

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

GCE Leisure Studies (6970)
Paper 01 Employment in Leisure

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General comments

The paper appeared to be 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..

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.

One element of examination technique that centres should consider carefully is the tendency for candidates to re-write the question before starting their answer, for example 'one advantage of using an online application form rather than a paper based one is...!....'. There is limited room for responses and although continuation sheets can be used, candidates tend to stop when they have filled up the space so answers are self limiting. Some then also carry on 'another advantage of using an online application form.....'!

Whilst in preparing these papers we will always try to keep as much of the information 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 the candidates on one organisation so that they can get a feel for them, i.e. a possible real –life situation. Candidates should be made aware of this.

The requirements 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 'analyse' and 'evaluate' did not show enough depth in response.

1(a)(i) Most students knew what a job analysis was and could identify at least one characteristic. Most commonly this was to determine the roles and responsibilities of a post. Responses should make it clear, however, that this is where these are analysed and determined rather than just described to the potential candidates. This led to confusion with the job description in some responses.

1(b) This was often answered well with responses being aptly applied. Most students made some attempt to relate their chosen methods to the role of casual employees, usually using local papers and the organisation's web site. There was also accurate use of job centres and even poster advertising within the centre itself although there were some totally generic responses. Explanation tended to be partial, particularly with statements such as 'it is cheap'. The fact that they are relatively low paid jobs could have been linked more effectively to this and other aspects of the methods chosen. On the other hand there was good linkage of local papers to the fact that they might be called in at short notice so they wouldn't want to travel far. As in past series, there is still a significant minority of responses which are not specific enough. 'the internet' or 'online advert' is not enough, neither is just stating newspapers. There is a very real difference between the remit of a local paper advert and that of a national newspaper.

1(c) Overall this question showed a disappointing performance. For those who did appreciate exactly what the question was asking, there was too much unsubstantiated comment which therefore lacked any evaluative precision. Typically this might be 'online form would be cheaper and easier to sort' – how or why this was the case needs to be stated for evaluation to have real meaning. At times there was an element that was unrealistic, particularly in stating that if people had to go to centres to pick up application forms then this would show how keen they were. Almost inevitably there was considerable mention of electronic failures. The main source of error in responses was to contrast online application forms with CVs rather than paper based forms, stating that because the organisation set the questions then they would get the information they wanted and that they would be easy to sort. There were some sound responses based around the relatively low cost for a potentially large number of low cost employees as well as the ability to save forms easily in case they wanted to use them again for similar events, but real evaluation was often missing.

1(d) Many of the suggestions for skills and qualities were sound, showing good relevance to the post in the initial choice and good use of the job description in their justification. The most popular choice was centred around good communication and this was well applied to the role of marketing as well as dealing with personal trainers and customers. The benefit of being organised was well linked to the variety of tasks that the successful applicant would have to undertake. At times responses strayed from the skills and qualities with candidates stating they would need qualifications. Students should appreciate that skills and qualities do not cover every aspect of a person.

1(e) As in previous series, this question proved to be demanding. There were more well worded and relevant questions suggested than in past series with a pleasing selection of those that were phrased as a statement such as 'Give an example of a time when you...etc'. Explanations for these should focus on how the response enables the organisation to differentiate between the candidates. At times there was a tendency merely to repeat the question. For example a question such as 'What are your ambitions for Allsportz/' would be justified by 'this would show them what their

ambitions for Allsportz were'. A minority of candidates still chose questions that were not realistic as the information would already be known from the application form, eg 'have you experience of management?'. Centres should make students aware that this type of question is not valid as interview time is too precious for duplication in the process.

1(f) Most students were able to give a basic evaluation of the procedure, although at the lower end there was the tendency merely to state what would happen without further comment. Most responses saw the purpose of the initial discussions, although the real value of them in ensuring that the best candidate was chosen was often not explicitly stated. Similarly it was seen to be good practice to inform the successful candidate first, but the benefit of this was not always stated. Some overall comments also saw the process as beneficial in terms of saving time and money and, indeed, in making the organisation look professional.

1(g)(i) Students generally had a good grasp of how self-employed staff operated and how this might be beneficial to the organisation. Although there were occasionally unrealistic assertions that they were almost a type of free labour, most responses centred around at least one of the two main ideas. Responses used the idea of the winter/summer contrast to indicate that they would save money by having self-employed rather than full-time as they would not have to pay them when there was no work. Many responses also dealt with the benefits of having potentially specialist staff to carry out these activities and this was seen in the light of saving on training for their own staff or in attracting more customers by extending the range of activities they could offer. A number of generic benefits were also offered, especially the potential for self-employed staff to be highly motivated and give good service so that they would be used again. Although many responses achieved the top end of Level 2, few made it to Level 3 as the analysis tended to be superficial, leaving too much implicit.

