AQA

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Education

Leisure Studies

LSPA   Portfolio Units

Report on the Examination

2008 examination - June series

Contents

GCE Leisure Studies

GENERAL COMMENTS

This year's examination series provided a spread of standards of work. As before this work ranged from excellent to limited portfolio units; there were a significant number of high quality portfolios.

It is apparent from the quality of the work submitted that centres and candidates had benefited from the advice provided by the 2007 series report, standardisation meetings and the help offered by portfolio advisers. However there were still centres where marking was lenient or over generous, with one or two centres being severe.

It was particularly refreshing to see the wide range of research taking place at A2 level for 'Current Issues', 'Leisure and the Media' and of course the range of leisure events for 'Leisure in Action'. It is always enjoyable to read such individual work.

The sourcing of research was more consistent; however, there were still a significant number of candidates who use the cut and paste method without using quotation marks or accrediting the source and then failed to add their own comment and interpretation. This can result in the candidate's work being downgraded or given no credit.

Internal moderation was evident for some centres and for the most part it was very useful. It is a practice to be recommended if there is more than one teacher delivering the course.

If teaching staff are in any doubt about how to proceed with a unit or part of a unit, please do not hesitate to contact your portfolio adviser.

LS01 – The Leisure Industry Today

The work submitted covered a wide range of ability and depth.

The leisure industry needs to be defined rather than implied. Some candidates did not provide examples in enough depth to show the range, scale and importance of the industry. Data needs to be included to allow candidates to fully explore the importance and range of the industry. The components to show aspects of the range and scale were generally completed well. On the whole sectors were well covered but the inter-relationships needed greater development with many candidates referring only to joint usage. It was also pleasing to see the amount of information candidates had researched about the European industry and how attempts had been made to compare the UK with some countries in Europe. Current developments within the industry still need to be substantiated using facts and figures. Participation trends frequently used data which was more up to date. However, in most cases this data was not used to interpret future trends, which meant the full scope of the task could not be completed.

The impact different market segments have on the industry, especially in terms of access, participation and barriers is still not fully understood by candidates. Evaluation is always difficult but candidates had developed different ways to cover this task. Evaluation was generally carried out better in this series. Frequently the candidate did not refer to the quality of the predictions and conclusions they had made about the industry and this prevented higher mark bands from being achieved. Predictions also need to be referenced to the reliability of the source. The weakest candidates provided only a description of the source.

What was particularly good

The best candidates provided their own definitions of the leisure industry as well as those from a variety of texts. It was very pleasing to see the quality of work produced at the higher mark bands. Candidates had used data effectively to show the scale and importance of the industry in order to meet the demands of mark band 4. Many candidates made detailed comparisons of the UK leisure industry with that of Europe, meaning that this section was of a higher standard that the previous series.

What was not so good

Many candidates did not base their predictions for future trends on data and therefore predictions for the industry were mainly limited in nature. The analysis of the key factors and their influence on access, participation and barriers need to based on the effect this has on the industry for the different market segments.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates

- Time needs to be spent on developing a definition of the leisure industry as one is not available in any dictionary source.
- Spend time teaching market segments and analyse the effects this can have on different sectors of the industry.
- Evaluation of sources needs to be an on-going process so that candidates have the information on which to base the evaluation of the sources.

LS03 – Getting It Right in the Leisure Industry

Centres have ensured that one organisation is used to cover this unit.

The staff handbook was more detailed this series and took the form of an actual handbook in most cases. However, attention still needs to be paid to the links between laws, acts and codes and the particular sector of the industry being considered. Relevance to the organisation needs to be displayed and how this helps ensure the health, safety and security of staff and customers. In many cases examples of the risk assessment were included but not everyone included advice on how to carry out the risk assessment.

The key quality control and management systems were described but more detailed attention needs to be given to how these are used effectively to maintain standards within the chosen organisation. If Quest is used then the various strands need to be applied to show how they can be applied to maintain standards. In this task theory of the management systems is not sufficient and examples should be provided to show how the organisation uses these to deal with customer records, booking/reservation systems, membership schemes, ticketing systems and/or customer complaints.

