

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCE Leisure Studies (6970)
Paper 01

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6970 Employment in Leisure

General comments

The paper was accessible to candidates and performance was similar to last June.

Most candidates were able to respond effectively to most questions. There was evidence that most candidates had been effectively prepared, with the majority responding positively to the tasks set, offering valid answers, although many candidates did struggle to achieve the higher levels in extended responses. Almost all candidates answered all questions.

There is still a tendency for candidates to be able to cope with the demands of the paper comfortably at a basic level without managing to raise their mark beyond the level of grades C and D. This 'bulk' has moved up in comparison to past years, but there is still a problem for a substantial number of candidates in using their knowledge and understanding to the best advantage although a greater proportion achieved this than in the past. There has been pleasing evidence of improvement in exam technique, with less pure recall given when not required.

It is the applied nature of the GCE that is still an issue here. The purpose of this GCE is to give learners an applied, work related approach to the leisure industry, involving active learning and the ability to take basic principles and apply them in unfamiliar situations. A few questions will always be aimed at AO1, straightforward recall of knowledge and understanding, but the majority – particularly the longer questions - will require learners to apply this. This is the key skill that they need to tackle this qualification successfully. More are achieving this each time but there is still a considerable amount of generic material offered in the longer applied questions. It involves active use of the stimulus material as indicated in the 'indicative content' parts of the mark scheme for levels based questions. Without this application responses cannot get beyond 3-4 marks out of the 8 available for longer questions, i.e. a grade D/E level.

Information needed for a specific question is usually on the same page, candidates should be aware that for the later questions information from the earlier parts could be useful. The papers are designed to focus candidates on one organisation/person so that they can get a feel for them ie. a possible real-life situation. Candidates should be made aware of this.

The requirements of some of the command words were generally known by candidates, although many did not manage to access the higher marks in the longer questions as a consideration of terms such as 'analysis' did not show enough depth in response.

It is worth noting that from June 2010 onwards there has been a requirement for Quality of Written Communication (QWC) to be assessed on this paper. The marking criteria for this will be integrated into the level descriptors.

Question 1

Q1a Most candidates had a sound basic understanding of what a job analysis was and its role as the initial step in the recruitment process. The need to establish whether recruitment was necessary was often implicit, although the actual benefits were not always well described. A few candidates did apply it well to the scenario, identifying that after a period of change in both the personnel and visitor numbers it would be necessary to 'take stock' of what was needed and perhaps save the extra cost of recruiting someone who wasn't actually needed.

Most candidates could identify 3 or 4 items that would be in an advert

Q1b Most candidates achieved a response in the lower to middle range but evaluation of the effectiveness was rarely tackled with any great success. A large proportion of responses simply stated what was there – or what was not there – together with perhaps an occasional comment as to why the candidate might want to know that. At the lower end this tended to repeat what the part of the job description was – 'gives the salary so they know how much they will earn' but its role in recruitment was omitted. Better responses developed this to include statements such as 'they could see how it compared to their present salary' or 'see if it would be worth moving for' the link to the purpose of the advert of attracting applicants was not often explicit, however. A significant proportion of candidates seemed to confuse it with an advert and stated that they should put contact details or closing date on it or criticised that fact that it was not attractive.

Q1c This question was generally answered well. Candidates suggested relevant and useful criteria and were able to justify their inclusion at least in part. These tended to be associated with either the role of taking tours – hence confidence and outgoing personality were seen to be needed. Others concentrated on the supervisory role and hence suggested that experience in the role of guide – or at the higher level - would be needed. Most responses were well applied to the specific role, which was pleasing to see.

Q1di There was a wide variety of quality of response to this question. At the lower end were candidates who produced ineffective questions simply because they required only a repetition of information that would have been on the application form, for example 'do you have any experience of being a tour guide'. Although this might have produced a response that

shed some further light on a candidate's potential suitability for the post, the question itself was not effective. The best responses tended to be those that asked the candidate to give examples of situations where they had used their experience, for example 'describe a time when you had to motivate a team – how did you achieve this?' This would be very effective as it would give a practical assessment of the candidate's skills and/or experience. More traditional questions – but still used quite effectively – were those that concerned the candidate's ambitions – where do you see yourself in 5 years time?' or what they thought they brought to the organisation.

Q1dii Most candidates could suggest at least one suitable activity, with role plays of customer situations, trial tours and giving presentations as the most commonly suggested. There was usually at least some valid and applied explanation to back these up, although at times candidates did spend rather too much time describing what they would have to do and thus explanation marks were lost. The command word 'suggest' does not imply that detail is needed and candidates should be aware of this. There were many soundly applied responses, however, with use of presentations to show both confidence in front of others and organisational skills. The best responses showed direct links back to the requirements of the job description and so what personal qualities might be needed in order to perform these.

