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TRAVEL AND TOURISM STANDARD LEVEL

Paper 5251

Travel and Tourism Core Module

General comments

The October examination produced yet another good entry and it was pleasing to see new Centres entering candidates for the Standard Level Core Module. There was a wide range in the overall level of performance but the vast majority of candidates were able to address all four questions within the time available. There is, however, still some evidence of Centres ignoring previous instructions about the use of supplementary sheets. Indeed, at one Centre, all candidates included lined paper rather than trying to use the allocated space within the question paper.

Most candidates were able to make good use of the stimulus material to help them answer particular questions and there was usually frequent reference to current travel industry procedures. However, very few candidates were able to provide details of particular case studies with which they were familiar. It is important that future candidates take every opportunity to illustrate and exemplify the topics that they write about.

There were some outstanding scripts and it was very pleasing to read such mature answers. Furthermore, even the weaker candidates were making positive attempts to answer the particular questions that were set and Centres are to be congratulated for this significant trend. It is very much hoped that such an approach will be in evidence over the course of future examinations.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was set in the context of the Gettysburg battlefield attraction in Pennsylvania, USA. Part **(a)** required candidates to interpret the stimulus material provided and it was surprising to see so few scripts correctly identifying telephone, facsimile and website as methods for obtaining visitor information. These were the methods that were itemised on Fig. 1. Many candidates made appropriate suggestions for part **(b)**'s "important facts and phone numbers". There was frequent reference to such matters as climate, consular details, emergency services, transportation and recreational facilities. However, it was only a minority of candidates that were able to offer four valid suggestions. There were many correct attempts at part **(c)(i)** and valid differences between a motel and a self-catering cottage were frequently identified. However, the ability to identify four valid differences tended to elude most candidates. There were far too many instances of features being listed rather than a conscious effort being made to stipulate precise differences between the two types of accommodation. It was a similar story with part **(c)(ii)** and many candidates correctly identified two business services but neglected to describe what exactly they involved. This resulted in limited credit being awarded. There were some very good attempts at reasons for the calendar of events in part **(d)** but there were also many very weak efforts. Far too few candidates considered anything much beyond the simple attracting of more visitors and it was very rare to read comments about extending the season and attracting visitors in off-peak times. However, major problems were evident in answers to part **(e)** and the vast majority of candidates tended to confuse the socio-cultural aspects with economic and environmental impacts. Such an approach severely limited the amount of credit that could be awarded. Those candidates that gave proper emphasis to social and cultural issues scored very well.

Question 2

This featured Limpopo Valley horse safaris and there were some very good answers. Many candidates interpreted Fig. 2 very well and there were many full mark answers to part **(a)**. It was also common to see a good response to part **(b)** and the advantages of using horses to cross the Botswana landscape were quite well understood. It was a shame that many candidates were unable to build on these ideas when answering part **(c)**. Reasons for limited environmental impacts were never developed in a convincing fashion and it was rare for candidates to offer any valid reasoning. There was some repetition of material included in part **(b)**'s answer and many candidates simply did not do themselves full justice in this section. Part **(d)(i)** was very poorly done. Only a small minority of candidates recognised the horse safari company as a tour operator. The question was asking how this organisation would actually handle customer enquiries and deal with making of reservations. It was very rare to see appropriate suggestions being made. Answers to **(d)(ii)** tended to be better and peak and off-peak seasons were at least mentioned, with many individuals offering valid reasoning and exemplification. Many promising answers to **Question 2** faded away in part **(e)** and many candidates were very unsure about what exactly ancillary services involve, particularly in the travel agency context. Clearly insurance, car hire and foreign exchange were valid and it was expected that these would have been commented on in some depth. A few also included health and visa details but no candidate thought of mentioning pre-flight transfers, airport hotels and car parking. This topic is not well known and Centres are strongly advised to familiarise their candidates with current types of provision.

