



**General Certificate of Education (A-level) Applied  
June 2011**

**Travel and Tourism**

**TT09**

**(Specification  
8651/8653/8656/8657/8659)**

**Unit 9: Travel and Tourism – People and Quality**

***Report on the Examination***

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## General Comments

This was the tenth 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 managed to make good use of the information they had collected, whereas the weaker candidates tended to just lift and copy, producing pages and pages of text, sometimes with little relevance to the question asked.

## What was particularly good

1. Many candidates answered question **09** about benchmarking very well. It is a difficult concept that had proved challenging in the past. Teachers have clearly spent time explaining and illustrating why and how benchmarking is used in the travel and tourism industry – most candidates were able to write about the advantages and disadvantages of benchmarking; from a vocational perspective, this is very important.
2. The topic of “values and attitudes” had previously proved difficult for many candidates (e.g. in June 2010); it still was difficult for some in June 2011, however many wrote good answers to question **05** about the values and attitudes of employees, with examples that included sexism, ageism, homophobia, racism, sectarian prejudice etc. More candidates now understand the topic and its importance in the travel and tourism industry.
3. Most candidates paid close attention to the command terms and clearly understood the difference between verbs such as “identify” (e.g. question **03**), “analyse” (e.g. question **02**) and “discuss” (e.g. question **09**). Even the weaker candidates clearly endeavoured to follow what they were asked to do.

## What was not so good

1. Two questions explicitly asked for *two* elements of answer: “analyse **two** methods of staff motivation...” (question **02**) and “evaluate the effectiveness of **two** techniques...” (question **10**); the word *two* was in **bold** in *both* questions, yet many candidates ignored it and wrote about *many* (methods and techniques), sometimes even answering about *all* the methods and techniques that are mentioned in the *Specification* and on which they had notes in their preparatory folder. Maybe candidates believed that writing about more than two would result in higher marks, yet this was not the case.
2. Many candidates did not understand the expression “positive physical working environment” (question **01**); some answers referred to leadership styles, team spirit, salaries or parental leave, but not to the correct aspects (e.g. office space, ergonomics, lighting etc). Some candidates in their answer just ignored the term “physical”, yet the phrase is in the *Specification* and had been included in previous TT09 exam papers (e.g. January 2007).
3. As noted in several previous reports, many candidates still present their answers as pages and pages of text without any break, without any paragraphs or without any indication of structure. Candidates must organise their text in sections and sub-sections, thereby showing the logic and the plan of their answer

## **ASSIGNMENT TASK A**

This task was about management and motivation of teams. The *Specification* lists several methods of staff motivation that candidates are expected to understand, such as job rotation, empowerment and good communication. The list includes “positive physical working environment” (fifth bullet point) however many candidates were clearly unprepared for question **01** on that topic. In many cases it seems that they had no notes about it in their preparatory folders, so they tried to guess and improvise, which resulted in poor answers. In their folders however candidates had a lot of information about other methods of staff motivation, which enabled them to answer question **02** much better. Some examples were industry-specific (e.g. familiarisation trips in the case of a travel agency) – this was very welcome for an Applied GCE in Travel and Tourism, as it shows candidates’ knowledge of their sector. Many candidates however wrote about Herzberg, Maslow and motivation theory in general; although it was good to see that they had mastered the theoretical background, this is not what is being tested in TT09 (it is not in the *Specification* and candidates cannot get extra marks for drawing Maslow’s pyramid of needs and explaining it over several pages).

## **ASSIGNMENT TASK B**

This task was about customer complaints. This has been the topic of several TT09 questions; candidates were generally well prepared. For question **03**, candidates were asked to identify the most common causes of complaints that their chosen organisation receives. Many candidates accessed Level 2 by answering with specific reference to their organisation (i.e. giving a sense of place), however many just wrote vague answers that sometimes seemed either hypothetical or stereotypical (e.g. “the most common cause of customer complaint in the restaurant is that the soup is not hot enough”). For question **04**, candidates had to explain the procedures in place in their chosen organisation to handle those complaints. Most candidates proved good at *describing* the procedures (i.e. narrating what happens: the letter of complaint is passed to the Customer Service Department... an offer of a free meal may be made as compensation...) – but few candidates really *explained* the procedures (i.e. wrote why those procedures are in place). For question **05**, candidates were then asked to discuss how the values and attitudes of the employees may affect the handling of customer complaints. Answers were polarised: whilst some candidates understood the idea very well, others only wrote generic comments about being polite and smiling to customers.

## **ASSIGNMENT TASK C**

This task was about the law. In previous TT09 exam papers, candidates had been told to write about a given Act (e.g. the Data Protection Act or the Health and Safety at Work Act). For questions **06** and **07**, candidates were free to choose a piece of legislation; the vast majority chose the Disability Discrimination Act, firstly outlining its key intentions and requirements (question **06**) and then showing how it affects operational practice in their chosen organisation (question **07**). Some candidates struggled with the notion of “operational practice” and often just ignored it in their answers. Candidates were then asked why *both* managers and other employees need to be aware of the latest development in legislation. Although the word *both* was emboldened, many candidates did not consider it: they wrote about one category or the other, and consequently did not score as high as they could have, had they paid closer attention to the question.

## **ASSIGNMENT TASK D**

This task was about customer service standards. It started with question **09** about benchmarking, an important concept which most candidates (though not all) now seem to understand – a marked improvement from the first years of the *Specification*. The final question should have been straightforward (“Evaluate the effectiveness of **two** techniques used in the travel and tourism industry to measure and monitor the standard of customer service”), however many candidates answered poorly for two reasons: (i) some candidates wrote about quality criteria in general (e.g. health and safety) as opposed to techniques to measure and monitor the standard of customer service (e.g. mystery shoppers and observation), (ii) some candidates described the techniques at great length, yet did not include any evaluation, despite the command term.

## **Suggestions for teachers to prepare future TT09 candidates**

1. Stress that examiners are not after *quantity* but after *quality*: concise and focused answers are often better than pages and pages where candidates copy anything remotely relevant that they have in their preparatory folder.
2. Make sure that candidates precisely understand all the terms and phrases mentioned in the *Specification* (e.g. in many cases this was not the case for “positive physical working environment”) and have relevant notes to be able to be answer a question about any of them.
3. Emphasise the importance of the layout and presentation of answers: the exam script ultimately remains a tool of written communication. (This has been mentioned in previous reports on the examination but it is still a problem.)

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

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