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TRAVEL AND TOURISM STANDARD LEVEL

Paper 5251

Travel and Tourism Core Module

General comments

For the October 2005 examination it was pleasing to see that the majority of candidates were able to attempt all four questions within the time available. Most scripts contained four balanced answers and frequent reference was made to appropriate industry examples. However, a minority of candidates did not appreciate the wording of particular question sub-sections and thus did not fully address the issue that was being asked. On the whole, the stimulus material supplied with each of the four questions was very well interpreted and most candidates were able to write with a degree of authority. It was only a small minority of individuals that resorted to copying sections of supplied text without due reference to the demands of the particular question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was set in the context of Tunisia as a holiday destination and there were several outstanding answers. Almost all candidates were able to identify the number of UK visitors asked for in part **(a)(i)** and the appeal of Tunisia was equally well identified in part **(a)(ii)**. The question asked for an explanation of each type of appeal and it was expected that answers would be based on the stimulus material for three appropriate identifications and that some appropriate reasoning would accompany each statement. Not all candidates were able to supply this e.g. "sapphire seas" being very good for watersports such as jet skiing. The vast majority of candidates were able to identify three components of a package holiday for **(b)(i)** but there were major problems with **(b)(ii)**'s ancillary services. Very few candidates were familiar with the term 'ancillary service' and answers tended to be very poor. This was surprising because if the same question had been asked within a travel agency context then many individuals might well have suggested car hire, airport transfers, foreign exchange, excursions and theme park tickets. These are exactly the types of services that major resort hotels will arrange for their guests. Answers to part **(c)** tended to be vague and, passports/visa apart, few candidates could offer much in the way of difficulty. The news is frequently full of stories about travellers caught up in natural disasters (tsunamis, earthquakes and hurricanes) as well as terrorist explosions. The role of the embassy/consulate in such circumstances is thus of major significance. However, answers to part **(d)** tended to be much better and most candidates were well aware about the positive and negative socio-cultural impacts that tourism can cause. There were some excellent answers to this particular question and the topic is clearly well known.

Question 2

The majority of candidates had very little difficulty in correctly identifying part **(a)**'s four adventure tourism activities. However, very few individuals were able to correctly state part **(b)**'s five characteristics of a scheduled flight. Timetable, load factor and class of travel were common but very few individuals provided details of in-flight services, ground arrangements (check-in, lounges, baggage allowances etc.) or ticketing flexibility. Answers to part **(c)** were often characterised by the same mistake that was made with **Question 1 (a)(ii)**. The question asked for an explanation of each type of conference organiser advantage; it was expected that answers would be based on the stimulus material for three appropriate identifications and that some appropriate reasoning would accompany each statement. Not all candidates were able to supply this, e.g. the range of 5* hotels would have rooms/facilities that would be appropriate for the needs conference organisers/delegates. Answers to part **(d)** tended to be vague and many candidates were unable to describe how a particular strategy would work to effectively reduce particular environmental threats. The majority of candidates were unable to appreciate the significance of the "short break" mentioned in part **(e)**. Most did not mention that this term applies to stays of less than seven nights and the fact that many international leisure travellers are cash rich but time poor. The key points were that destinations like Oman are readily accessible and that they contain more than enough attractions to occupy visitors for a short period of time.

Question 3

Part (a) tended to be well done by the majority of candidates and the stimulus material was particularly well interpreted. There were many full mark answers to parts (i), (ii) and (iii). Part (b) was a little more demanding and the degree of explanation offered was not always convincing. Candidates were expected to say why a particular approach was undertaken by the guide and it was surprising to see only a few answers making reference to customer service and health and safety issues. There were some very good answers to part (c)(i) and some candidates clearly appreciated the need for hotels to fill their rooms and to generate a constant revenue stream. Similarly, the majority of candidates were well aware of how complaints should be dealt with and there were many full mark answers to part (c)(ii). There were two key issues with answers to part (d) – a known visitor attraction and its appeal to different types of visitor. Candidates were given the opportunity to show off their knowledge about a local attraction and illustrate the ways in which it appeals to different visitor types but this was rarely done effectively. There were some very good answers but they tended to be in the minority. It was expected that details would be provided about:

- leisure versus business visitors
- singles/couples/families/groups
- children/adults/OAPs
- special interest groups.

