

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Leisure Studies (6971)
Paper 01 Current Issues in Leisure

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General Comments

There were a moderate number of entries for the June 2016 moderation window. Registrations have seen a declining trend over the past few series. Some centres submitted very few student registrations. Most centres have continued to support the qualification and have developed very clear quality assurance systems to ensure that the specification for this unit is met with rigour.

Comments included in this report are generally in line with reports from the previous series and the report recommendations remain the same with few additional recommendations. Cohort size still remains relatively small for this series and does not reflect the full range of grades.

The guidance and preparation by centres followed the Pearson / Edexcel guidelines with OPTEMS and front sheets being presented accurately. Declaration sheets had been completed by the students 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, student name, and student number. It was clear to see where the assessor had made the assessment decisions; there was sufficient developmental feedback provided by some assessors at some centres. Some centres are using 'track changes', for feedback. It was clear when internal standardisation activities had taken place throughout the stages of the unit; this is a requirement to ensure that developmental feedback is applied at each of the stages of the research project. Where standardisation had taken place this was accurate and rigorous and supported the process of assessment. Centres will need to consider the most suitable way of presenting student evidence that has been through an internal standardisation process. This process should not be retrospective.

Only one set of front sheets is required to be sent in for moderation. Multiple sheets tend to be confusing. Where changes have been suggested as action points these should be clearly written on the front sheet and dated for authentication purposes. This also ensures that, for the moderation process, there is clarity over the time scale in which this was completed. 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. Draft copies of work do not necessarily need to be included; if the centre includes this then these pages should be folded in half to clearly define that they are drafts.

Centres submitted portfolios in an acceptable format, ie in one plastic wallet. Centres are advised that surplus material taken from internet sites and questionnaires must be removed but can be referenced at the stage used within the research project stages. This may also require an endorsement from the assessor. Centres are following the guidance on 'word count' for this unit which guides students and prevents them from deviating from the project title chosen. The use of a time line or Gantt chart is important to keep the student on track to ensure that reference to

planning is commented upon. It would support the process if assessors also kept a monitoring record of the timescale and provided developmental feedback when students are not on track to complete. It was clearly evident that some students had planned retrospectively. 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. Students should also be encouraged to comment upon the validity of the source of information or the website. The use of 'Wikipedia' is not recommended. However, if used by the student this should reflect a comment about how authentic the evidence taken from this site is.

Centres had allowed students 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 some centres. Where it is good it shows developmental feedback and signposting to the assessment outcome and relevant comments.

Where annotation was evident this greatly assisted the moderation process. Annotation by assessors showed improvement. Detailed annotation further guides the student. 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 use of a witness endorsement / observation record is also acceptable.

The work of the student 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 the students had been guided well for this unit and evidence was consistently of a very high standard. Appropriate topic titles were chosen which clearly focused on the identification of a current issue in leisure. The topic titles allowed students to develop their research projects. Where proposals moved away from the topic title students were not able to access full marks throughout. Topic titles have moved radically away from health related issues, ie obesity or sporting events, such as football. There were some excellent titles including financial rewards given to soccer players, athletes and eating disorders, gambling, music festivals, game consoles and horse related events. Students were able to identify the scope of the issue chosen.

Students 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 the students was clearly not their own work and this can be seen as 'plagiarism' if not sourced and referenced appropriately. There was some evidence to show that students had accessed other research projects and used parts of these in their own. If used as part of their own research and used in an applied way to support or refute their proposals, then this is acceptable. If used and not applied, then this constitutes plagiarism and is not acceptable.

There is a good standard of work produced from previous series. There was clear evidence that students had been guided, given clear parameters for the unit and had been well supported throughout the research project. It is very pleasing to see that centres are now developing the concept of research projects with students at A2 Level covering the scope and a literary review which sets project direction. Student evidence seen in this respect was outstanding and centres are to be commended here.

Context of the unit

Centres are reminded that this is an A2 unit and requires the students to reflect on the knowledge that they have gained from the AS examination and AS portfolio units. Students 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 ensure that students are on the 'right track'. It appears that some centres often leave students unsupervised throughout long periods of time without sufficient tracking and monitoring. This results in some students 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 and comprehensive research proposals were evident with the scope identified more clearly. The scope requires some development work with some students and is important as it sets the framework for the research. The use of literary reviews had been developed extremely 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 students to move throughout the mark bands. Aims and objectives were used with accuracy and were commented upon throughout the research project.

Students 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 student. Centres need to plan with students the use of timescales and milestones throughout the stages. The lack of adequate planning throughout the initial stages results in an imbalance of the AOs. Insufficient attention is placed on sample size and its parameters and when applied accurately can move students to mark band 3 if applied to the title. Some students had difficulty in demonstrating organisational skills that are involved in carrying out research projects, ie to produce and submit their project to meet deadlines. When a checklist approach was developed by centres, this guided the student well.

Proposals took the format of a series of intended questions to be answered. Some students included feasibility studies that showed a marked improvement. Plans were highlighted against timescales with some more detailed than others. It was apparent that some plans were rarely focused upon in the evaluation section and were not applied within the unit. It is essential 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 students 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 students. Students are required to research the chosen subject area and possible methods of data collection. They should be able to reference the text and include quotations. When students 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 students had difficulty in extracting the relevant information from other sources for their own projects. There is still a tendency by some students 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 students, who only use this information source and more importantly only use a few websites. It is evident to see that these students find it difficult to move up the mark bands. They 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. Students 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 some centres did not provide appropriate guidance here. Some students 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 than the physical evidence. This should also be placed in context with the sample size used to highlight 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 students had reviewed each stage of the research project. Students are required to review the completed project and identify areas where improvements can be made. These suggestions must be relevant and realistic. Students 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. Students 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 students had understood the chosen issue. Sample size in terms of actual numbers and also in terms of the makeup of the sample, ie age, geographical location should also be commented upon in terms of how this has affected opinions and conclusions.

Grade Boundaries

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