

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

GCE Travel and Tourism (6998)
Unit 12: Travel Organisations

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General Introduction

This report comments on the marking from this summer's series. This report will comment on the assessment evidence requirements, the accuracy of the marking and the administration. There are also some general comments and details of support materials available from Edexcel.

Assessment Evidence

The tasks for the unit are set within the specification. There are four tasks for the unit shown on p153 of the specification. Research needs to be undertaken to complete all tasks as there is a requirement to investigate one sector of the travel and tourism industry and one organisation within that sector. Gaps in provision need to be identified and then a realistic proposal suggested for task B. Task C requires an analysis of the extent to which legal and regulatory requirements have affected the operation of the industry. The research gathered needs to be applied effectively in this task to the chosen organisation. Task D is an evaluation task which considers the degree of influence held by the key organisations within the chosen sector and an evaluation of the connections between that sector and others in the travel and tourism industry.

Assessment evidence requirements allow centres to choose the format for presenting candidates' work.

The tasks are:

- a) - A description of a selected organisation within the sectors identified on p151 of the specifications.
 - The description of the organisation should include the type, scale and structure of the chosen organisation.
 - There should be an explanation of the organisation's products and services, the types of customers who use the organisation and how the products and services meet their customers' needs. From this there should be the identification of the gaps in provision.
- b) - A proposal should be suggested for a new or adapted product, service or facility to fill the identified gap/s in provision.
 - There should be a detailed description of the proposal and an explanation of how it meets customer needs. Diagrams and images can be used in this task.
- c) - A research task, but there should be research undertaken which underpins all the other tasks in this unit. Legal and regulatory requirements need to be investigated and then analysed in relation to the affect they have had on the chosen sector of the industry.
- d) - An evaluation of the degree of influence which is held by the key organisations in the chosen sector as well as an evaluation of the connections between the sector and others in the travel and tourism industry.

We are looking for candidates to apply their knowledge for the research that they have undertaken. There does not need to be pages of historical

background and theory included in the submitted work. Overall weakness were the lack of detail in the description of the structure of the chosen organisation, the lack of detail in the description of the proposal for a **realistic** new product, service or facility and the evaluation of the degree of influence as very often the key organisations of the sector were either just described or not considered in terms of their influence.

Task A

This task addresses AO1 - **show knowledge and understanding of the specified content**. The task is divided into two elements, showing knowledge by producing a description of a selected organisation within a specified sector of the travel and tourism industry and by describing the organisation's products and services. Also, showing understanding by explaining how the products and services meet the needs of their customers and identifying how and why there is a gap in provision.

Many candidates were able to give a detailed description of the type, scale and in particular, the structure of their chosen organisation. The structure should include reference to how the organisation is organised and where the lines of responsibility occur and for what. The products and services were sometimes just listed and a range of different types of customers was not considered. There should be an explanation which links the types of customers with the products and services available. From this element of the task knowledge and understanding should be displayed through the identification of where gaps in provision for the customers occur and what they are. Many candidates listed the gaps without relating them to the different types of customers.

Improving Candidate Performance

The key requirement of this task is for candidates to show knowledge and understanding through their detailed description of a selected organisation, focusing on the type, scale and structure.

Explain the links between the available products and services, the range of different types of customers who use the organisation and how these products and services meet their needs and what is missing from this provision.

Gaps in provision should be feasible and appropriate for the chosen organisation.

Task B

This task addresses AO2 - **apply the knowledge, skills and understanding specified in the subject content**. Candidates are required to produce a **realistic and relevant** proposal which is appropriate to fill identified gaps and meet customer needs which should be described in detail. Diagrams and images can be used to support the suggested proposal. Where candidates chose a budget airline like 'Ryanair' and the proposal was business class travel, it was often hard for the candidates to

justify the proposal as many of the suggestions went against the whole ethos of the organisation. Some candidates produced PowerPoint presentations for this task but failed to actually address the task fully. Witness testimonies or observation records should be included to support the evidence and effectiveness of the candidates' performance in actually meeting the assessment criteria for the task.

Improving Candidates' Performance

The key requirement is for candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding of the identified gaps in provision. Candidates should explain how the proposal is linked to meeting the needs of the customers.