Each identified category of visitor would then be matched with a particular aspect of the chosen attraction's operation. However, many answers were vague and a large minority of candidates did not clearly identify the attraction about which they were writing. It was thus inevitable that the amount of credit awarded was going to be limited.

Question 4

This was set in the context of an adventure tourism cruise. Part (a) tested aspects of worldwide destinations and many candidates were unsure about key terms. Most were able to identify (a)(i)'s ocean but the appropriate climatic term for (a)(ii) was rarely known. The correct answer was cold temperate or arctic. Candidates are expected to know the main climatic types. Similarly, a large minority thought Chile's time zone was in advance of GMT but the majority could identify icebergs as a hazard and thermal baths as the attraction. Part (b) saw similar confusion and many candidates thought southern hemisphere winter was in fact the summer, something that made nonsense of the reasoning that often followed. However, there were several good answers to this sub-section where candidates pointed out that severe winter conditions would make the cruise dangerous. Part (c) was attempted better and most answers correctly commented on improved customer service and the ease of movement/use of facilities with only 74 passengers on board. The failings associated with answers to Question 1 (a)(ii) and Question 2 (c) were also evident with responses to part (d). Many candidates were able to identify three types of training but only the minority of answers provided any justification for their choices. Candidates must offer appropriate reasoning when the question invites such a response. Answers to part (e) tended to lack depth but there were some very impressive accounts. This is very clear evidence that time management is not an issue for this particular examination. Better answers always kept in mind the 'overseas' focus of the question and it was pleasing to read many valid comments about Internet bookings, attending trade fairs and working with outbound tour operators.

Paper 5252
Marketing and Promotion

General comments

The cohort sitting this examination was similar in size to previous examination sessions within this qualification, although several new Centres entered candidates for the first time. Many candidates had made adequate preparations for this examination and some demonstrated a good level of understanding of the principles of marketing and promotion. Candidate performance was spread across the range of marks and better performing candidates applied their knowledge of the syllabus through contextualised responses to the questions, whilst weaker candidates relied heavily on citing certain aspects of the syllabus without demonstrating their full understanding of the concepts covered by the questions. Whilst the syllabus clearly provides the learning framework for this module, teachers are advised to ensure that full coverage of the required topics is provided, in order for candidates to be able to engage successfully with the examination questions. For example, the majority of candidates struggled to answer a question on sampling in market research, which should be covered within the teaching of primary research techniques.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Questions within this subset focused on the market research carried out by the Australian Tourist Commission (ATC). These questions required candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding of the market research process and the reasons why travel and tourism organisations such as the ATC conduct market research.

- (a) Most candidates were able to correctly identify the research technique as a primary technique, although some tried to guess at how exactly the research was carried out, giving questionnaire as their response.
- (b)(i) As mentioned within the general comments for this paper, this question was clearly not understood by the majority of candidates. Whilst the syllabus does not make specific reference to “sampling methods”, it is anticipated that teaching of primary research techniques includes an identification of how respondents to a questionnaire or in a telephone survey are selected. Candidates need to understand that primary research cannot be carried out with every member of the target market for a travel and tourism organisation for reasons of practicality. It was disappointing to note the small percentage of candidates who had gleaned this understanding from their coverage of the syllabus.
- (ii) As with the above question, very few candidates were able to identify characteristics of specific sampling methods.
- (c)(i) Most candidates were able to achieve maximum marks for this question, which required a simple identification of the four sections of a SWOT analysis.
- (ii) Responses to this question varied with the ability level of candidates. The weakest candidates reiterated the four aspects of SWOT, making vague reference to the need to strengthen strengths, lessen weaknesses, make the most of opportunities and avoid the threats, which did not answer the question. Mid-range responses then exemplified these, drawing upon the ATC scenario to give emphasis to their responses. However, there were some better candidates who were able to clearly identify the marketing objectives of an organisation such as the ATC and apply their understanding of the SWOT analysis process to these objectives.
- (d) Candidates were required to categorise the PEST analysis results as positive or negative. This format has been used on regular occasions within the examinations for this module. However, several candidates did not identify the statements in anyway, instead inserted only ticks in the table. These responses cannot be accredited.
- (e) Most candidates were able to explain the importance of marketing and promotion in general terms. Better performing candidates were able to apply this specifically to Australia as a tourist destination. Weaker candidates referred to the organisation rather than the country.