Question 3

This was set in the context of an international airline and there were some very good, well argued answers. Many candidates scored full marks in part **(a)** but a surprisingly large minority of individuals could not correctly identify continents or destinations found near to the equator. The differences between business and economy class were generally well known and answers to **(b)(i)** were of a good standard. The concept of special needs in **(b)(ii)** was treated in a far less convincing manner and there were many vague inaccurate statements. There tended to be a description of what airlines provided rather than a simple explanation of why they provided what they did. Candidates writing about special meals, disabled pre-boarding and various child services usually scored well. Many candidates failed to obtain maximum credit in part **(c)** because they tended to write only one or two words. For example, baggage check was frequently quoted but credit was not awarded without an indication of how the bag was checked. Answers to part **(d)** were usually sound and most candidates were able to identify a range of services provided for inbound visitors at international points of entry. Most candidates made some attempt to provide comments about service availability and those that related provision to customer needs scored well. This topic is clearly well known.

Question 4

Set in the context of tourism development in Chile, was also done quite well. There were many full mark answers to both parts **(a)(i)** and **(a)(ii)** and the stimulus material was interpreted very well. Some candidates clearly did not follow the wording of part **(b)** and did not attempt to explain what might have been done to the mountain slopes to allow types of winter sport activity to take place. Some individuals, quite good geography candidates, even started to explain how the slopes had been formed – unfortunately this was not the question. Those candidates who itemised the laying out of ski runs, cable cars, viewpoints and even the clearing of obstacles were much better rewarded. It was a similar story with part **(c)** and many candidates did not recognise the resort as being a mountain settlement which provides a range of products and services aimed at winter sports enthusiasts. It was only a minority of candidates who included reference to ski schools, equipment hire, shops for self-catering visitors, night life/après-ski and types of accommodation. Answers to part **(d)** were of a very good standard and almost all candidates wrote about the features of the landscape and the variety of marine life. There were some very good attempts made at answering part **(e)** but far too many answers neglected to mention the role of national organisations. Far too many individuals wrote in generalised marketing terms and paid insufficient attention to the important part played by either government or national tourism organisation. There were, however, some excellent answers and many candidates were able to score well.

Paper 5252
Marketing and Promotion

General comments

There was an increased number of entries and a wide range of ability was demonstrated in the responses made by candidates. The majority of candidates had prepared adequately for the demands of the examination in this module, displaying some understanding of the principles of marketing within a Travel and Tourism context. There was still evidence of a small number of candidates who lacked the necessary knowledge with which to tackle this examination.

The majority of candidates appeared to be familiar with the assessment methods used within this examination, and responses were generally well-structured and well-paced. However, it would be beneficial in preparing candidates for future examinations to ensure that questions are read carefully and understood, as relevancy of responses was an issue on several occasions for this paper.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question used the case study scenario of Bicycle Tourism in Estonia as a basis to test candidates' understanding of the main marketing and promotional techniques used in the travel and tourism industry. Candidates were expected to be able to apply theoretical knowledge to the given case study information in order to be able to complete tasks associated with SWOT and PEST analyses and the Marketing Mix.

- (a)(i) This question adopted the commonly used format of completing a SWOT box by selecting relevant detail from the situation analysis provided. Most candidates were able to complete this task to a satisfactory standard, although there were many cases where candidates did not follow the instructions to place only one letter in each box.
- (ii) This question continued with the same format for candidates to complete the PEST analysis. Again, the level of performance in this task was generally sound, although many candidates used more than one letter in each box, despite the emboldened instructions not to do so.
- (b) This question asked candidates to use information from the previous situation analysis on tourism in Estonia, to identify the three most important priorities for the Tourist Board in improving tourism marketing. The majority of candidates scored highly in this section, choosing appropriate priorities and explaining the importance of each. There were some instances where candidates did not use the information given, and this affected the marks achieved for their responses.
- (c)(i) Many candidates seem confused by the reference to qualitative data, despite this being an important term within marketing research – approximately half of the responses suggested that this type of data is collected through secondary research, rather than using primary methods.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to identify correctly at least one disadvantage of using qualitative data in this question.
- (iii) Few candidates applied their knowledge to the case study scenario in this question and used either very generalised examples of secondary sources e.g. government statistics, or made vague reference to internal and external sources. Only the best performing candidates were able to make the connection specifically to appropriate sources for bicycle tourism.
- (d) This question was designed to test candidates' ability to apply their knowledge and understanding of the marketing mix to the case study scenario. Responses were very varied, but were generally disappointing. Most candidates were able to identify the 4 P's of the marketing mix – although few went beyond a generic description of each element. Answers were assessed according to the "level of response" criteria, with the vast majority of answers achieving only Level 1, as little or no attempt was made to apply each element to Estonia's bicycle tourism proposals.

