

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2011

Applied GCE

GCE in Travel & Tourism (6987)
Unit 1: The Travel and Tourism Industry

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Introduction

The questions in this paper were set to assess candidates' learning of the content of the specification, and devised to meet the assessment objectives as given in the specification. Summarised below are the weightings applied to this unit.

Summary of AO Weightings and question requirements

	Summary of AO	Weighting	Question requirements
AO1	Knowledge and Understanding	25-35%	Describe, Explain, Compare
AO2	Application of Knowledge and Understanding	25-35%	Explain, Suggest
AO3	Research and Analysis	20-25%	Examples you have researched, Analyse, Explain why, Comment on
AO4	Evaluation, conclusions, recommendations	reasoned justified 20-25%	Evaluate, Suggest, Assess, Explain, Analyse, Justify.

General Comments

Candidates lost marks on this paper by not reading the question correctly. For example on Q1(d) many missed the words 'tourist destination' and suggested Iraq or Afghanistan. Also on 1(e) the word 'outbreak' was missed, and candidate explained what would happen after the war or civil unrest had finished, e.g. battlefield tours. Candidates also lost marks on this paper by **explaining** when the question had asked them to **describe**, or vice versa. Reading and understanding the command verb is a skill which was not well developed in some candidates, obvious by their answers.

As with all previous papers, there were 90 marks available. Candidates were allowed calculators. The information presented in question 5a) could, however, have been completed without a calculator (although candidates are always advised to have a calculator with them for this paper).

Some candidates continued their answer on additional sheets. Although this is permissible, when excessive additional sheets are used, the candidate may be unable to complete the whole paper in the time allowed, and this sometimes led to weaker or non-existent answers for Q6.

Also, when additional sheets are used it is recommended practice for candidates to write; 'continued on additional sheet' at the end of the appropriate section of the answer booklet. Many candidates did not follow this practice.

The Quality of Written Communication (QWC) has been assessed in this Travel and Tourism GCE paper.

Learners were assessed on their ability to:

- Ensure that text is legible and that spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so that meaning is clear
- Select and use a form of writing appropriate to the purpose and to complex subject matter
- Organise information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Questions 3(d) and 6(b), marked with an *, were the questions where this was taken into account on this paper.

This report will comment on each question in the paper. It will comment on the overall performance of the question, key strengths and weaknesses in responses and in some cases will give example answers.

The Travel and Tourism Industry

Q1(a)

This was well answered by the majority of candidates, either by saying *'leave your country of residence to visit another'* or by giving a correct example such as *'a UK resident travelling to Spain for a holiday.'*

Q1(b)

This question asked for a definition of 'long haul' - either long haul flights or long haul holidays were acceptable. Responses did vary, however, from as short as 80 minutes to as long as 24 hours. In reality, a long haul flight is usually a flight time of 6 hours or more. For this series, any duration of 4 hours and over was accepted, but in future series, 6 hours or more would be the correct response. *'Flights to another continent'* was also accepted. Examples of long haul holidays or destinations were also credited, e.g. UK to Florida. Candidates who simply said *'a long time'* or *'a long way'* or *'a long journey'* were not specific enough, and were awarded no mark.

Q1(c)

There were several types of response to this question:

- Candidates who saw the words 'all-inclusive', clearly knowing the meaning, but then only describing the free facilities at the hotel. These were limited to 2 marks.
- Candidates who saw the words 'package holiday' and described flights, accommodation and meals/transfers. These were also limited to 2 marks.
- Candidates who had read the question carefully, and described correctly an 'all-inclusive package holiday, as below.

'A package holiday includes flight, accommodation and transfers. An all inclusive package holiday will also provide all food and drink at the accommodation for one price. Many all inclusive packages also include all activities and free excursions'

There was also confusion in many candidates' responses between all inclusive and full board. Many described meal arrangements only, rather than the other features of the all inclusive package such as unlimited free drinks, sports and activities.