1(g)(ii) The benefits of self employment were well known, particularly the flexibility that it gives and how that can have a positive influence on the work-life balance. Students should be encouraged to be explicit in how the characteristics identified are beneficial rather than just stating, for example 'you are your own boss' or 'you can choose who you work for', as these do not show how a benefit is achieved. At times self-employment was seen in a rather idealistic light and students should be guided realistically in dealing with it. It was often claimed that 'you can charge what you like' or 'earn as much as you like' whilst the more realistic responses linked how much you earned to the amount of work that you did and that to an extent the latter was under your control.

2(a) Most responses dealt with either the potential benefit of the outgoing deputy manager provide some sort of guidance or training – job shadow was effectively used at times – with that of the potential negative effects of having an employee who did not want to be there. As with other questions on the paper, there was a tendency to deal with one or the other in depth or both at a superficial level and hence although many responses achieved a top Level2, few pushed their way into Level 3.

2(b)(i) Shift work was not well understood generally and hence candidates had difficulty explaining why leisure organisations used it. Often it appeared that students thought it was how organisations fitted full- and part-time staff into the day or how they used different specialists to run activities. Many thought its main use was to

cover busy times rather than understanding that for organisations that were open long hours it was necessary to ensure that all roles could be covered for the whole time within the terms of the Working Time Regulations.

2(b)(ii) Students were more successful in explaining the potential issues for employees associated with shift work, although understanding was hazy at times. Many knew that shift work would often mean working irregular hours, having a knock on effect on life outside work. It was also appreciated that some of the shifts might be at unsocial hours, impinging on family or other social life. As with self employment, claims were sometimes unrealistic, suggesting that employees would not know when they were working. There was also a significant minority who suggested that it meant you would earn less or that you inherently had to do a series of shifts each day.

2(c) There was a tendency for students to describe what would happen rather than actually evaluate its effectiveness. The best responses looked at the procedure from the organisation's point of view as well as that of the employees. Benefits to the former concentrated around the ability to plan rosters or cover well in advance as well as ensuring that the organisation should always have enough staff if only 2 were allowed off at a time. However, some responses rightly suggested that the rather long 6 months notice might lead to increased absenteeism if employees wanted to take a break. There was a balance of feeling as to whether the procedure was fair to employees, with a good number of responses appreciating that all staff members might not have equal access to it at the appropriate time.

2(d) Students should be made aware that legislation of this type relates to employees rather than customers for the most part. Whilst many did successfully pursue customer ideas of equal access for all – especially those in wheelchairs – as well as employee equal pay for those doing a the same job role, many also suggested that it required there to be the same sized changing rooms for males and females or that all types of food must be served in the café. Whilst the latter in particular may be good practice, legislation dealt with in this unit is aimed largely at employment.

3(a) The concept of laissez-faire management was generally understood at a basic level, although a minority seemed to think that this would mean they did nothing at all so the groups would be without guidance. Most, to a greater or lesser extent, did identify that there were two conflicting arguments – the element of danger in the activities might make this a poor option whilst the need to work and communicate as a team meant that it might be highly appropriate. Pleasingly, some could link the idea of this type of leader who promoted communication to the actual purpose of team building exercises which would have a beneficial effect when the groups returned to their work places. There was confusion as to what the activities were for, however, and it is vital that the students do read the stimulus material carefully in an applied paper. Unfortunately a minority seemed to think that the groups were Allsportz employees and the team leader was theirs at work rather than a leader for external groups.

3(b) Motivational techniques continue to present a challenge to students on this paper. Although most did understand the basic premise of Profit Related Pay a minority confused it with Performance Related Pay and hence did not appreciate the 'team' aspect of this method. Many responses simply stated that it could motivate the team in order to get more money, which obviously has some validity and a significant proportion gave some idea that this might not be totally appropriate as Tamsin would

still get paid the same as the rest and that some of the team might coast on the back of others' efforts. There was disappointingly little use of the rest of the stimulus material, with the contrast between this approach and the concept of a regular salary being tackled only rarely. As in the past, few responses looked at the method from the organisation's point of view, with a number not appreciating that in order for extra money to be paid the organisation had to make a bigger profit – hence it would not be an expensive option. Candidates should always look at the effectiveness of motivational techniques from the employee and the organisation point of view, unless the question specifies otherwise.

3(c)(i) Generally students knew that job enlargement involved the addition of roles and responsibilities but they should make it clear that these were at the same level as the existing ones and they did not involve a monetary reward for taking them on. Some responses looked at the benefit to the organisation of getting more work done for the same money, which was an equally valid way of answering.

3(c)(ii) Most students appreciated that there was some intrinsic motivational value in job enlargement but often could not develop this idea further, merely re-stating the stimulus that it would motivate them. Only a few responses saw the potential long term benefits of gaining experience and hence career progression as a result. The disadvantages tended to be outlined better, with the potential impact of the increased workload in particular being well developed.

Students should:

- Read the stimulus
- Use the stimulus material in their responses
- Be explicit in higher level answers for evaluative and analytical questions
- Not repeat the question before starting the answer.
- Consider organisations and employees

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwant to/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>