Question 2

This question also used a case study approach, based on the Western Cape province in South Africa. The main focuses of the questions are market segmentation and promotional methodology. As a whole, this question produced the poorest responses from candidates, with few scoring half marks or above.

- (a)(i) Providing a definition of the term “market segment” caused no real problems for the vast majority of candidates.
 - (ii) This question used domestic and overseas visitors as a form of geographic segmentation. Quite a few candidates were not able to be precise enough with their definition, and used the generic term of demography in response to this question.
 - (iii) Only the better performing candidates correctly identified the lifestyle or psychographic segment for this question.
- (b)(i)(ii) This question asks candidates to select the most appropriate promotional methods for the Travel and Tourism providers in the Western Cape province to use with overseas visitors. Many candidates chose promotional methods beyond the limited budgets of independent Travel and Tourism providers. It was a little alarming to note that a significant number of candidates appeared to not understand the term “promotional method”.
- (c) This question caused considerable difficulty for a number of candidates, primarily due to mis-reading and misinterpretation of the question. Many candidates read “range of factors” and made the assumption that the question was about location, whereas in fact, it was about things to consider when producing promotional materials. Those candidates, who correctly understood the task, often provided a basic list of considerations rather than attempting an explanation of the factors involved.
- (d) This question clearly differentiated between highly performing and weaker candidates. A range of problems was encountered – several candidates attempted to cover each of the activity segments from the list rather than selecting just one, as instructed at the start of the question. Few candidates recognised the term “power breaks”, and several confused “special interest groups” with “special needs travellers”. More than one candidate misinterpreted the use of the word “cater” within the question and focused their attention on hospitality and catering options for their selected activity segment. Candidates from one Centre provided extremely detailed definitions of different market segments but did not actually answer the question. There were, however, several excellent responses about how the needs of tourists on beach holidays could be met.

Question 3

This question investigates the Product element of the 4 P’s, including the Product Life Cycle, and Place.

- (a)(i) It was very surprising to note how few candidates seemed to be familiar with the work of a bureau de change. A significant number of responses suggested that the main product of a bureau de change was accommodation, information or a seat.
 - (ii) Responses to the question differentiating travel and tourism products and services were interesting. Many found it difficult to explain the inter-relationship between the two and focused on the specific characteristics of either a product or a service. Few took advantage of the example of the product of the bureau de change to assist in their explanation.
- (b)(i) Most candidates displayed good understanding of the product life cycle, although many seemed to omit the research/development stage, instead suggesting that the cycle begins with the introduction phase.
- (ii) Better prepared candidates were able to provide a clear description of the specific market characteristics of the two phases, whilst less able candidates merely repeated information from the phase title, rather than linking their description to number of sales etc.
- (c)(i)(ii) Placing travellers cheques on the life cycle model caused candidates no difficulty. Almost all were able to give satisfactory reasons for choosing a particular stage.
- (iii) This question looked at the benefits of using alternative methods of payment over using travellers cheques. The majority of candidates recognised that credit and debit cards offered customers more security, greater flexibility, were less time consuming and more widely accepted.

- (d) Many candidates found responding to the higher order learning skills demanded by this question difficult. Only the better performing candidates were able to convey their understanding of the types of financial product that Travel and Tourism providers offer as well as the reasons for their involvement. Weaker candidates misinterpreted the question and gave reasons for the tourist industry offering a wider range of holiday packages in general terms or the social benefits to nations as a whole for engaging in tourist activity.
- (e) This level of response question should have allowed candidates easy access to higher grading as it is a frequently used question within examinations for this module. However, given the fact that so few candidates were familiar with the term bureau de change, only a small proportion of candidates actually achieved marks above Level 1, as responses were basic and not applied. For example, many candidates made reference to the need for the site to be near mountains or water – but few picked up on the need for the site to be near entry and exit points for major groups of tourists.

Question 4

This question tested candidates' understanding of price as an essential element of the marketing mix. There were many differentiated opportunities through the range of questions for candidates to demonstrate how well they understand the role of price in the Travel and Tourism industry.