Question 2

Questions within this subset were based around the Sandals and Beaches resorts in the Caribbean.

- (a)(i) Many candidates confused market skimming with prestige pricing in this question.
- (ii) There was a great deal of variation in candidates' understanding of the concept of supply, demand and pricing strategies. Few were able to bring the supply side into their answer, although many implied this. A large number of candidates saw this question as an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of different pricing policies, but did not make specific reference to demand.
- (b) Responses to this question were either very good or missed the point completely. The syllabus requires candidates to understand the range of external factors that affect price determination. A large number of candidates referred only to specifics of the holiday booking that affect price, e.g. number in party, star rating of accommodation, meal type, etc. thus answering this question on a completely different level to the expected response.
- (c)(i) Most candidates picked up on family or couples as the segment, rather than the all-inclusive luxury element of the resorts. The correct answer here was life style and not demographics.
- (ii) There were many appropriate responses to this question. Most recognised that resorts for couples are romantic or linked to the honeymoon market.
- (d) This question was intended as an easy way for candidates to demonstrate their understanding of how tourism providers differentiate their products to meet the needs of different target markets. However, the response to this question was almost unanimously disappointing. Weaker candidates saw products and services in the stem to the question and wrote everything they knew about the generic differences in terms of tangibility, etc. This did not answer the question and scored no marks. Other misinterpreted Beaches as any beach holiday rather than a named resort. Only a relatively small number of candidates actually provided a detailed account of how the product/service mix for these two different resorts differed.

Question 3

Questions in this subset were based around the South African Eco-tourism brand.

- (a) Brand logo as a concept was broadly understood but many candidates used both *brand* and *logo* in their definitions, thus rendering them unacceptable as a definition.
- (b) The product life cycle model was applied appropriately by the majority of candidates.
- (c) Many candidates made a valiant attempt to explain how brand images are used to attract more custom. Many responses looked at a range of ways in which brand images could be used. Weaker candidates discussed any marketing strategies that are used to attract more custom, thus scoring poorly on this question.
- (d) It was disappointing to note the number of incorrect responses to this basic question which required candidates to correctly identify the acronym AIDA.
- (e) Few candidates were able to cite specific direct response methods used in marketing, e.g. website visit counts, coupons, coded telephone reservations, etc. Most responses were generalised – looking at increases in sales, which was accepted.
- (f) Most candidates correctly identified the range of promotion that SATO could use, however, only the better candidates made an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of different methods, e.g. mass media reaches a bigger audience but is too expensive for non-profit making organisations to use extensively.

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates approached this question about the advantages and disadvantages of different distribution channels from the perspective of the customer, rather than from the perspective of the provider. Most scored reasonably well on this question.
- (b)(i) CRS was often defined as Central Reservation System. Whilst this is sometimes used, the correct original industry definition was Computerised Reservation System, which is the answer accredited for this paper.
- (ii) Few candidates were able to actually name specific examples of CRS.
- (iii) Responses to this question were varied. Weaker candidates thought that CRS were used to contact the pilot with weather reports, etc. However, better responses correctly described the function of a CRS in making airline reservations.
- (c) There have been several instances where a similar question to this one has been used in previous examinations. However, despite this fact, the majority of responses to this question were lifted almost directly from the syllabus and were not applied to the context of the question in any way. Better candidates recognised the need for a ski resort to be located in snowy and mountainous regions, but few were then able to connect this with other relevant locational factors. Many responses listed low crime rates as a major factor – this would be true of any tourism destination.
- (d) This final question required candidates to contextualise the marketing mix for a ski resort. Responses tended to be split two ways. They either identified the 4 P's on a basic, generic level, or covered one of the 4 P's in detail but overlooked the others. There were some extremely good ideas relating to how the product/service mix could be enhanced, but candidates needed to respond across all elements to achieve the higher levels for this question.

