



General Certificate of Education

Travel and Tourism

8651/8653/8656/8657/8659

TT09 People and Quality

Report on the Examination

2009 examination - June series

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General Comments

Overall, candidates' performance was better than in previous years. Candidates had clearly studied a range of suitable travel and tourism organisations, from Chester Zoo to The Museum of London Docklands and from British Airways to GNER. As in previous sessions, the better candidates answered the questions very well, duly making use of the information they had collected in their preparatory folders, whereas the weaker candidates tended to just lift and copy, producing pages and pages of text, often with little relevance to the question asked.

What was particularly good

1. Most candidates paid close attention to the command words; teachers must have spent time clarifying the meanings of verbs such as "outline" (4a), "describe" (2a) and "evaluate" (1b, 2b). It 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, endeavoured to do so, thereby showing some ability to meet Assessment Objective 4.
2. All candidates had sufficient material and data to try to answer questions about any aspect of the Specification – this shows that the entire Specification is taught, as opposed to just some aspects according to the chosen organisations, as was the case in the first years of the Unit. As a consequence, all candidates attempted all questions and even the weaker ones managed to score some marks.
3. 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 and good practice for exam answers in general.

What was not so good

1. Some answers included incorrect statements (for example presenting British Airways as a tour operator or as a company owning airports); some others included comments that were not suitable (for example about the reasons why tourism organisations should not follow quality criteria of hygiene and cleanliness). One may optimistically assume that such statements and comments are due to the stress of the exam situation and do not reflect the candidate's real views. It would be worrying if students who have a GCE in Travel and Tourism genuinely thought that British Airways owns British airports or that tourism organisations should not follow quality criteria of hygiene and cleanliness.
2. As noted in previous reports, too many candidates still present their answers as pages and pages of text without any break, without any paragraphs 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. It is surprising to see that some candidates do not take more care when presenting their answers, seemingly ignoring that someone will be reading their work – this is paradoxical when those same candidates polish the design and layout of their portfolios for their other GCE Units.
3. Some candidates seem to believe that the longer their answer, the higher the mark they will score. A minority of candidates filled over 55 sides of A4 – according to the instructions of the TT09 rubric, the four booklets (of eight pages each) are sufficient. Some candidates might occasionally need supplementary sheets, but this should be exceptional. The questions are formulated so as to elicit precise and specific answers. The "hit and miss" strategy is not a good one: concise answers are often better to show the candidate's knowledge and understanding, as opposed to long and rambling

answers where the candidate writes everything they can on a topic, in the hope that some passages will be relevant. For example, to answer question 1(b) some candidates included a SWOT analysis and a PEST analysis of their chosen organisation.

Assignment Task 1

This task was about implementing the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) – a piece of legislation that candidates usually know and understand quite well.

For part (a) candidates were asked to describe how their chosen organisation meets the requirements of the DDA. Answers that remained too vague (e.g. about access in general) or too basic (e.g. about toilets for disabled visitors) scored lower marks than answers that explained how the chosen organisation had to make (or not make) “reasonable adjustments” to meet the requirements of the DDA. As always, precise references to the organisational context enabled candidates to score higher. For part (b), candidates were asked to consider the needs of a wheelchair-using manager. Many candidates just wrote about wheelchair-using staff in general, which was not the focus here. Some answers remained quite simple, but many took other relevant aspects into consideration (e.g. examining different managerial roles and duties, different departments or different buildings or situations). Examiners were pleased to see some excellent answers to part (b), displaying both maturity and realism.

Assignment Task 2

This task was about electronic information and security in travel and tourism. When asked to describe the electronic forms of communication used throughout their chosen organisation, all candidates were able to score some marks – yet higher marks rewarded answers that were not just generic (e-mail, fax, internet...) but specific (booking systems in a hotel, VDUs in an airport, walkie-talkies in a theme park, etc). Candidates were also asked to evaluate the security risks posed by the use of electronic forms of communication in their chosen organisation – many candidates found this question difficult: many answers were mainly descriptions of the use of the internet with references to passwords, encryption, hacking and https secure sites. Few candidates actually wrote about security risks – it seems that candidates felt limited by the information they had in their preparatory folder (for example with descriptions of procedures) and did not try to adapt them to fit the question asked (i.e. evaluating security risks).

Assignment Task 3

This task was about collecting customer feedback. Of the four tasks, it is the task that most candidates answered best – candidates were seemingly very well prepared for questions on that topic. Descriptions of methods used to collect feedback in part (a) were usually good – though when asked to evaluate the effectiveness of one method currently used in part (b) and of one additional method in part (c), many candidates found it difficult to answer in the context of their organisation. Candidates all had good ideas about the theoretical advantages and disadvantages of methods such as mystery guests, focus groups or questionnaires, but the answers often remained generic and were not applied to the chosen organisations.

ASSIGNMENT TASK 4

This task was about quality. Of the four tasks, it is this one that caused most problems to many candidates. Part (a) was straightforward, referring directly to the quality criteria listed in the Specification (reliability, availability, hygiene, etc) – yet some candidates entirely missed that point. Likewise, many candidates misunderstood part (b) about the advantages and disadvantages of having agreed quality standards. Some candidates wrote excellent answers (about star rating schemes, benchmarking, etc) but the majority got confused – and many wrote

about quality criteria, referring back to their answer to part (a), which led to strange argumentations (for instance about the advantages and disadvantages of reliability or of hygiene). Some candidates failed to display any critical thinking in their answers to part (b), which was disappointing.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future TT09 candidates:

1. Focus on the part of the Specification about quality (quality criteria, quality standards) as this seems to be the most challenging area of the Unit for many candidates.
2. Stress the importance of the layout and visual presentation of the answers: the exam script ultimately remains a tool of written communication.
3. Help candidates understand that examiners are after quality, not quantity: the longest answers are rarely the best ones. Candidates should spend time examining exactly what they are asked – rather than just writing everything they can on a subject.
4. Centres are advised that in future TT09 examinations the mark for one of the longer questions will be awarded based on both 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.