Q1(d)

A large percentage of candidates missed the words 'tourist destination' and incorrectly gave Iraq or Afghanistan as a response. Others did not appear to know what civil unrest was, and gave examples of terrorist attacks such as 9/11, the London bombings, or Mumbai attacks. Better responses quoted Thailand, Kenya, Sri Lanka, or Israel/Palestine. Northern Ireland was also seen and accepted.

In future, the civil unrest in Tunisia, Egypt and other parts of North Africa and the Middle East would make good examples in a question like this.

Q1(e)

Many candidates missed the word 'outbreak' in the question, and then wrote about special offers, reduced prices or increasing promotional activity, which would be totally inappropriate. A tour operator response in these situations would be to evacuate customers from the area, cancel outbound flights, offer alternative destinations or refunds to customers etc...

Example of part of a stronger response:

'If the war or civil unrest is very bad and extremely dangerous, they should remove the opportunity to go to this destination until it is safe to do so again, as their first interest should be customer safety. If any of their customers got hurt this would mean very bad press for them'

Q2(a)

Travelodge was the most commonly seen correct response. Many candidates did not score the mark here, however, for incorrectly stating Holiday Inn rather than the budget accommodation Holiday Inn Express. Other incorrect responses were clearly not low cost or budget, eg Hilton or Marriot,

Q2(b)

Most candidates used the features offered by Premier Inn and linked them to low disposable income of honeymoon couples. This would limit them to only 2 of the 4 marks available. Stronger candidates would have used the additional information, such as a choice of nine hotels, and linked this to the budgetary needs of the customer, such as minimal transport costs if there is a hotel near their home. Others may have contrasted this offer with the usual high cost of a honeymoon abroad.

Q2(c)

A well answered question. The majority of candidates addressed the safety and security, excellent customer service and technology provided by accommodation providers. Candidates described features such as key cards, CCTV, safes, room service, concierge, 24 hour room service, wi-fi, widescreen TV and websites. However, many forgot that the question asked for examples, so only scored 6 of the possible 9 marks. Others explained why excellent customer service is important. Others who did give an example gave a chain, or generic example, such as Hilton. Stronger responses showed that candidates had visited hotels in their local area or stayed at hotels on a trip or holiday. Overseas examples were rarely used, with responses mainly focusing on UK city hotels. Holiday brochures and websites could be used in class to identify examples and these could then be quoted in responses.

A good response is shown below:

'Accommodation providers have responded very well to changing customer needs and expectations. In regards to safety and security, in all Marriot hotels, there are CCTV cameras in reception to ensure that people and their belongings are safe. There are also CCTV in corridors, lifts and in the grounds so that no-one who is not staying there can enter. A night porter and security staff are also employed to deal with any problems that may arise. The Marriott hotel trains its staff to be friendly and approachable. They cater for any special dietary needs, and provide cots and highchairs for babies. The accommodation sector also uses new technology, for example when booking a Holiday Inn you can see a virtual tour, reviews and pictures of the hotel, before you make your booking online.'

Q3(a)

Most candidates were able to identify a transport organisation and a travel agent. Private sector support was less well answered; ABTA and insurance companies were the most popular correct examples.

Q3(b)

Those candidates who did not know the difference between public and private sector struggled with this question. Those who know that public sector included Visit Britain, DCMS, Tourist Boards and TIC's scored well. Marks were also awarded to candidates who showed knowledge of the sectors, eg government funded/not for profit. Other candidates, however, were not able to give a correct example. Having seen the word 'public' they gave organisations such as police, army or NHS, but as they are not tourist organisations these were not rewardable responses.

An example of a response which gained full marks is shown below:

'Visit Britain is an example of a public sector support service. Their role is to get people to visit Britain, give information to possible tourists. They have links on their website to hotels and attractions in the UK. They don't aim to make a profit, they aim to increase tourism numbers and be as useful as possible to tourists. Another example is a tourist information centre, these can be found all over the UK. They give out free information to tourists about travel and accommodation and attractions in their particular area. They aim to boost tourism not make a profit, and like Visit Britain they are usually government funded.'

