



General Certificate of Education

Travel and Tourism

8651/8653/8656/8657/8659

TT09 People and Quality

Report on the Examination

2009 examination - January series

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GENERIC COMMENTS

This was the fifth operational paper of Unit 9 Travel and Tourism – People and Quality.

Candidates had clearly studied a range of travel and tourism organisations and had relevant documents in their preparatory folders. The better candidates duly managed to make use of the information they had collected, whereas the weaker candidates tended to just lift and copy, producing pages and pages of text, often with little relevance to the precise question asked.

What was particularly good

1. Most candidates clearly knew about a wide range of recent laws affecting the travel and tourism industry. Examiners were pleased to see this, as this shows that the Unit section about the law is well taught, in both depth and breadth.
2. Many candidates started their answers with a very brief introduction which helped locate and present their chosen organisation. Although this is not compulsory, it is nonetheless useful as examiners may not necessarily know if the named organisation is a local tourist attraction, a museum or a hotel.
3. Many candidates now pay closer attention to the command words; teachers must have spent time clarifying the meanings of terms such as “outline”, “justify” and “evaluate”. This was a problem in previous years – but now fewer candidates ignore the command words and the subsequent expectations. Even the weaker candidates, when asked to evaluate, do endeavour to evaluate, thereby showing some ability to meet Assessment Objective 4.

What was not so good

1. In their answers, some candidates seemed to confuse airports and airlines, as well as train stations and train operating companies.
2. As noted in previous reports on the examination (for example January 2008), many candidates still present their answers as pages and pages of text without any break, any paragraph or any indication of structure. Candidates should be encouraged to organise their text in sections and sub-sections, thereby showing the logic and the plan of their answer.
3. Although spelling is not directly assessed, many candidates pay insufficient attention to keywords. Question 2a was about hygiene, a term which was on the paper itself, yet many students kept writing about “hygine” or “hygeine”. It is unfortunate that candidates do not spend time re-reading their answers to check the spelling of keywords.
4. In a few cases, poor hand-writing caused difficulty to examiners. When flawed calligraphy becomes an obstacle to written communication, some strategy ought to be put in place to help candidates.

ASSIGNMENT TASK 1

This task was about managing complaints. All candidates were able to outline causes of complaints for 1a, but for 1b many candidates struggled with the concept “procedures to handle complaints”; instead, they wrote about what the organisation ought to do to minimise or prevent complaints (e.g. employing more waiters in a restaurant or creating better queuing systems). For 1b, the trigger for candidates to score a level 2 mark was “justify” – many candidates tried to justify, which was clear in the way their answer itself was structured (“part 1: description of the procedures, part 2: justification of the procedures”). Many good candidates may be able to integrate description and justification directly, but for the weaker ones, a clear structure can help them write a better answer and ultimately score a higher mark. Candidates were also asked to suggest an alternative method of handling one type of complaint. Within centres, most candidates usually suggested the same method, as they had clearly discussed this together. This approach is fine, the quality of the answer helps differentiate between candidates anyway, but some creative candidates may well feel constrained by that collective strategy. There is no expectation that all candidates from the same centre will come up with the same suggestions. In some cases, it might be better to let candidates use their knowledge and understanding and follow their imagination.

ASSIGNMENT TASK 2

This task was about hygiene. Although most candidates seemingly understood the concept, many answers proved disappointing. Question 1a asked about hygiene related problems that may affect the chosen organisation; the most common answer was food poisoning, as examiners expected – and the systems and procedures in place to deal with that problem were then very well described and often justified in 2b. Unfortunately, many candidates ignored the explicit reference to “problems” in the question; instead they wrote lengthily about staff uniforms or about the cleanliness of hotel bedrooms, without focusing on the exact question asked. For 2c, candidates were asked to assess the importance of hygiene as a quality criterion for their chosen organisation. Some candidates wrote a very good answer, referring to other quality criteria they had studied – but too many answers unfortunately remained at a generic level.

ASSIGNMENT TASK 3

This task was about security in travel and tourism. Many candidates seemingly enjoyed answering questions 3a and 3b. The topics of terrorism, risks, accidents, sabotage and the like are always popular with candidates – though this can often lead candidates to provide unnecessary details. For example, for 3a examiners were not after personal details about Richard Reid (“the shoe bomber”) and were not interested in lyrical passages about the victims of the 9/11 attacks; they wanted an analysis of the security hazards particularly relevant for the candidate’s chosen organisation... yet that second part of the question (“particularly relevant for...”) was sometimes ignored. Some candidates wrote lengthily about the risk of terrorist attacks (on a theme park, a national park or a zoo) and then concluded that those hazards were not particularly relevant, thereby nullifying the validity of their answer. Candidates are therefore reminded to read the question carefully to avoid this scenario.

ASSIGNMENT TASK 4

This task was about operating in accordance with the law. Question 4a was purposely similar to a question from the previous session (June 2008); many teachers had clearly used that paper to prepare their candidates and had read the examiner's report to interpret the phrase "recent changes" in its broadest sense. Many candidates displayed a topical knowledge of legislation (with references to the smoking ban or licensing laws) – but two recurrent flaws were noticeable:

- firstly, many candidates successively outlined laws and described how organisations comply (instead of discussing how *changes* have affected the industry)
- secondly, a minority of candidates mainly wrote about the Disability Discrimination Act; the DDA is certainly important, but it seems that too much teaching time may be spent on the DDA as opposed to other pieces of legislation.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future TT09 candidates:

1. Clarify the differences between airports and airlines, and between train stations and train operating companies
2. Stress the visual importance of the layout and presentation of the answers; the exam script ultimately remains a tool of written communication.
3. Make sure that candidates understand the documents they have in their preparatory folders. It is important that they know how to use the preparatory folders for their answers, as opposed to just lifting and copying pages and pages. After the TT09 exam, several centres were asked to send their preparatory folders to AQA. Senior examiners have carefully looked at them and noted a recurrent feature: the unnecessary amount of information was undoubtedly a distraction for many candidates. Many candidates had too much material (e.g. pages and pages printed from the internet) and were not always able to navigate through their portfolio and to demonstrate their understanding of the documents and of the unit as a whole. In many cases, instead of answering the question asked, they just copied their draft answers to cognate questions from previous TT09 exam papers. Using previous exam papers is an excellent revision technique, but candidates must realise that the questions will differ from one session to the next.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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