Task C

This task addresses AO3 - **use appropriate research techniques to obtain information to analyse vocationally-related issues and problems.** The task requires an analysis of the legal and regulatory requirements that have affected the operation of the chosen sector in the industry. Fewer candidates included pages of downloaded legislation which was not applied specifically to their chosen organisation or sector. Comments could have focused on the effects of the Minimum Wage, Health and Safety at work, maternity and paternity issues for example and how all these could affect the chosen organisation with their implementation. The second part of the task was either not addressed or tackled inappropriately. Candidates should have analysed the effects of the legislation and regulations throughout the chosen sector using relevant examples. This could have been tackled in tandem with the first part of the task, where the analysis was firstly in relation to the chosen organisation and then within the sector.

There should be evidence of a range of research undertaken, using different types of sources e.g. websites, trade and training manuals, articles, newspapers and magazines, particularly for Mark Bands 2 and 3. The sources should be acknowledged through a bibliography or terms of reference indicating the sources used in the research for all tasks. For higher marks awarded at least some sources would be referenced in the evidence submitted. It is not expected that candidates use the Harvard referencing system precisely although some similar format would be expected. There should also be evidence for the higher bands that the candidate has obtained sources independently. Independent working could be supported through a statement from the candidate explaining how and why they used the sources, a detailed bibliography or a witness/observation testimony from the assessor indicating how the sources were obtained to confirm the independence of the candidates.

Much of the research seen in the work sampled relied heavily on web sites and text books.

Improving Candidates' Performance

- Choose appropriate and relevant legislation

- Ensure that it is applied to the chosen organisation
- Analysis should consider what the impacts are for the organisation and the sector of the regulations and legislation
- Analysis how these regulations and legislation affect the operation of the organisation and the sector from which it belongs.

Task D

This task addresses AO3 - **plan and carries out investigations and tasks in which the candidates examine vocationally related issues and problems; gather, record and analyse relevant information and evidence; and evaluate evidence, make reasoned judgements and present conclusions.** Candidates are required to evaluate the degree of influence held by the key organisations in the sector. There should be a clear focus on the way the key players influence the chosen organisation and the sector. If an airline such as Easyjet was chosen then the key organisations which would need to be considered are Ryanair, 'Virgin Airlines' and 'British Airways', for example. Candidates should focus on price setting and how the larger airlines now have to follow the lead from the budget airlines in order to stay in business and compete by offering something different which will appeal to the customers. Candidates could consider what has happened in the light of the economic crisis and the fall out from the volcanic ash and the current high cost of fuel. Statistical data should be used to support judgements and conclusions made, Candidates mainly described rather than evaluated. The second part of the task was either not addressed at all or tackled inappropriately. The candidates were expected to evaluate the connections between their chosen sector and other sectors in the travel and tourism industry. The focus should have been on how they can work together, what is the significance between Tourist Information Centres and visitor attractions or accommodation providers connecting together to provide an all round service for the customer. The evaluation should have included which organisations connect more successfully with each other and why. There should have been clear judgements and conclusions made and for the higher mark bands, statistical data should have been used as supporting evidence.

Improving Candidates' Performance

- Evaluate the degree of influence held by the key organisations in the sector
- What is their influence and how is it directed to the other organisations?
- Evaluate the connections between the chosen sector and the other sectors in the travel and tourism industry
- Consider why there is a need for these connections, what they are and how they operate.

Marking

Generally marking was generous. Candidate evidence should be assessed against the assessment criteria in the specification. For each task there are three mark bands. Assessors should first determine the mark band statement that “best fits” the evidence submitted. A note should be taken of command verbs and discriminators for each statement. For example, where task C requires an analysis then if work is descriptive, Mark Band 1 applies. Mark Band 2 should only be considered appropriate if candidates show they have produced a clear analysis with some substantiated conclusions. ‘Best fit’ would need to be considered where there are descriptions and some attempt at an analysis to determine if Mark Band 1 at the top or Mark Band 2 at the bottom end is best fit. Strengths and weaknesses in the evidence can then be taken into account when awarding marks from the mark band. Taking the example above, there are clearly weaknesses if Mark Band 2 is considered best fit and low marks from the mark band should be applied. If Mark Band 1 was considered best fit the higher marks can be awarded to credit the detail and relevance of the analysis and conclusions being made.