Q3(c)

Some candidates were confused between the role of the tour operator and the travel agent. This is understandable, as there is increasingly an overlap in these roles. Those who described their role in putting packages together, contracting with airlines and accommodation, and producing brochures scored more marks. Additional marks could be scored by describing their role and relationship with a travel agent/customer when booking the holiday. The role of the tour operator in overseas resorts and its administrative role were virtually ignored, however.

Q3(d)

This question also produced similar confusion between the travel agents and tour operators. Many candidates forgot the question was about tour operators, and assessed how the travel agents sector had changed. Most did identify that the internet was a major change which had affected booking methods and that direct booking and independent holidays were on the increase. Most candidates did not realise that virtually **all** tour operators will have a website themselves, so can actually benefit from the increase in direct and online bookings. Most assumed that they would lose money and 'less package holidays would be needed'. Very few responses achieved high marks as even the better candidates focused on negative assessment, rather than a balance between positive and negative effects of the changes.

Part of a better response is shown below:

'In the past ten years, the use of travel agents has decreased. Tour operators selling their holidays directly to the customer has increased, as by doing so they get the full profit of the holiday, paying no commission to travel agents. Tour operators have created websites, where customers can book everything on line... With this new method of selling, less employees will be needed, such as on the phone and working in travel agents, so some may have lost their jobs....Tour operators will advertise deals on line to entice customers to book with them, so they will sell even more holidays than they did before.'

Q4(a)

Generally, this question was well answered by most candidates. Those who did not achieve all 4 marks had probably not seen the word 'additional' in the question, and simply stated products/services already found at a zoo eg 'animals', or stated what they should have eg 'mince pies and mulled wine'.

Q4(b)

Stronger answers went beyond repeating the content of the articles, but evaluated it in terms of specific types of tourists that may be motivated to visit, eg families, different aged children, grandparents, groups of friends, birthday parties. Stronger responses would also have evaluated the way the articles were written, eg picking up on phrases such as 'trains get booked up very quickly' as a motivational phrase.

Part of a better response is shown below:

'I think that lots of families would be attracted to Chester and Longleat over Christmas, especially children as they easily get bored, and parents will like to do

festive things to entertain their kids. Everyone loves animals, and children love Santa. At Chester, having Frosty and Waddle is a really good idea, as children seem to love large cartoon characters as shown in the picture. Younger children can go on the carousel and older ones can try the games on the stalls. It will definitely boost visitor numbers as it is something different from a normal zoo. This is the same for Longleat. The train has connections with Thomas the Tank Engine, popular with all children. Free gift is also motivating as it makes the price seem more reasonable. By stating the fact that 'trains get booked up early' this will also motivate people to book because this means it is popular so it must be good'

Q4(c)

The Chester Zoo and Longleat examples in the stem of the question were meant to steer the candidates into what was expected here. It seems, however, that 'products/services' was interpreted by many as 'special offers' 'reduced prices' and other promotional activities. Other candidates forgot that this was a visitor attraction, and used Alton Towers Hotel (accommodation sector) as their example. Stronger responses used events and themes such as Halloween, Bonfire night, Christmas and Easter and were able to describe these well. Thorpe Park's Fright Night was a particularly well described example.

Part of a better response:

'Alton Towers.

In off peak seasons, Alton Towers advertises events. On Halloween it has a scare event that takes place at night, featuring skeletons, ghosts and eerie lighting, which brings more people in October.'

Q5(a) and 5(b)

This question required a different type of calculation to the usual. Candidates' calculations were not always correct with responses to (a) usually better than to (b).

Q5(c) (i) and (c) (ii)

To achieve higher marks, candidates needed to relate their answers to the characteristics and needs of the customers in the question. In this case the business person who is only staying one night (so may not need hold baggage at all) and the family with baby who are staying two weeks in a villa (so will need lots of luggage, pram etc). Basic analysis such as 'it will cost them more/a lot' only scored one mark. Other candidates incorrectly analysed the effects on the airline, with incorrect responses such as 'less people will fly with them' or 'people will cancel their holidays'.