Q1e A significant minority of candidates did not really know what this was and centres should ensure that all areas of the specification are covered. A considerable number of these confused it with short listing. Of the rest, many jumped straight to the process of informing the candidates, rather than dealing with the decision process itself. This might be an area that could be covered in a very practical way in delivery, by using the learners as interviewees and carrying out this part of the process – as well as the rest of the process – as an actual recruitment exercise.

Q1f Candidates had a sound basic understanding of what a contract of employment is. At the lower end there was a tendency simply to state what it contained – 'they have one so they know what their pay is, the hours they work etc' – but the benefits were implicit at best. Better candidates were clear that it formed the basis for working conditions in a legal document and that it could therefore have been used in the event of any dispute or as a guideline to what might happen in any situation where misunderstanding might occur. For a majority of candidates this development was rather hazy and they tended to achieve just 2-3 marks.

Question 2

Q2a There were some very good responses to this questions which really focussed on the task in hand and argued that seasonal staff enabled the organisation to plan ahead as they would be there all summer, would reduce recruitment costs for the same reason and could rely on them being there rather than casuals who might get a better offer elsewhere. Potential improvements to customer service were also explored, as they were there for longer and might even be looking for a full time job so they might try harder. These responses contrasted with those who did not really take on board that it was not a choice of them or full time staff and pointed out to cost savings through not having to employ them in the winter. Other responses were restricted by a lack of understanding of the motivation for volunteers, suggesting that they would not work hard as they were not being paid. The interest that causes them to volunteer is at least as powerful, especially as they have chosen to do it.

Q2b Most candidates were able to identify with acceptable accuracy the name and requirements of at least one piece of legislation concerning equality and then to apply this basically to the scenario, usually suggesting that those doing the same job should be paid the same. Although some candidates then succeeded in delving into more detail, too many candidates then spent much time suggesting what they should have done, rather than answering the question as set.

Q2ci Most candidates had a basic understanding of what a grievance procedure was, but descriptions were often rather vague, particularly in respect of who the initial communication was with – many candidates seemed to think that Annie would go straight to the owner. Similarly, having made this initial statement, a significant minority of candidates then jumped straight to the industrial tribunal without giving any information about internal methods of dealing with it. This is still an area that is rather poorly dealt with by the majority of candidates and few were able to outline a real procedure.

Q2cii In contrast to knowledge of how the procedure operated, the benefits of a grievance procedure were well understood. Most saw it is being fair to all parties and giving a defined course of action which could prevent an otherwise minor matter developing into something major and possibly involving a court/industrial tribunal. This was seen as being a benefit for the organisation in terms of preventing negative publicity as well as reducing any financial cost.

Q2di Redundancy procedure was well known and most candidates could make at least 2 relevant comments as to what it is.

Q2dii Issues of redeployment were generally well understood by candidates and many showed some sound application to the scenario. Excellent links were made to the potential need for employees in other castles either through increasing number of visitors or through a need for people to attend the exhibits which had been moved there. This was developed with ideas of savings on recruitment and training costs by better candidates. Some sound evaluative arguments were made from the employees' point of view in terms of distance – whilst some suggested they might not want to move, others noted that all the castles were within one area and so the upheaval may not be great.

Question 3

Q3ai Awards and recognition were not well understood by the majority of candidates. Most assumed that there was some sort of tangible benefit for those receiving an award and in fact a significant proportion of candidates used 'reward' in their response as being synonymous (or a misread) with award. This meant that most candidates did not get out of level 1 with their response. The better responses did see the possible intrinsic value of them together with the disadvantage of perhaps creating unhealthy rivalry – or even jealousy – within a department.

Q3b As in past series the last question, on motivational techniques, was perhaps the most disappointing. The vast majority of candidates showed a sound knowledge of what staff training involved and its potential theoretical benefits, but did not apply it successfully. In fact there were few real attempts to apply it at all apart from linking the administrative staff's needs to be trained on their new computer system to it. The potential of benefits of staff development – either individually or as a unit – was scarcely touched upon by any candidates and even fewer tries to apply it to the staff roles identified in the stimulus material. It is really important that candidates get used to applying these techniques in different scenarios in preparation for the assessment, as generic benefits/disadvantages will not lift the candidate out of level 1 in the mark scheme.

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