On the whole business systems were more fully covered with examples being used from the range shown in the specification on pages 42 and 43. The best candidates covered these aspects to analyse the business systems used and to show how effective the impact of technology is in supporting these systems. The key aspects of marketing were well covered but the range lacked depth of application. There were some very detailed examples of analysis of SWOT and PEST for individual organisations.

What was particularly good

The best candidates produced very detailed handbooks in an appropriately presented and accurate format, showing how the laws could be applied to the organisation. The choice of organisations in general allowed the candidates to gain information to all aspects of the procedures used in the leisure industry.

What was not so good

Some candidates still did not apply the risk assessment to the chosen organisation.
AO2 and AO3 still relied heavily on theory rather than application of the systems to the chosen organisation. With AO4, whilst key aspects of marketing were generally described in detail there was frequently little evaluation as to how this effects consumer awareness, sales and take up. Evaluation was still general and did not rely on data to prove its effectiveness, meaning that candidates could not meet the assessment criteria for mark band 4.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates

- Ensure that the health and safety laws are applied to the organisation.
- Ensure that the needs of customers, staff and the organisation are considered when discussing safe working practices.
- The risk assessment procedures need to be accompanied with appropriate advice as to how to conduct them.
- Primary research may assist candidates in the evaluation of consumer awareness, sales and take up.

LS05 – Lifestyles and Life Stages

Care should be taken when recording AO2 and AO3 on candidate record forms.

The new government statistics on the health of the nation proved to be extremely useful in meeting the assessment criteria for AO1.

The first task was still covered quite factually by using data in the form of graphs and tables. A few enterprising candidates tried to create the picture of the health of the nation by using a UK map with data added. In most cases the links to show the whole picture of the health of the nation was not fully covered. Regional differences were not always evident. Some aspects of technology were looked at in terms of the impact on people's lifestyles.

A detailed analysis of the implications of the current health status of the population on the leisure industry generally lacked depth, especially at the lower end of the ability range. The implications for the leisure industry were often vague. Some good practice was shown in linking primary and secondary research and what this meant to specific areas but this was not fully expanded to link with the leisure industry as a whole.

More able candidates clearly provided evidence of a script and had indeed presented this as evidence by PowerPoint presentation notes. However it was not always clear the ways in which this was linked to different lifestyles. The benefits of the different activities were not always explained or related to the different aspects of health. If the presentation is given on this task then it would be appropriate to add a witness statement to show further evidence of overage.

In this task most aspects of the leisure industry were covered but there needed to be greater depth on access and opportunities in the local area and how it impacts on lifestyles or life stages. Many candidates did not explore this aspect fully. This therefore made it more difficult when making a range of appropriate and realistic recommendations for improvement.

What was particularly good

Candidates had researched the locality quite thoroughly and could make judgements about the range of leisure activities and analyse if these were sufficient.

What was not so good

Candidates did not link the leisure activities to different lifestyles or to the different aspects of health. Where general statements were made; candidates found it difficult to evaluate the access and opportunities for different lifestyles and life stages. Recommendations were frequently limited.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates

- Both primary and secondary research will assist the candidates in explaining how activities provided in a locality will benefit health.
- Candidates require an understanding of what is meant by lifestyles and life stages.
- Candidates need to consider the full range of leisure activities as studied in LS01.
- Candidates should be aware of regional differences in health and any links between them.

LS06 – Leisure Organisations

Many candidates made a good attempt at comparing two organisations in terms of facilities, funding, location and access. Details on customer base were often less detailed.

AO2 requires a detailed report on employment opportunities showing jobs within the organisations and a realistic appraisal of progression. However, attention to the detail of entry qualifications and the level of employment were not always clearly made. This therefore did not allow candidates to understand the paths for progression.