- (a)(i) Most candidates seemed familiar with the term price taking.
- (ii) Few candidates read this question properly. Many descriptions of price discrimination were attempted, but only a small number provided appropriate examples from the Travel and Tourism industry as requested.
- (b) This higher order task was well received by the majority of candidates. Most were able to give an accurate explanation of market skimming as a pricing policy and were also able to correctly position products adopting this policy on the life cycle model. Many candidates scored Level 2 for their responses, and several scored maximum marks for this task.
- (c)(i) Responses to this question were very mixed. Weaker candidates did not recognise the requirement to focus on internal influences on price and suggested competition, demand, government taxes etc. in this section, which could not be accredited.
- (ii) Better performing candidates gave excellent responses to this question, identifying and explaining the impact of a wide range of external influences. A number of weaker candidates used this question to demonstrate their understanding of different pricing strategies, which did not answer the question and thus could not gain marks.
- (d) The majority of candidates gave clear definitions of branding and of price in response to this question and were thus awarded Level 1 scores. Only the better performing candidates made an attempt to describe the relationship between the two concepts and to cite Travel and Tourism examples as requested by the question.

Paper 5253

Travel Organisation

General comments

The number of entries for this series was similar to that in May 2004 but the standard of performance was much improved. The quality of explanations for extended answers was generally improved, though some candidates failed to achieve good marks on these levels of response-type questions due to writing items in list form rather than extended prose. This should be noted by Centres and when a question asks for 'Explain' in the answer then there should be a reasoned response in sentence format. On the other hand, when a question just asks candidates to 'Identify' this only requires a short one/two word answer.

Levels of understanding of the syllabus generally were good and Centres should be congratulated on the appropriate preparation candidates have received. It was apparent that past papers and marks schemes have been used well to inform and develop the expertise of candidates so that more detailed responses were made. However, there were examples of poor use of stimulus material and candidates failing to include all relevant information to inform their responses.

The time allocation of candidates was greatly improved, with little evidence of responses to latter questions being rushed. Handwriting was much clearer, which meant that papers were much easier to read. More detailed comments on the various questions are given below.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was generally very well addressed by candidates with many achieving high marks, though Centres need to develop expertise in calculating costs for a journey and improving responses to the extended question in **(d)**, which has been used in previous papers.

- (a)** A specific named accommodation was required for **(i)** which was given within the scenario. **(ii)** and **(iii)** tended to be accurately identified.
- (b)** The majority of candidates identified the individual cost of the holiday, and included insurance and the supplement for first class hotels, but failed to double the amount (as there were two passengers on the booking). Some candidates failed to interpret the cost details correctly, or did not identify the relevant costs for the date chosen and thought the costs given were per night. More practice is needed on this type of question for candidates to achieve full marks.
- (c)** The booking form is similar to those used in previous examination sessions and some candidates had benefited from practice. However, there were examples of candidates including the names of both passengers (when only Mrs J Jones should have been given), insurance details not being requested, incorrect details as to the name of the tour, date of departure and duration, as well as no identification of room type. Details regarding deposit and insurance did depend to some extent on correct responses in **(b)** but only deposit and insurance should have been included in the total figure. The form should have been signed with the date of the examination and the details for the payment transposed clearly from the details in the stem of the question. Many candidates achieved full or almost full marks for this, so there has been some improvement in performance.
- (d)** There were some good responses to this question showing that candidates did understand how accommodation providers benefited from contributing to a package holiday such as this, with many achieving Level 2 or 3 marks, but there are still some candidates who fail to read the question carefully and direct their response accordingly.

Question 2

This question identified lack of knowledge by the candidates of ferry services and the use of the stimulus to guide responses appropriately, with **(a)** to **(d)** particularly showing lack of understanding and knowledge of the syllabus. Few candidates achieved full marks in **(e)** as they identified sources which were not 'printed' as stated in the stem of the question. The last part of the question was also not well answered, identifying lack of knowledge of how facilities cater for tourists with special requirements (again an important part of the syllabus). Knowledge of ferry services, legal requirements for vehicles and facilities for disabled customers must be developed further for higher marks to be achieved on questions of this type.

- (a)** Most candidates realised that the journey time would be faster but few understood the need for assistance at airports for customers in wheelchairs, so very few candidates achieved full marks for this question.
- (b)** Candidates did not relate the convenience factor of using own vehicles in circumstances such as this so failed to respond appropriately to the question. Again, very few candidates achieved full marks for this.
- (c)** Features of ferries were poorly understood and Centres need to ensure that candidates can respond adequately to questions which require features of various forms of transport to be identified.
- (d)** Many candidates responded with 'driving licence' which is insufficient, as an 'International driving licence' is the required response, few identified that insurance would be necessary, and very few that warning triangles would be required. This is an area which is clearly stated in the syllabus and Centres should ensure they cover this adequately.

