



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
January 2012**

Leisure and Tourism

48403

(Specification 4840)

Unit 3: The business of leisure and tourism

Report on the Examination

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General

What was done well:

- Most candidates had clearly studied a range of leisure and tourism organisations and were able to recall precise information about them (1c, 2c, 4, 5b)
- Most candidates paid close attention to the command terms, especially ‘compare’ (4, 5b), which is a marked improvement on previous series when candidates often wrote separately about one aspect, and then the other
- Many candidates were able to apply their knowledge to a new leisure and tourism business situation: the fictional Hotel Mons (2a, 5a, 5c and to a lesser extent 3a, 3b). This corresponds to *Assessment Objective 2* of the *Specification*: ‘Apply skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts’
- The great majority of candidates attempted to answer all questions, unlike previous series, and very few questions were left unanswered.

What could be improved:

- Some candidates did not understand the difference between ‘customer-fronting’ and ‘operational’ (2b), or between ‘skill’ and ‘personal quality’ (1b)
- Many candidates wrote about advertising when they were asked about sales (4); the two are linked, but they are different
- Many candidates still struggled with the notions of marketing and target markets (3a), as noted in previous reports on the examination for this unit
- On the topic of health and safety, a small number of candidates kept repeating the same points about not being sued and litigation/compensation, irrespective of the question. Whilst it is good to see candidates’ awareness of the legal aspects of health and safety, it would be better to see them appreciate other benefits of health and safety measures.

Question 1

Question 1 and Figure 1 were about two receptionists working in a fictional hotel located in the business district of Brussels in Belgium.

Candidates were asked to define ‘customer-fronting’. Most answered well; many also mentioned other examples (e.g. waitress) and made valid points beyond a merely tautological statement about ‘working with customers’.

Still on the topic of customer-fronting jobs, candidates were asked to explain two personal qualities that may be necessary for any staff to do a customer-fronting job well. Many candidates answered correctly, with a range of comments about being polite, approachable and well-mannered. However, a number of candidates incorrectly wrote about ICT skills and maths skills, hence **recommendation 1**.

Candidates were asked to focus on one leisure and tourism organisation they had studied and to examine if there is a range of customer-fronting jobs in that organisation. On the one hand, most candidates duly identified the customer-fronting jobs present in their chosen organisation, but on the other hand, few candidates really answered the question as worded (‘is there a range of..?’). In some cases, candidates wrote ‘Yes there is a range...’ but then only listed one or two types of jobs (such as crew members at a fast-food restaurant), thereby showing that in fact there is *not* a range of customer-fronting jobs (which indeed is the case in many organisations, especially smaller ones with staff who multi-task).

Question 2

Question 2 and Figure 2 were about different levels of seniority at Hotel Mons.

Candidates had no difficulty in understanding the hotel's organisational chart (in the figure) and used it to answer the question about the relationship between Andrea's job and Jenny's job.

The notion of 'operational level', however, proved difficult for many candidates who did not remember its meaning and sometimes answered with creative but incorrect answers (for example about working on the ground floor or in the central part of the building), hence **recommendation 2**.

Candidates were also asked to describe two jobs at the operational level in two organisations they had studied. Most answers were satisfactory, though some candidates also started writing about the skills, qualities and even qualifications necessary for those jobs. Whilst it was good to see they had studied so much, they could not score extra marks, as they were not answering the question asked, hence **recommendation 3**.

Question 3

Question 3 and Figure 3 were about marketing and sales.

Candidates were asked to explain why it is important for Hotel Mons to identify its target market clearly. Some candidates made very good points (about advertising and targetting business tourists, and about providing them with the facilities they may need, such as meeting rooms and internet access for laptops in bedrooms); many candidates, however, wrote basic answers about child-friendly attractions and criteria used for market segmentation in general. Although some points were tangentially relevant, such answers often remained theoretical. Many candidates could see what part of the *Specification* they were being examined about, but they struggled to focus on the question asked (see **recommendation 3** again).

Candidates were also asked to explain how the promotional techniques used by Hotel Mons could be effective. Again, some candidates wrote precise, pertinent answers (for example about the benefits of advertising in business publications read by the hotel's intended clientele), but others answered in a generic way (about customers seeking promotions, 'as everybody likes a good deal').

Candidates were also asked to suggest other promotional techniques and types of promotional material that Hotel Mons could use. Most candidates came up with at least one good suggestion, typically sales pitching and hotel brochures, however it is worth noting that some answers about professional networking sites and social networking sites showed candidates' knowledge of the increasing use of Web 2.0 tools for marketing purposes in the leisure and tourism industry. Although these concepts are not mentioned in the *Specification*, candidates were duly credited for such original and pertinent suggestions, showing a good knowledge of contemporary changes in the sector.

Question 4

Question 4 was about sales activities.

Candidates were asked to compare the sales activities of two leisure and tourism organisations they had studied. A small number of candidates answered well, but unfortunately too many misunderstood the question (or perhaps read it too fast) and answered about advertising, not about sales (despite the fact that the word 'advertising' was not even in the question). Last year, a question had been asked about comparing the *advertising* activities of two organisations; it seems that many candidates expected that same question and answered it, although the focus was different.

Question 5

Question 5 and Figure 4 were about health and safety.

Candidates had to explain why some particular measures (listed in the figure) were important for the health and safety of housekeeping staff at Hotel Mons. Most candidates made at least one valid point; only a very small number of answers went off the topic, typically in writing about customers - as opposed to staff.

Candidates were asked to describe one health and safety issue that they had studied. Most candidates scored at least one mark, though many failed to describe the issue, and instead wrote about prevention measures.

Candidates were then asked to compare how two organisations deal with that health and safety issue. Most candidates answered this question satisfactorily and the best answers were duly written as comparisons. Candidates were clearly prepared for such a question, which was very good to see.

Candidates were asked why dealing with that issue is important for the two organisations. Although some answers were superficial, many others displayed some maturity, for example commenting on the fact that, morally, it is an important thing to do. It was good to see this type of comment.

Candidates were eventually asked if the health and safety issue they had examined was also relevant for the small Hotel Mons (that they had considered at the start of their exam paper). Many candidates really engaged with the story, followed the scenario and advanced an appropriate argument, for example: food poisoning could be an issue at the hotel breakfast buffet; fire could be an issue if customers smoke in their room; accidents could occur in the gym, if the hotel has a small gym etc.

Overall recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** Make sure that candidates understand the difference between terms they could incorrectly regard as synonyms, such as 'quality and 'skill'.
- **Recommendation 2:** Check that candidates are able to define all the subject-specific terms mentioned in the *Specification*, for example 'operational level'.
- **Recommendation 3:** Remind candidates that they should answer the question asked and that adding irrelevant information will not gain them extra marks.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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