

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCE
in Leisure Studies (6970)
Paper 01 Employment in Leisure

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General Comments

The paper appeared to be accessible to student and performance was similar to last June.

Most students were able to respond effectively to most questions. There was evidence that most students had been effectively prepared, with the majority responding positively to the tasks set, offering valid answers, although many students did struggle to achieve the higher levels in extended responses. Almost all students answered all questions.

There is still a tendency for students to be able to cope with the demands of the paper comfortably at a basic level without managing to raise their mark beyond the level of grades C and D. This 'bulk' has moved up in comparison to past years, but there is still a problem for a substantial number of students in using their knowledge and understanding to the best advantage although a greater proportion achieved this than in the past.

It is the applied nature of the GCE that is still an issue here. The purpose of this GCE is to give learners an applied, work related approach to the leisure industry, involving active learning and the ability to take basic principles and apply them in unfamiliar situations. A few questions will always be aimed at AO1, straightforward recall of knowledge and understanding, but the majority – particularly the longer questions - will require learners to apply this. This is the key skill that they need to tackle this qualification successfully. More are achieving this each time but there is still a considerable amount of generic material offered in the longer applied questions. It involves active use of the stimulus material as indicated in the 'indicative content' parts of the mark scheme for levels based questions. Without this application responses cannot get beyond 3-4 marks out of the 8 available for longer questions, ie a grade D/E level.

Whilst in preparing these papers we will always try to keep as much of the information on the same page, students should be aware that for the later questions information from the earlier parts could be useful. The papers are designed to focus the students on one organisation so that they can get a feel for them, ie a possible real –life situation. Students should be made aware of this.

The requirements of the command words were generally known by students, although many did not manage to access the higher marks in the longer questions as a consideration of terms such as 'analyse' and 'evaluate' did not show enough depth in response.

1(a)(i) Most students knew what a person specification was and only a small minority suggested that it was written by the applicant rather than the organisation. The main area of concern was that many students went on to state what it was used for rather than simply explaining what it was.

1(a)(ii) Together with question 1(a)(i) this question showed the importance of ensuring that the precise demand of the question is considered and then followed. A significant proportion of responses to this question spent most of the time stating what was in a job description with only occasional comment as to what it might be used for. Although most got as far as suggesting that it told the potential applicant what they needed to know, enabling them to make a choice about applying, disappointingly few got further than this.

1(b) There were two elements to this question which caused issues to students in the middle and lower mark ranges. Firstly, the demand of the question was to 'evaluate the effectiveness of the *advert*'. There were many cases when responses strayed into dealing with the demands of the job itself, not the information that the advert gave. So stating, for example, that it might not suit some students because it involved managing a team, is simply a statement about the demand of the job and not the effectiveness of the advert. The second area was evaluating for 'attracting suitable applicants'. Many evaluative comments were very vague and did no more than just say 'the hours are stated so they know what the hours would be'. This does not address the need to get suitable applicants. Similarly some of the negative points, such as the spelling errors, were seen but the comments such as 'it makes the organisation look unprofessional' stops short of relating that to the effect on recruitment.

1(c) This question was often tackled well. Most responses could give some basic evaluation of the choices, linking them to the demands of the post stated in the job advert. Organisational skills were seen as beneficial in supporting the need to give appraisals and produce staff schedules and support a team in general. There was a mixed response to customer service, with better responses seeing that it had not been mentioned and was not naturally a demand of the post. Communication was dealt with in a number of ways, often supporting its inclusion. The weakest comment was on the need for experience. Many responses suggested that it wouldn't be needed as training could be given but others were insistent that for a post such as this – and with such potentially major consequences – that it would be essential. The best responses tended to suggest some shifting of the criteria was needed whilst the middle ranking ones tended only to evaluate each one separately and not consider the effects of the 'essential' and 'desirable' headings.

1(d) Most students could identify at least one appropriate method, although overall there was a disappointingly large number of inappropriate suggestions. The most common suggestions were national newspapers and specific internet sites, either their own site or a specialist recruitment site. Pleasingly, a significant minority suggested the use of a 'head hunter' style recruitment as the position was important. Students again need to ensure that they are applying their response to the stimulus material and that they have taken into account the type of post. The type of post is significant, so the fact that a local newspaper is cheap to advertise in is not significant for a job role such as this and that the types of jobs usually seen in a job centre will not be managerial. In addition, students should be aware that a response such as 'the

internet' is not precise enough. It is a wide and varied medium and students should be made aware of this.

1(e) Many students did manage to identify two possible activities, the most common choices being role plays, presentations and group activities. Explanations tended to be rather vague however, often just describing what they would do. For example, 'role plays would put them in a position with a customer and they would need to show how they would respond' is weak. This tells us little about why it is suitable and the explanations should obviously be tied as far as possible to the criteria that might be demanded for such a post, remembering that the applicants did not necessarily work at that type of establishment. Good responses linked group work with the ability to work as a team and possibly show leadership skills in an activity. Presentation explanations often cited that it demonstrated communication skills and perhaps the type of clear guidance that might be required when training team members. Weaker responses were often vague as to what was being suggested, as in 'they would have to show what they could do for customer service, or 'they could be asked about' which tended simply to echo what would happen in the individual interview.