Research was carried reasonably well into the marketing mix of the organisation and some links were made to the market segments and therefore the target markets of the organisations. Primary research was more apparent in the detail of candidate's work.

The evaluation relied on the depth of research carried out by the candidate; as did the recommendations for future events/expansion of the organisation. At the higher mark bands the candidate needed to have made these by looking at how they could increase market share at minimal cost/time expense. This was not always considered by even the best candidates.

What was particularly good

Those candidates who had studied two similar organisations found it easier to make comparisons.

What was not so good

The detailed report into employment opportunities was frequently limited to two or three jobs. This meant that candidates could not make realistic judgements to the scope for progression. Frequently candidates did not explore the qualifications needed at entry level and those required for progression, in order to meet the requirements of mark bands 3 and 4.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates

- Consider two reasonably similar organisations for comparison.
- Ensure that the full range of employment opportunities within the organisations are investigated and not just one or two job roles.
- Use an organisational management chart to ensure candidates research the employment opportunities at different levels and can make judgements on the scope for progression.
- Primary research will allow candidates to meet the demands of mark bands 3 and 4 into market segments, marketing mix and target markets of the organisations and allow realistic recommendations for the future events or expansion of the facilities.

LS07 – Fitness Training for Sport

In most candidate's work the knowledge, skills and understanding of the components of physical fitness was detailed but reference was not always made to show how these can improve performance. There were much wider examples included this series.

Research into and analysis of methods of fitness training was clearly carried out by most candidates, but the observation of fitness training was not always included or was poorly carried out by some. When planning and assisting in a fitness session, most candidates' showed an understanding of the importance of making it time related. Only a few candidates still used skill coaching rather than fitness training as the focus of the session. Safety factors were not always related to the session.

The evaluation of an individual using a minimum of two measures of fitness, range from well done to lacking in sufficient detail. The base line for fitness was not always established and therefore candidates found it difficult to identify goals and make recommendations linked to areas for improvement.

On the whole candidates used good written expression at the higher mark bands conveying the appropriate meaning for the subject matter.

What was particularly good

The best candidates had prepared in detail to run a fitness session and the supporting witness statements by staff was equally as specific. Many candidates had recorded the base line assessment for the evaluation of the individual and then clearly showed that this was a starting point for progression. Goals were identified and showed that these were made to improve fitness.

What was not so good

There is still a great deal of theory for the components of physical fitness which was not supported by examples to show how these can be used to improve performance. The observation of a training session again needs to relate to fitness training and not a skill based session. This will then allow for the analysis of how each activity was chosen for that individual or team.

The candidate's own session must be time related and some independent acknowledgement made as to whether the methods of communication were appropriate and that the session was under control. Without this information it is difficult to assess as moderators if the session has actually taken place.

In planning the session candidates must consider the group they are working with in terms of age, level of fitness and any special consideration required for any individual/s taking part. It would also be useful for the candidates to add specific evidence that they have looked at the group and all the safety aspects possibly through a risk assessment.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates

- Ensure that the candidates link good examples of how the development of the components of fitness can enhance performance in sports activities.
- Ensure that candidates do not confuse fitness training with that of skills training. The session cannot also involve skills.
- Candidates need to understand the underlying principles of fitness training and link these with the goals of the individual or team.

LS08 – Leisure in Action

Leisure in Action is a popular unit. Candidates chose to run a wide variety of projects including fundraising to ensure the project can take place. Teaching staff found a number of different ways to document the work of the candidates and this is extremely valuable for moderators to confirm standards. The summary of event options was interesting and detailed in most cases and provided candidates with sufficient information on which to make a choice of final project. It was clear that in most cases a full feasibility study on these event options had been carried out prior to embarking on the chosen project. Business plans for the project frequently needed to be in more detail. Candidates should use page 69 of the specification as a checklist. Records of the candidate's own contribution varied and the more detailed allowed sound judgements to be made about the issues of deadlines and contribution made. The candidates that had prepared methods of evaluation in advance of the project were able to make realistic recommendations for improvement.

