AQA

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Education

Travel and Tourism
8651/8653/8656/8659

TT09   People and Quality

Report on the Examination

2007 examination - June series

GENERAL COMMENTS

This was the second operational paper of Unit 9 Travel and Tourism – People and Quality.
To prepare their candidates, many teachers had clearly read and used the January 2007 Examiner's Report: some of the common weaknesses identified in the January Report (e.g. generic answers failing to refer to specific organisations) only occurred occasionally in June 2007. This augurs very well for future series.

What was particularly good:

1. Many candidates had clearly researched *several* travel and tourism organisations; they had enough material to choose the most suitable case study for each assignment task, depending on the topic and focus.

2. Many candidates paid close attention to the command words: they evaluated when they were asked to evaluate, they discussed when they were asked to discuss.

What was not so good:

1. Many candidates did not understand the meaning of key concepts such as 'incentives', 'benchmarking', 'procedures' or 'confidentiality'.

2. Many candidates failed to answer the precise question asked: instead, they wrote everything they knew on a particular topic (be it quality standards or staff motivation), almost leaving it to the examiner to pick the relevant elements of the answer in pages and pages of text.

ASSIGNMENT TASK 1

This task was about consumer protection and the security of information. All candidates were able to identify at least one pertinent example of information theft that could occur in their chosen organisation (systems of online booking lent themselves very well to that answer). Most candidates were able to outline the key intentions and requirements of the Data Protection Act, though their knowledge often remained vague and patchy. The third question asked candidates to evaluate the procedures in place in their chosen organisation to protect the rights of its customers with regard to confidentiality. Some candidates ignored that last word ('confidentiality') and wrote about security, health and safety, which was not relevant. Overall, candidates had clearly collected valuable information about their organisations, showing a good understanding of practical issues (e.g. password protected systems, encryption), the strengths of the procedures in place but also their possible limits.

ASSIGNMENT TASK 2

This task was about provision for customers with special needs. All candidates were able to outline the key intentions and requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act: they all seemed very familiar with this piece of legislation and were particularly sensitive to issues of discrimination, fairness and social justice. Many candidates duly used the appropriate terminology ('reasonable adjustments'), which was also very good. Asked to evaluate how their *chosen* organisation complied with the requirements of the DDA, many candidates wrote interesting answers describing how *any* travel and tourism organisation complies with the Act; many candidates still find it difficult to relate an examination question to a specific organisation. Question 2(a) also illustrated this. When asked about the specific needs of wheelchair-bound customers using their chosen organisation, many candidates wrote generic and basic answers about access to toilets or access to parking spaces – yet without reference to the specific context. Many candidates had chosen organisations that seemed ideal for the task: a theme park like Alton Towers, a BAA airport, a railway company like SWT – but, surprisingly, some answers to Question 2(a) made no reference whatsoever to rides or access to planes and trains, only several paragraphs about disabled toilets and parking places.

ASSIGNMENT TASK 3

This task was about customer service standards. Overall, answers fell into two categories, in a very polarised way. Some (very) good answers (that displayed a solid understanding of benchmarking and service standards in the context of a particular travel and tourism organisation) – and some (very) poor answers (that often fully missed the point). Many airlines, hotel chains and tourist attractions have well established systems of benchmarking. Some candidates had properly researched that and wrote very good answers, duly discussing the extent to which their chosen organisation was using benchmarks (both internal benchmarks and external benchmarks) to set their quality standards. Other candidates wrote about targets and generic procedures and policies, and also about mystery shoppers and questionnaires to collect customers' feedback – this was the topic of assignment task 1 in the January 2007 paper, but it was not relevant here. For the second question, some candidates answered very well (duly analysing how the organisation ensures that its service standards meet the needs of its customers, justifying the methods used by the organisation to monitor its service and to improve its performance). Many other answers were not relevant though. Candidates seemingly just repeated and rephrased information from their portfolios, without any structure or any apparent effort to address the question asked.

ASSIGNMENT TASK 4

This task was about management and the motivation of teams. Most candidates did quite well for the second part of the task (about approaches and techniques of staff motivation, displaying a good knowledge of the topic, sometimes even with references to models such as McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y) – but some candidates struggled with the first part of the task, as they did not understand the meaning of 'incentive' (some candidates wrote about paid holidays as incentives, others explained that having a nice (sic) uniform is an incentive). Besides, the question explicitly invited candidates to write about financial and non-financial incentives, but many failed to refer to one of the two types.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future TT09 candidates:

1. Teachers should make sure that candidates research appropriate *travel and tourism* organisations: a community cinema and a local football club are *not* travel and tourism organisations! (When candidates do not choose an appropriate organisation, they cannot achieve all of the marks).

2. Teachers should check that candidates understand the meanings of all the key concepts from the specification (i.e. words such as 'benchmarking', 'quality', 'compensation culture', reliability' etc).

After the examination itself, several centres were asked to send candidates' preparatory folders to AQA. In most cases, the preparatory folders included useful and sensible documents, such as research notes written by candidates (for example notes taken during an interview with a representative from the organisation) and original materials (for example copies of their Health and Safety policy).

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