1(f) The contents of a contract of employment were generally well known, as was the basic purpose. This was usually seen as being as something that ensured that both employer and employee had to ensure they knew what the role definition was. Its role as a legal definition that could be used to solve potential disputes was often clear also.

1(g) The basic purposes of an induction were often well understood but unfortunately this question saw the return of a perpetual problem on this paper in past series, that of a lack of application to the scenario. Responses dealt with the need for a health and safety induction, meeting other staff and orientation tours but most of the analytical comment was of a generic nature. As stated in the introduction to this paper, these types of responses will rarely get above the top of Level 1 in the mark scheme so performance was disappointing. A few responses did manage to link the new manager's previous role with the fact that customer service would be very different in a safari park, and many just scraped into Level 2 through indicating that it was a very different type of environment. Unfortunately this was as far as most responses went, with the nature of the 'different environment' rarely being considered as to why they might be so important. Additionally, the word 'thorough' was often missed. Most responses only seemed to consider the fact that an induction would be necessary and the fact that it would be thorough for a high level post was ignored. There were some misconceptions associated with inductions in some responses. The most significant was its confusion with training, but there were also a few responses that appeared to think that it was a bit like a trial period and that either employer or employee might have the option of not carrying on after it.

2(a) Most students were aware of the effect of either the Equality Act or Equal Pay act and this was applied soundly to the scenario.

2(b) Grievance procedures were not well known and their potential use was often very vague. Students should be aware that a grievance procedure is a set procedure that operated under firm guidelines. It is not just a question of 'speaking to the manager and then he has an informal discussion with the people involved. There is a set of steps that have to be followed, including a written request for it and then evidence gathering followed by an official record. Responses tended to focus on what the potential outcome might be rather than the use of the process to an acceptable

outcome. Often the outcomes were unrealistic, potentially involving one or other being sacked in the end.

2(c) Responses to this question tended to show that there is some confusion about the role of apprentices. A significant minority suggested that they were more like volunteers than full-time employees and therefore concentrated on benefits such as having experience to put on their CV. Other responses knew that they got paid a relatively small amount but seemed to think that this was good for the organisation because it gave them cheap labour. Whilst this may be true once they are trained it is not per se, and students should be aware of the concept of value for money here. Similarly at the end of their apprenticeship there was confusion in thinking that they would automatically have a job. Where relevant points were made they tended to be bland statements without development. Hence the fact that they were young and might get a job at the end, on its own, is true, it does not say what advantage that is to either without development. The fact that this might motivate them well and make them valuable to the organisation would confirm this. Overall most responses got to 2-4 marks but rarely beyond this due to the lack of real explanatory ideas being followed through.

2(d)(ii) The use of seasonal workers was generally soundly understood and stated in comparison to full-time workers. The cost savings of only having them when you needed them – in this case most commonly in the summer when visitor numbers are generally higher – were clear. The comparison with casual workers centred either around their possible improved reliability because they were contracted in advance and could not just turn work down or through their experience at having been working at the park for 5 years. Application was generally good but often was only done for one of the two types, hence restricting marks. Overall there was a tendency to deal with one of the types well but be rather brief on the other and students should be encouraged to produce more balanced responses in a question such as this.

3(a)(i) The simple idea of doing a different job was well known but responses then tended to go on to say why this was done – ignoring the fact that this is what the stimulus had told them.

3(a)(ii) The concept of an appraisal was generally understood soundly and responses were often successful in using them in relation to the stimulus. Application was generally good, linking the positive ideas of him knowing how well he was doing or being able to talk through his problems. Similarly the negative idea of perhaps the appraisal being carried out with his line manager with whom he did not get on was also well documented. Many responses achieved the middle or even top of Level 2 but tended to be restricted by not really relating it back to motivation carefully, which was the major issues at stake in the question. There is still a significant minority of students who think that appraisals are some sort of monetary or other reward, however, although this is less than in the past series.

3(b) A wide variety of suggestions were made for this question but unfortunately many of them seemed to ignore the stimulus information and simply conclude that increasing pay or giving bonuses might solve this situation. Similarly, an 'employee of the month' award or similar would not really help where an atmosphere of unhealthy competition already existed. Good responses suggested staff development and training or even profit related pay. The use of bonding days for the former was done well, although often the final step as to how this would improve motivation in the workforce

was only implicit. The fact that staff who get on with each other might try to help each other was lacking in a number of otherwise sound responses. The use of profit related pay stressed the need to work together for this to occur but again tended to stop at this point. Students should be encouraged to carry explanations through to explicitly answer the question.

Students should:

- Read the stimulus
- Use the stimulus material in their responses
- Be explicit in higher level answers for evaluative and analytical questions
- Not repeat the question before starting the answer.
- Consider organisations and employees

Grade Boundaries

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