Paper 5253

Travel Organisation

General comments

It was encouraging to see that the majority of candidates appeared to have prepared well for this examination and, as a result, demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding of the principles of travel organisation. All four questions were attempted by the vast majority of candidates and were answered within the time allocated. The examination provided sufficient opportunities for differentiation as it was evident that better candidates applied their knowledge of the syllabus to the scenario-based questions, whilst weaker candidates made limited contextualised responses to higher mark questions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was set in the context of an advertisement for a holiday to Mauritius.

- (a) Most candidates demonstrated good understanding of the term 'transfers' as used by the travel industry and responded appropriately. However, a number of candidates did not score full marks as they were not specific or simply stated 'transport organised from the airport to the hotel'. The response required candidates to state that transfers were included in the holiday price: these included transport from the hotel to the accommodation and back to the airport at the end of the holiday.
- (b) The vast majority of candidates were able to identify the correct tour operator.
- (c) Most candidates were able to carry out the simple identification successfully.
- (d) Limited numbers of candidates scored full marks for this question due to miscalculations. Candidates often left out the supplementary costs of insurance or selected the wrong dates and times of departure which resulted in the incorrect fare being selected.

- (e)(i) This question caused many candidates to lose a mark. The majority scored one mark as they were able to identify one legal requirement from the resource material. However, the second mark was awarded for the simple statement that every member of the group would need their own passport. Very few candidates identified this and instead responded with reference to visa requirements.
- (ii) This question required candidates to suggest two advantages of single travel insurance policy for the whole family. The expected response was one that made reference to cost and convenience. Better candidates identified this while weaker candidates simply stated what the policy might cover.
- (f) Candidates were credited for responses relating to card details or bank details, most candidates coped well with this simple style question.
- (g) Most candidates scored full marks for this part of the question.
- (h) This caused some candidates problems as they did not refer closely to the stem and Fig. 1 of the question before providing the itinerary. The stem stated that the family requested a daytime flight. Too many candidates suggested a late evening flight. This changed the times of the flights and arrivals and, consequently, marks were lost. The question required candidates to provide an itinerary of check-in, flight and transfer arrangements; a number of candidates misinterpreted the question and tried to provide a ten-day itinerary for the group.

Question 2

This question provided candidates with the opportunity to display their understanding of cruise holidays. Most candidates readily understood the stimulus material.

- (a)(b) There were a significant number of full marks for both parts.
- (c) The majority of candidates were unable to give specific features of travel insurance relating to cruise holidays; generic insurance responses were given.
- (d) Better candidates scored full marks on this section, as they were able to explain rather than list the differences between a ferry and a cruise ship. Weaker candidates simply listed or drew up a table but made no real points of comparison.
- (e)(i) A number of candidates struggled to explain the term 'optional excursion'. Few candidates referred to the fact that extra cost would be incurred.
- (ii) The majority of candidates were able to suggest one benefit of participating in an optional excursion.
- (f) It was encouraging to see a significant number of candidates attaining Level 2 for this section. Those who did so were able to describe a variety of suggestions a travel agent could make to help the family prepare for their holiday. Better candidates (Level 3) did this in more depth and detail, making reasoned judgements on the full range of ways the travel agent could help prepare the couple. Weaker candidates simply made one or two points with very limited discussion evident of what the travel agent could, or should actually do, to help prepare the couple; often they produced a list rather than a discussion.

Question 3

This question examined candidates understanding of the relative merits of different forms of transport available to business men and women. It also examined candidates' knowledge of different types of accommodation available.

- (a)(i) Most candidates were familiar with the term 'hub airport' and provided a satisfactory definition.
- (ii) The majority of candidates were able to identify a suitable method of transport and supported their answers with reasons. Most candidates scored well.
- (b)(i)(ii) Candidates demonstrated good understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the listed methods of transport. The majority of candidates gave two examples for each advantage and each disadvantage.
- (c)(i) This question was generally answered quite poorly, despite it being relatively straightforward. It would appear that few candidates understood the term 'half-board'. Too many candidates defined it as being bed with one meal available.
- (ii) Marks were affected for this part because of the lack of understanding for part (i).
- (d)(i) This question was generally answered correctly.
- (ii) The majority of candidates scored full marks in this section demonstrating sound knowledge and understanding.
- (e)(i) A significant number of candidates were unsure as to the definition of a touch screen facility. It was insufficient to simply state 'something like a computer'. Better candidates were able to identify it as a screen when touched gave information. Few candidates mentioned the fact that the facility could be accessed in a wide range of languages.
- (ii) It was encouraging to see a good number of candidates being able to decide upon a suitable method of transport and then go on to explain their choice.

