

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

June 2011

GCE Leisure Studies (6971)
Paper 01
Current Issues in Leisure

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Publications Code UA027397

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Unit 6 6971: Current issues in Leisure

General Comments

There were a number of entries for the June 2011 moderation window. Comments towards the report are generally in line with reports from the previous series and the report recommendations remain the same with a few additional recommendations. Cohort size still remains relatively small for this series and there is now demonstration to reflect the full range of grades.

The guidance and preparation by centres followed the Edexcel guidelines with OPTEMS and front sheets being presented accurately. Declaration sheets had been completed by the learner and the centre assessor. There was 100% accuracy in the recording of marks. Coursework was received within the required window. All centres correctly utilised the mark record sheets providing centre name, candidate name, and candidate number.

It was clear to see where the assessor had made the assessment decisions although it was unclear if internal standardisation activities had taken place throughout the stages of the unit. Centres will need to consider the most suitable way of presenting this information for moderation. Where this was evident it was clear how the centre had managed the quality assurance process with clear dates, signatures of IV and comments made against the grading criteria.

Only one set of front sheets is required to be sent in for moderation. Multiple sheets tend to be confusing. Comments made by assessors varied considerably in depth. Assessment feedback must relate to the mark band as well as the assessment criteria. Reference to page numbers greatly assisted the moderation process.

Centres submitted portfolios in an acceptable format (in one plastic wallet). Centres are advised that surplus material taken from internet sites must be removed but can be sourced at the stage that it is used within the research project. This may also require an endorsement from the assessor. Centres are following the guidance on 'word count' for this unit which guides learners and prevents them from deviating from the title chosen. The use of a time line or Gantt chart is important to keep the learner on track. Work submitted showed a good understanding of the importance and relevance of sourcing and referencing. The use of websites was more frequently referred to throughout the work. This is an acceptable way of acknowledging evidence at A2 level. Candidates should be encouraged to comment upon the validity of the source of information or the website.

Centres had allowed learners to use a range of appropriate evidence. The inclusion of dates is important in ensuring the authenticity and validity of evidence and more importantly its relevance to the scope of the research project.

There is a requirement for centres to develop a more comprehensive form of annotation. This appears to be weak with most centres. Annotation confirms the assessment decision and is important for the learner to see where evidence has been awarded. Annotation is also part of a cycle of communication to the learner, the internal verifier and the external moderator. Comments should also reflect the evidence requirements of the unit and feedback should be developmental with action points stating clearly what action has to be taken. Some centres had provided minimal annotation with a range of ticks on a page. A tick is a positive response to the evidence and therefore should also be backed up with relevant comments. Signposting clearly where the assessment opportunities had been provided in the evidence further guides the moderation process. Assessors must fully annotate the work throughout including appendices and other supporting evidence.

The work of the candidate must show assessment has taken place and that a judgment has been made throughout the stages or milestones set in the project. Work showed that learners had been guided well for this unit and evidence was consistently of a high standard. This series showed that a wide range of appropriate topic titles were chosen which clearly focused on the identification of a current issue in leisure. This included leisure activities, lifestyle and health related issues, equality & diversity issues, events, festivals and traditions, Government policy, media and commercial aspects and technology. There were some excellent titles including game consoles, smoking, fast food, clubbing for young people salary capping in football, obesity, internet gambling, underage drinking, diversity in sport, and debt in leisure. The topic titles allowed learners to fully develop the research project. Where proposals moved away from the topic title and the scope has not been defined learners were not able to access full marks throughout. Most learners are generally able to identify the scope of the issue chosen. Some centres had used the same topic title with a number of learners. This is not ideal as the unit should ideally reflect the learner's own interest or a similar interest.

Learners must be guided by assessors on how to process information taken from secondary sources. Downloaded pages from websites if used in an applied way and linked to the project title are acceptable. These require referencing to show authentication. Some information presented by learners was clearly not their own work and this could be seen as plagiarism if not sourced and referenced appropriately. There was some evidence to show that learners had accessed other research projects and used these as their own. This is not acceptable and is regarded as plagiarism. If used as part of their own research and used in an applied way to support or refute their proposals then this is acceptable.

There was a marked improvement in the standard of work produced from previous series. Most centres had developed this unit in a way as to allow learners to access the higher mark bands. It is very pleasing to see that centres are now developing the concept of research projects with learners at A2 level covering the scope and a literary review which sets project direction. Research methods included focus groups and interviews some involving email exchange and had set the sampling methodology to be able

to comment upon the sample size, geographical area, age range and different groups. There was clear evidence that learners had been guided and taught well and had been given clear parameters for the unit. It was evident that where tracking and monitoring had taken place outcomes were very good for the learners.