What was particularly good

The range of events undertaken by the candidates.
The variety of research carried out in order to make the final choice of project. The best candidates producing a full business plan.
The depth of diary entries and minutes in order to show the candidate's own role and the team's contribution as a whole.
Market research into the customers and their needs was effectively carried out.
The use of time lines or Gantt charts to show time scales was very effective.

What was not so good

Project plans did not provide enough depth to meet the requirement of mark bands 3 and 4 for the business plan. Many of the points from page 69 in the specification (feasibility of the project) were addressed by one or two sentences. These need to be explained in detail. Most candidates did not present their plan professionally. Health and Safety issues need to be fully considered by candidates, including which laws and codes of practice apply to the event.

The research required for this unit is two fold. The first part relates to the possible event options and the second to the different aspects of the chosen event e.g. the best method of transport or different hire costs for venues etc.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates

- Candidates need to research a range of project options in detail to be able to discuss and justify their choice.
- Ensure that candidates understand and can present their business plan in a professional manner.
- Ensure that candidates keep detailed records of their involvement in the project.
- Evaluation of their and the team's role could take place at the same time as the team meetings, in order to assist with the requirements for evaluation in AO4 and can make recommendations for improvement.

LS10 – Current Issues

It was again a pleasure and a privilege to read the range of topics for current issues covered by candidates. The investigation was frequently very detailed and showed that the candidates had developed their research skills to a high standard.

The style and the quality of the presentation are not required to be tested by the unit and therefore teachers should not base their assessment on these. The assessment should be based on the quality and depth of the current issue being researched and how it meets the assessment evidence grid.

The unit is designed to allow individual candidates to investigate a current issue of choice. It is more difficult to assess individuality when it has been taught as a class exercise.

What was particularly good

The range of current issues which looked at national as well as local concerns. The best candidates used a wide range of research from both primary and secondary sources. This provided them with a wider perspective on the issue and allowed consideration of the stances taken by the various stakeholders.

Most candidates could discuss the possible consequences of the issue and consider these in terms of short and long term effects. The best candidates considered any conflicting factors and commented on possible effects.

The identification of sources and their reasons for use and/or rejection was more precise in this year's series.

What was not so good

Many candidates found it difficult to link their current issue with the leisure industry today. Many of the links made were tenuous at best and certainly made it difficult for candidates to meet the demands of mark band 4.

Many candidates did not look at opposing viewpoints, this could have been achieved by primary research from a cross section of the population and then comparing the results with the views expressed in the media.

The justification of choice of resources and the reasons for the use and or rejection caused some candidates issues as they had failed to consider issues of validity or presentation of a balanced viewpoint.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates

- As facilitators, teachers should review the candidate's action plan carefully to avoid any candidates looking at an issue that does not relate to the leisure industry. Tourism topics are not relevant in this context.
- Discussions may help candidates understand the links between the different aspects of the leisure industry. The use of the range from LS01 may be an appropriate starting point for what is appropriate to the topic.
- Assist candidates to develop a log of resources acquired and why some have been used and others rejected.

LS11 – Leisure and the Media

There was an interesting variety of large scale events investigated in this unit ranging from local to national. This unit is in two distinct sections with AO1 and AO2 comprising of the investigation into the role of the media in the chosen event and AO3 and AO4 the wider influence of the media on the leisure industry. Candidates would benefit by completing the task Assessment Objective by Assessment Objective.

AO3 and AO4 showed both primary and secondary research in order to meet the evidence required for the higher mark bands. In order to provide a comprehensive evaluation of a full range of impacts of the media on people's leisure time, it would be desirable to test national statistics against a spread of population in the local area. This would assist candidates' in making judgements as to whether the impacts are realistic and appropriate.

What was particularly good

The candidates who met the assessment evidence in mark bands 3 and 4 looked at the ways in which the media had influenced aspects of the chosen event such as audience size and hours or column inches covered, providing detailed data. This enabled them to make the complex links between different aspects of the media to the chosen event. The best candidates' related income earned by personalities from sponsorship to the specific event and showed the increase in advertising and sponsorship over the time the event had been running.