Question 4

Generally candidates coped well with the early sections of this question. (a)(i) however, proved a problem to a number of candidates, as they were unable to explain the term *fly drive* sufficiently to score two marks. Part (d) was quite demanding and clearly differentiated between candidates.

- (a)(i) This required candidates to define the term *fly drive*. Better candidates gave a full explanation with some giving an example.
- (ii) A number of candidates scored three out of four for this question. This was encouraging, as in previous papers this question has not been answered appropriately.
- (iii) Again a significant number of candidates attained two out of three. Some candidates failed to grasp the part of the question that stated 'this particular family' and simply gave generic responses.
- (b) This section was well understood by candidates. Consequently, full and detailed answers were produced with the majority of candidates scoring full marks. Candidates applied their knowledge of the needs of this 'particular family' and were able to suggest appropriate special arrangements needed to be made by the travel agent.
- (c)(i) Good knowledge was demonstrated by the majority of candidates in response to this question.
- (ii) Generally, this question was answered well with issues of convenience explored.
- (d) An improved set of responses witnessed. Better candidates were able to discuss at length together with reasoned judgements, the benefits to the customer and the organisation of offering an integrated range of travel services. Better candidates were able to clearly explain what such services were, then discuss at length the benefits to both customer *and* organisation. Weaker candidates dealt with either the customer or the organisation, not both.

Paper 5254
Visitor Services

General comments

On the whole, candidates have been able to demonstrate a reasonable level of understanding of the subject content – i.e. the provision of Visitor Services in a chosen destination. Assignments have generally been well researched, professionally presented and enabled candidates to explore the range of issues facing visitor service providers.

Candidates who have had a specific assignment brief to follow, which closely reflects the knowledge and skill criteria set out within the syllabus, usually produced assignments which meet the assessment criteria sufficiently to achieve at least a pass grade. However, where Centres did not appear to provide an assignment brief that required candidates to apply their theoretical knowledge within a practical context, the pass rate was often significantly lower.

There has been excellent evidence of candidates clearly explaining how Visitor Services operate within a selected destination. Many candidates provided organisational charts to detail the structure and key players in Visitor Service provision to meet the Assessment Objective (AO) 1.1. Evidence of 1.2.1 has been less well developed, with only a handful of candidates identifying the specific role of Visitor Services in terms of marketing and promotion, research, quality standards, etc.

It is important to emphasise that candidates should provide a list of the range of products and services offered by Visitor Service providers to meet AO2. Where candidates have chosen one provider as a focus for this assignment, this aspect was sometimes poorly evidenced. A hotel, for example, may contribute to the Visitor Services for a particular destination, but not all of its products and services that relate to this aspect of its function are obvious.

AO3 requires candidates to examine marketing and promotion specifically. This element was usually either really well evidenced through website screen shots, and the inclusion of a broad range of printed marketing materials, or omitted completely. A useful approach would be to ensure that one of the primary research tasks that candidates must include as evidence for the assignment targets publicity materials and other promotional techniques commonly used by Visitor Service providers.

Most assignments included a section on accommodation classification schemes operating within the chosen destination. There has been little evidence in assignments this year of the concept of destination benchmarking and only a brief mention of training schemes used by employees involved in the provision of Visitor Services.

The majority of assignments assessed this year have featured sections on the business and the leisure travel markets, although there have been several occasions where one market segment has been omitted. Full coverage of all of the assessment objectives is required within an individual piece of work for each candidate.

It has been pleasing to note that all Centres have been following the assessment guidelines for this module, which means in turn that most assignments have been presented in a logical format and included all of the references identified in the syllabus for this qualification.

The assignments have been, on the whole, well written and have been enjoyable to read. It is worth taking this opportunity to remind Centres and staff involved in delivering this module, that candidates' work should be 1800 to 2500 words long. It is helpful to identify page references on the SAR or cover sheet to show where the corresponding evidence can be found within the assignment. Please ensure that candidates only tick off sections for which they have evidence.

