



**General Certificate of Education**

**Leisure Studies**

**8641/8643/8646/8647/8649**

**LS09          Working in the People Business**

**Report on the Examination**

*2009 examination - June series*

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## What was particularly good

1. Candidates have a better appreciation than before that the leisure organisation exists to serve its customers and not for the benefit of its employees. The focus of this examination is on how workplace practices are of direct benefit to the work and aims of the organisation.
2. More candidates are showing good knowledge of workplace procedures such as motivation, interviews and grievance, although a sizeable minority have still not learned these before the examination.

## What was not so good

1. Despite showing some improvement last year, candidates' responses about the duties and requirements of jobs they have studied remain rather disappointing. Candidates need to learn specific details of two leisure jobs. Too often the descriptions could have applied to almost any job at all.
2. Candidates still do not apply the command of each question closely enough. They struggle to go beyond descriptive answers and follow command words like "Explain" or "Evaluate". Centres should spend time coaching them in these skills.
3. Handwriting was often very small, or so poor that it was almost illegible, which does not help the candidate to convey his or her ideas. Some candidates write with black pens that are so faint that their writing creates unnecessary difficulty for examiners. Centres are reminded that use of blue ink is contrary to AQA regulations.

## Question 1

For the first time since the specimen paper was published, candidates were asked to draw the organisational structure for a leisure organisation they had studied. Many candidates scored full marks, but the weakest answers failed even to use a structure in the manner suggested in Figure 1. The question asked for *different* job positions, so repeated portrayal of 'team leaders', 'assistant managers', etc. was not rewarded. Candidates showed good understanding of the benefits of organising staff in a hierarchical structure and explained them well.

Candidates should learn specific details about their two chosen leisure jobs. This means that candidates should go beyond writing, for example, that "experience is essential" and explains what experience is required? where? doing what? and for how long? Some candidates wrote that no specific qualifications or experience were needed to do their chosen job. If so, why choose that particular job?!

## Question 2

All candidates demonstrated some understanding of the Sex Discrimination Act but some described its requirements in a very limited way as simply an obligation to avoid discrimination or bias. Candidates needed to go further and show that job appointments must be made on merit. Candidates were correct, and were rewarded, for stating that the Thursford advert looked discriminatory for inviting applications from female dancers and a man with his own white beard. However, the best candidates realised that in these two cases being female and male are justified as genuine occupational requirements.

### **Question 3**

Misinterpretation of the stem and question, perhaps caused by hurried or careless reading, resulted in some candidates describing the whole job recruitment procedure instead of concentrating on the interview stage. Some candidates wrote a good deal about short-listing but their answers became relevant only when discussing how the leisure organisation would prepare for the interview by selecting the panel and composing suitable questions with due regard to the person specification. There are many ways in which the panel can identify the best interview candidate impartially: for example, by asking the same questions in the same way to each candidate and giving a score for the answer or by taking steps to remove bias from the decision. These were the requirements for levels 2 and 3.

### **Question 4**

Most candidates realised that the manner in which the short programme would be delivered was not important and that the marks were awarded for appropriate content. A short introductory programme must concentrate on immediate safety essentials, such as fire procedures and keeping customers safe. Teaching new recruits how to carry out a risk assessment or the detail of legislation was regarded as unlikely in a half-day course. The best answers were specific to a named organisation. Similarly in question 4(b), induction training informs new employees about what they need to know from the start, so that they do not mistakes or unwittingly damage the business. General training can follow later. Many candidates made the mistake of explaining how induction training would be of value to the employee rather than to the leisure organisation.

### **Question 5**

Identifying the difficulties for a leisure organisation of using performance related pay continues to cause candidates difficulty. They seem to make an assumption that the PRP system will be operated badly or unfairly and base their answers on that. Thus PRP would cause resentment and low morale. However, the question requires them to show how PRP is difficult to manage because of the inherent problems of measuring performance in a leisure context and matching it to the amount of payment. The mark scheme describes many other problems, too. A common mistake was to think that PRP will cost the organisation too much money but candidates forget that in return the organisation gets better performance from its employees, which will presumably produce a better financial return. Indeed, that is the purpose of a PRP scheme.

### **Question 6**

This question asked about self-employment for the first time and candidates showed a good understanding of its advantages and disadvantages, but didn't go on to make a proper assessment of whether it would be an advantageous leisure career choice for the person concerned.

### **Question 7**

Unfortunately, a lot of candidates did not recognise the term "person specification" and wrote about what should be included in a CV. The best answers showed that a person specification identifies which qualifications, experience, skills and qualities are desirable for the job and which are essential. How the specification is used at different stages of the recruitment process was generally well-understood though seldom dealt with in full.

## **Question 8**

Candidates are becoming more familiar with the requirement to explain procedures like grievance and disciplinaries. They know that beyond the basic steps they should include detail that helps to make the procedure fair and rigorous. Two steps are commonly lacking. The leisure organisation is likely to put in place training and supervision to ensure that employees do not repeat any mistakes they have made; and the organisation would consider adjusting its procedures after a disciplinary or grievance event so that the problems do not occur again.

## **Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates**

1. Candidates should carefully learn the details about their two chosen jobs so that they are able to write *specifically* and not generally about the duties and requirements.
2. When explaining organisational structure diagrams, teachers should include the horizontal as well as the vertical aspects of the diagram by considering departmental specialisation and the span of control.
3. Ensure that candidates' writing is legible, large enough to read, and is in sufficiently dark, black ink.
4. Centres are advised that in future LS09 examinations the mark for one of the longer questions will be awarded based on both the content and the quality of candidates' written communication.

## **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.