Context of the unit

Centres are reminded that this is an A2 unit and requires the learner to reflect on the knowledge that they have gained from the AS examination and AS portfolio units. Learners are required to choose an issue that is leisure related. This can extend into the area of the sport and recreation industry. It is essential that all research meets appropriate ethical guidelines, including permission being granted before 'real life' examples are included. It is suggested that between two and four thousand words would be appropriate for a written research project. Although this is an A2 unit the guidance throughout the stages is paramount to ensuring that learners are on the right track. It appears that some centres often leave students unsupervised throughout long periods without sufficient tracking and monitoring. This results in learners performing at the lower grades at A2.

A01 – A research proposal that identifies the research topic together with the project aims and methodology.

Very clear research proposals were evident with the scope identified more clearly. The scope requires some development work with learners and sets the framework for the research. The use of literary reviews had been developed well by centres and showed relevance to the topic title. Plans varied and some had been retrospectively developed. Where these are realistic they matched good research projects allowing learners to move throughout the mark bands. Aims and objectives were used with accuracy. Learners should also be encouraged to use hypotheses; this will often keep them on track. Some centres have also posed questions to be explored; this also helps and supports the learners. Centres need to plan with learners the use of timescales and milestones throughout the stages. The lack of adequate planning throughout the initial stages shows imbalance. Insufficient attention is placed on sample size and its parameters and this can move learners to mark band three if applied to the title. Some learners had difficulty in demonstrating organisational skills that are involved in carrying out research projects i.e. to produce and submit their project to meet deadlines. When a checklist approach was developed by centres this guided the learners well.

Proposals took the format of a series of intended questions to be answered. Some learners included feasibility studies these showed a marked improvement. Plans were highlighted against timescales with some more detailed than others. It was apparent that plans were rarely focused on in the evaluation section and were not applied within the unit. It is important that centres see this as an important part of the development of the research project.

A02 – Research that includes references related to the topic.

Research was conducted well throughout the projects with most learners including both primary and secondary research. The internet had been used widely with some other sources also accessed. Data collection, data presentation and analysis showed marked improvement with good analysis and conclusions being drawn. On the whole this section is completed well by learners. Learners are required to research the chosen subject area and possible methods of data collection. Learners should be able to reference the text and include quotations. When learners were able to compare findings from previous research in order to establish the relevance of current information, this was acceptable within the research and was rewarded. Some learners had difficulty in extracting the relevant information from other sources for their own projects. There was a tendency to download substantial information with very little processing and application.

A03 – A completed research project.

Research still tends to rely on the internet and this limits some learners who only use this information source and more importantly only use a few websites. It is evident to see that these learners find it difficult to move up the mark bands. Learners are required to organise the collection and analysis of data and to complete the research project. Most projects were completed however some proposals had not been addressed and information had not been presented in a format to make considered judgements. Some conclusions were presented in a statement format and in bullet points. Learners must include explanations of intended aims, methodology, analysis and conclusions that acknowledge formal structures. The aspect of the leisure industry discussed in the research project must clearly reflect the project aims and objectives. Results must be presented in a variety of formats where findings and conclusions can be drawn from. It was evident that centres did not provide appropriate guidance here. Some learners had included all the raw questionnaires carried out. These must be processed and removed with one copy being placed in the appendix as evidence. It is the processing of the questionnaires that is more important. This should also be placed in context with the sample size used highlighting any limitations here.

A04 – An evaluation of the research project

There was a marked improvement demonstrated here. Evaluations were detailed and showed clear evidence that the learner had reviewed each stage of the research project. Learners are required to review their completed project and identify areas where improvements can be made. These suggestions must be relevant and realistic. Learners had attempted to evaluate the research project in relation to their proposals. Evaluations were still sometimes brief statements and descriptive accounts. Evaluations must consider the intended research proposal as well as the methodology that has been used. Learners should be able to put forward other recommendations on how the proposal could have been improved if research had been focused in a completely different way. Some conclusions

given did not demonstrate that the learner had understood the chosen issue. Sample size in terms of actual numbers and also in terms of the make up of the sample i.e. age, geographical location should also be commented upon in terms of how this has affected opinions and conclusions.

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Order Code UA027397 June 2011

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