- (e) As mentioned earlier, 'printed resources' with reasons were expected, so answers which included travel agents or tour operators, or information which did not relate to other countries was inappropriate. Sources of information is a large section of the syllabus and Centres must ensure that candidates understand what these are and how they assist travel organisation and the users of the resources.
- (f) Lack of knowledge of facilities required by passengers with special needs was very evident here and many candidates used the same example (ramps) for all providers. Each tourism principal would have to consider different types of provision for wheelchair bound customers and this is an area which Centres must develop in future.

Question 3

The responses to this question were generally satisfactory, with candidates demonstrating understanding of terminology and currency, though the skills/qualifications required for local guides was weak. Ability to complete a Customer Enquiry Form was satisfactory, with some showing distinct ability to extract correct information from the stimulus to complete the document.

- (a) Generally the term 'transfers' was understood, if poorly explained by candidates, though there were examples of money transfers which demonstrated candidates had not read the question correctly as this was not mentioned in Fig. 3. The fact that transfers are provided by the tour operator was not identified by many, so few achieved full marks for this question.
- (b) 'Optional excursion' was not clearly explained, though most candidates achieved one mark – few mentioned that this would have to be paid for separately by the customer.
- (c) This form was generally suitably completed, though the main errors were failure to insert the correct date or name of the candidate as consultant, identify the first choice of departure (March 22) and the alternative choice (April 12), include the departure point, party size and number of adults. Single room was accepted under room type, but should ideally have been included along with Moscow extension under special requests. Few candidates completed the bottom section of the form correctly – this was an enquiry not a confirmed booking. More practice is needed in completing documentation used within the industry, such as this.
- (d) The majority of candidates achieved up to 3 marks for this question, but none identified that local guides should be qualified so no candidate achieved full marks for this. It would be beneficial for Centres to consider various jobs within the industry and the qualifications required to improve candidate performance.
- (e) Understanding of the types of currency required by travellers is still problematic, and a wide range of forms of payment were given which were not appropriate to the question. The main types used by tourists would be travellers' cheques, credit/debit cards with some local currency available for emergency or minor expenses. Some candidates did realise the security issues with the various forms of payment, but this type of question needs more practice within Centres.

Question 4

This question highlighted lack of knowledge of features of scheduled airlines, difficulties with preparation of itineraries and lack of knowledge of facilities required by different types of travellers (in this case accommodation needs for a businessman). Most candidates achieved half marks for this question, with a few showing good understanding and ability to explain in more detail (particularly for (e) where an extended response was required as opposed to a list).

- (a) Features of scheduled airlines were not well identified, even though this is a fairly straightforward question where candidates demonstrate understanding of the syllabus. No candidate achieved full marks for this question.
- (b) Most candidates explained the principles of international flights and domestic flights, but hardly any identified the types of airlines which would fly on these routes, so no candidate achieved full marks for this question.

- (c) It had been decided to assist candidates producing itineraries by giving a table format for their completion, and this proved beneficial for the majority of candidates. Most were able to calculate the correct dates for the journeys, and extract data from the stem regarding Airlines and Flight Numbers. The majority were also able to calculate the correct arrival and departure times for the four flights, but very few candidates included times for check in for each of the flights. Some also included details of how the customer was to spend the time between flights, but this would not be included in a travel itinerary of this nature. More practice is needed with this type of question, but the majority of candidates scored much higher marks than on previous itineraries.
- (d) The majority of candidates achieved full marks for this question as they understood some form of land transportation was required and were able to give appropriate examples.
- (e) Candidates were expected to demonstrate knowledge of facilities a business person would require at any type of accommodation, rather than brief information about different types of accommodation. An extended, reasoned response was required here as the question asked candidates to 'explain', and some candidates failed to achieve Level 2/3 marks because they listed features only. This means that Centres need to ensure candidates understand the key words in questions, so that they do not lose valuable marks. Many of the features given were good but were poorly explained or justified as to why this type of customer would require certain facilities.

Paper 5254

Visitor Services

No entries received this session.