What was not so good

Legislation was considered. Acts and codes of practice were quoted but in most cases not applied to the chosen event. Many candidates used the theory of advertising and sponsorship and applied that to their chosen event but did not provide data as to how income can be generated and increased.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates
- The choice of event will influence whether candidates have sufficient information to meet the higher mark bands in the assessment grid.
- Candidates will benefit from using the bullet points in the unit specification as a guide to the depth of information that is required by this unit.
- A session on how legislative control can influence the media, advertisers, sponsors and event organisers would be useful to heighten candidate's perceptions.
- A discussion on fitness for purpose of advertising would be useful.

LS13 – Leisure in the Community

Leisure in the Community is a wide topic which candidates interpreted in various ways. The specification requires specific information as to what is there at the present time. A map of the locality showing the spread (position) of leisure facilities is extremely useful.

The developmental process to its current pattern of provision requires candidates to investigate the growth of the area and planning that has taken place. The investigation as to whether these are adequate or not will rely on the use of local planning data as well as primary research or a needs analysis.

The local and national initiatives need to be related to the specific locality as not all are relevant in this context. This will provide candidates with specific information to analyse its effects on the local community.

An evaluation of any proposals should be based on both primary and secondary research.

What was particularly good

Candidates considered the effect of any proposals in depth by considering local views.
The localities were defined and the best units included maps to show detail of the provision of leisure.
Candidates were able to make an assessment as to whether the facilities in the locality were adequate or not. Data was frequently used that reflected population data and local development plan information.

What was not so good

Leisure was restricted in large number of cases to sports and recreation facilities. The wider leisure industry was not always considered. Candidates should use the range from LS01 when considering leisure in the community. Many candidates tried to assess whether the provision was adequate without considering aspects of demography, employment data, financial contribution or the changing needs of the market.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates
- The local leisure plan needs to be considered as it will relate to aspects of demography, changing profile and needs of the population.
- Candidates need to be focused onto which national and local initiatives effect the locality.
- There is a need for both primary and secondary research in this unit and candidates should be guided as to how to sample the views of all interested parties.

LS14 – Outdoor Leisure

This unit was generally approached well by candidates. Candidates were able to describe the attractions of the area and the main stages in evolution; however the ways in which the main agencies had influenced outdoor leisure was less detailed. The agencies were frequently described without reference to their influence.

Candidates did not always consider the full range of outdoor leisure activities and facilities. Use the specification pages 102 and 103 to assist in understanding the depth of outdoor leisure that needs to be considered.

The impact of outdoor leisure was well described but frequently lacked knowledge of management techniques. There were varying depths of analysis of the local plan.

What was particularly good

Maps of the chosen area were included and specific sites for man made and natural attractions were indicated. Candidates had experienced the effects on both the natural and man-made environment in the chosen area and could make a detailed assessment as to the management techniques.

What was not so good

The management techniques were frequently poorly explained and therefore little or no assessment of their impact could be made. Candidates did not always consider the natural and man-made environment. Lack of first hand experience meant that conclusions were not always backed up with facts and the understanding of impact on man-made and natural environments was not covered in full.

The inter-relationship of the different agencies and organisations were not considered as a pivotal force in the management of the area.

Candidates tried to consider more than one plan for the area and therefore could not make a comprehensive analysis as the range of research required frequently proved too large a task. The evidence required for A04 requires that **one** plan be considered. It would benefit candidates to clearly state the aims of the plan. Many portfolio units were rather general for AO4 in this series.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates
- The role of the agencies and organisation need to be considered in light of how these shape the development of an area. Are specific aspects of man-made and natural management encouraged or discouraged?
- Candidates will need help in considering the legislative changes that have happened recently and could affect the management of the chosen area.
- It would be useful to discuss all the opportunities for outdoor leisure in order that candidates consider the full range within the chosen area.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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