Task A

Marking of this task was generous. Many candidates did not go into sufficient detail regarding the type, scale and in particular the structure of their organisation. Many candidates neglected to identify and discuss the sector within which their chosen organisation was taken from. National organisations are better choices than local ones as this can limit the coverage of the criteria by the candidates. The work sampled was often descriptive with limited explanation of how the needs of different types of customers were met by the products and services available. Some candidates had trouble identifying realistic gaps in provision and did not always how these were linked to meeting the customers’ needs again.

Task B

Marking of this task was generous. For some candidates their gaps in provision lacked thought, depth and detail. For many there was little to link the identified gap with the specific needs of the customer, instead statements such as, ‘the inclusion of a brochure aimed specifically at children will encourage families to book’, were offered as an explanation. Sometimes lots of gaps were identified as proposals which were listed with no reference made to needs of customers or any links included.

Task C

Many candidates showed limited types of research sources, relying heavily on the Internet. Evidence of independent research was often a sentence on the task feedback sheets, a statement on the mark record sheet or a basic comment on the work. See previous comments on how to provide effective support for the candidates to support their independent working. To award marks from Mark Band 3, the analysis should be clear and well exemplified and the candidates should have used their research effectively and brought

statistical data into their conclusions as support for the judgements made about the affect of the legal and regulatory requirements on the organisation and the operations within the sector.

Task D

Marking was generous. Candidates were given credit by assessors for description rather than the required evaluation skill for this task. Few candidates produced comprehensive evaluations for Mark Band 3. The evaluations seen in the work sampled demonstrated a lack of detail because candidates failed to show an understanding of the key organisations in the chosen sector of the industry. Little use was made of statistical data to support and substantiate the evaluations being made. In some samples there were no strengths to move beyond the mid point in Mark Band 1.

Administration

Many centres met the deadline for submission of portfolios for moderation. The OPTEMS forms were generally completed correctly.

Samples submitted were mainly correct. Centres submitted asterisked samples. Where candidates were withdrawn, alternatives were sent. Where highest and lowest marks were not asterisked these were also sent.

Most centres did submit Candidate Authentication Records, although there were a few which were not signed. This is a JCGQ requirement. Exams Officers have copies of generic forms that can be used but these are also available on the Edexcel website at <http://www.edexcel.org.uk/quals/gce/travel/as/8791>.

Not all centres submitted task feedback sheets as provided on the Edexcel website.

Annotation is not a requirement but if used to highlight where key evidence e.g. specifically explanation, comparison, assessment etc could be found, this is helpful to the moderation process.

In task A, annotation could be used to highlight/identify where candidates have described the type, scale and structure of their chosen organisation and where there is explanation concerning the products and services available and how they meet the needs of the customers.

For task B, annotation could be used to identify the feasibility of the suggested proposal and where the explanation linking the proposal to customer needs occurs.

In task C, annotation could highlight where the candidates have referenced sources and specifically where the candidates have researched independently. Where the analysis occurs, annotation could be used to highlight this skill in the work.

As task D requires evaluation, annotation could be used to show where the candidates have used this skill and also to show where they have made substantiated conclusions and judgements.

Some centres provided annotation which was appreciated.

General Comments

Edexcel does not require candidates to submit their portfolios in a file. It is sufficient for candidates to provide all work tied with a treasury tag, providing it can be easily identified. In addition to the Candidate Authentication Sheet, there should ideally be a front cover stating the name of the candidate, centre and candidate number. Evidence for each task should be clearly separated, ideally by a task feedback sheet.

Only evidence used to determine the mark awarded need be submitted in a portfolio. That evidence should be for tasks A, B, C and D. Class notes and activities should not be sent in their portfolios.

This unit allows the opportunity for oral communication in presenting work. If this format is used, candidates' portfolios should include a witness statement/testimony, assessment checklist or observation record. This should describe the candidate's performance and highlight how this leads to the mark awarded. It should be signed and dated by an assessor. Any supporting evidence such as visual aids, notes, documentation etc should also be included. Video evidence, audio tapes and computer discs and CDs are not required as forms of evidence. Where centres and/or candidates have used these forms of technology, a witness testimony, assessment checklist and/or an observation record is required. It is this substantiation evidence that should be sent to the moderator. Printed versions of documents can be sent in support.

Sample documentation, candidate exemplar work with moderator comments and pen portraits are available on the Edexcel website www.edexcel.com as well as Principal Moderator reports from previous series.

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