A stronger response for Q5(c)(i):

'The effects on the businessman would not be significant. He would only have an overnight bag, which he could take in the cabin, so he would be one of the 70% unaffected by the increase. If he did need a hold bag, his company would pay for it, and they would also have pre-booked it, so the charge would be minimal'

A weaker response for 5(c) (ii):

“They will have a lot of luggage so they would have to pay more, this would make their holiday more expensive.”

Q5(d)

Very few candidates’ responses went beyond ‘make money/profit/income’. To achieve higher marks they needed to explain why in more detail, eg ‘more weight in the hold means more fuel costs’ and ‘checking in at the airport means they have more staff to pay wages to’.

The response shown below is good, although in order to achieve higher marks, the candidate needed to consider the additional costs (for fuel, wages etc):

‘Some airlines charge additional fees for hold baggage as this means that the plane is heavier, and this is not covered in the ticket price. Pre-booked seats are charged to make them more money and a bigger profit. Food is also sold separately as they make money from it, as the tickets are cheap.’

Q5(e)

The visual stimulus certainly helped candidates to answer this question. Most were able to evaluate the design with reference to both the negative and the positive points. Positive evaluation was mainly limited to the airline saving money, whilst not appreciating the initial investment they would have to make. Negative evaluation concentrated on the customers being *‘shy and not liking to sit opposite a stranger’*, or the lack of food and drink trolleys.

Q6(a)

Candidates are certainly now able to identify a large number of positive and negative impacts of tourism. Where they may need further guidance, is applying these to the situation in the stem of the question. Those who listed impacts with no application would only achieve 2 of the possible 6 marks. For example *‘income for local shops’* would be better as *‘increased income for shops in the towns which will be able to sell souvenirs to the large numbers of cruise ship passengers’*. Similarly litter, erosion and pollution need to be applied to the scenario.

The response below identifies many impacts, although not all of these are specific to the cruise ship (only souvenirs and pollution are fully described):

‘Positive impacts are that local businesses may flourish under the high demand for souvenirs and local cuisine. Along with this more jobs would be created making the area economically better. However, large amounts of pollution caused by the ship will disturb fragile ecosystems such as coral reefs. Along with this, litter will make the place look unclean. The other impact is that the influx of other cultures may make people change their way of life, this losing their heritage.’

Q6(b)

The most common sectors considered by candidates were accommodation and airlines, which were seen as losing customers to the growth in cruises. Stronger candidates will have looked beyond this at positive effects, and considered fly-cruises, accommodation in/near ports before departure, cruise and stay options, increased custom for coaches, tour guides in ports, and attractions in destinations near to popular ports. In addition, the high cost of some cruises may be positive for the travel agents, and especially the tour operators who are vertically integrated and have their own cruise company e.g. Thomson.

The response below considers many different sectors:

'To get on to some cruises, passengers fly to a certain destination; this will improve the airline industry. Also so get to a cruise, some people may use public transport or a hire car or a taxi, which will also benefit the transport sector. Before, and sometimes after the cruise, passengers may stay overnight in hotels, B&B and guest houses, which will increase the hotel sector. However, airlines may lose out on profits if more people go on a cruise rather than fly. When on a cruise, day trips are sometimes organized, where passengers travel by coach, so this will also be a benefit to them.'

Recommendations

- Candidates need to read the question carefully (eg. Q1(d) 'tourist' destination; Q1(e) 'outbreak' Q4(c) 'visitor attraction')
- Candidates should be aware of, and understand the active verb in the question - do not **explain** when asked to **describe** (eg Q2(c))
- Candidates should look beyond the obvious - consider the customer in the stem, and their characteristics and needs (e.g. Q2(b) and Q5(c))
- Candidates should apply their answer to the case study (eg Q6(a))

Grade Boundaries

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