's views and attitudes (what stakeholders think about the issue). Crucially, they also differ in the type of work required. AO3 is, like all AO3 tasks, a research and analysis task. Marks were awarded for explicit evidence of clear (MB2), detailed (MB3) or comprehensive (MB4) investigations with appropriate depth and criticality of analysis. Candidates who simply presented written accounts not explicitly drawing on investigation findings lost marks.

For AO4, as for other evaluation tasks (see TT08 for example), candidates had to evaluate more than one aspect: in this case, the current and the future impacts of their issue, stakeholder responses and, most challengingly, how much candidates' own values and attitudes influenced their perception of the issue's future impacts. Successful candidates carefully dealt methodically with each of these four elements, in separate sub-sections. Less successful candidates omitted the last of them and, as a result, were not able to score fully in the relevant Mark Band box. Stronger candidates faced up to the challenge, often approaching it by asking themselves what their own view of the issue had been at the beginning of the investigation, how it had changed in the meantime, as result of their research, and how much it then affected their judgement of what the future of the issue is likely to be.

TT12 – Business Operations in Travel and Tourism

This is mandatory for Double Award candidates.

What was particularly good

- The overall quality of work for this unit was pleasingly high.
- Candidates invariably chose appropriate travel and tourism organisations and went on to address the AOs directly. Work for AO1 was particularly strong. There was a lot of detailed work that began to discuss operational problems within the specified key areas. Some critical, developed work was also seen.

What was not so good

- While most candidates grasped the need to give an account of how the interaction between system operation examples solves problems, the depth of coverage was frequently the shallowest part of the portfolio so that some candidates scored fewer marks for this AO than for the others.
- AO3 requires an analysis of how practices within the organisation meet their aims. Some candidates' work did not begin by making clear what these aims were so that their analyses lacked focus.

For AO1 all five key areas were almost invariably described at least clearly (MB2) and frequently in detail (MB3). The most successful candidates were able to develop their accounts critically by commenting on required skills and discussing systems operation problems through appropriate, relevant examples.

For AO2, successful candidates began by identifying operational problems and went on to show how system examples interacted in their solution. Many produced clear, and some detailed, accounts. Very high-scoring candidates were also able to critically account for how examples interacted effectively in the solution of complex problems in unfamiliar contexts. This is demanding and few candidates could achieve high MB4 marks as a result.

Since AO3 is about how far the example practices covered in AO1 meet the aims the organisation has for them, successful candidates were right to open with a statement of these aims. Many candidates, as they should, used observational evidence from inside a travel and tourism organisation. Some, less successful candidates, did not make aims explicitly clear and lost focus and marks in consequence.

The fact that many candidates had inside information about their chosen organisation supported their evaluations of how the example practices from AO1 contributed to the organisation's overall efficiency. Again, clear and detailed work was often seen. The most successful candidates developed their evaluations critically and made valid recommendations concerning the efficiency of the exemplified systems.

Quality of written communication is assessed through AOs 3 and 4 and was pleasingly good in this unit.

TT13 – Management in Travel and Tourism

No portfolios were submitted for moderation for this unit this year. Centres are referred to previous editions of this report.

TT14 – Special Interest/Activity Holidays

Double Award candidates choose **either** Unit 14 **or** Unit 13 (Management in Travel and Tourism). All 2012 Double Award candidates submitted work for Unit 14 this year.

What was particularly good

- Candidates correctly chose itinerant and overseas markets.
- Health and safety provision and patterns of tourist flow were almost invariably included in candidates' descriptions for AO1.
- Few portfolios submitted this year were excessively long. The highest achieving candidates did not feel the need to compile over-lengthy AO1 sections in order to evidence great *motivation* (MB4). A teacher witness statement is an appropriate way to evidence meeting this requirement.

What was not so good

- Predictions of future trends sometimes received short shrift in comparison to the description of recent (last ten years) market trends (AO2).
- A significant number of candidates lost marks by only partially addressing the requirements of AO4, often by properly considering only one of the two main elements:
 - o comparison of the two chosen markets
 - evaluation of the study (sources, methods, influence of candidates' values and attitudes and conclusions and predictions made).

Many candidates did well in AO1. Detailed descriptions that addressed all elements of the task were frequently seen. The best work showed the use of well-developed skills in compiling very detailed (not over-lengthy) descriptions, including health and safety provision and tourist flow patterns. As noted above, great motivation is appropriately evidenced by the teacher's signed witness statement that this was indeed shown.

For AO2, while trends over the last 10 years were well described, often in some detail, by many candidates, future trend predictions and the influence of changing values and attitudes were less thoroughly considered. Less successful candidates lost marks by giving too little weight to these aspects. The most successful portfolios provided more balanced description of a comprehensive (MB4) range of changes, showing critical awareness of values and attitudes' influence.

AO3 is, of course, as all AO3 tasks are, a research and analysis task. However, it differs slightly in that the analysis of research findings may be only or mainly located in the work completed for the other AO tasks. However, it is still a research-based task; so, candidates scored higher marks when they made their research sources and methods explicitly clear.

As noted above, there was room for improvement in the AO4 work of some candidates. Partial completion only was a feature of a number of portfolios. Both main strands of the task were followed in the most successful portfolios, which scored higher marks because they both compared the two markets and evaluated the study produced, using the checklist in the mark band descriptor boxes as a guide.

Overall Summary for A2 Units

Among Single Award candidates, Unit 8 was frequently the strength and Unit 10 the relative weakness. The value of checking Unit 10 title suitability with the Portfolio Adviser at the outset was clearly shown. Those candidates who followed Portfolio Adviser guidance scored higher marks than those whose ill-advised subject titles caused their work to go awry.

Double Award A2 portfolio candidates produced, on the whole, pleasingly mature and appropriate work.

Centres are reminded that summer 2012 was the final availability for the double award portfolio units.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion