

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

GCE Travel and Tourism (6993)
Unit 7 Responsible Tourism

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General Comments

The GCE Travel and Tourism qualification is well established.

For centres that may be new to the qualification it is highly recommended that the resources available to download from the Edexcel website are accessed. In particular, the question papers, mark schemes and the Principal Examiner's Reports for each exam series. A review of these documents can give centres an insight into how the unit content is tested as well as providing familiarisation with the question paper structure, common issues observed, examiner's tips and good practice displayed by students.

Question Paper Overview

There were 90 marks available on this paper.

Quality of written communication (QWC) was tested on two questions 1(c) and 2(d)(i) and indicated by an asterisk *.

The paper consisted of matching, short and medium answers and extended writing style questions.

The questions are set to assess students' understanding of the content of the specification given in the 'Detailed Unit Content' section for Unit 7. Full details can be found on pages 91 - 95 of the unit specification.

The question paper for this unit is divided into three questions each worth 30 marks. Each question is quite distinct. Questions 1 and 2 are typically focused around a case study. Question 1 features a destination in the economically developed world, Belfast this series. Question 2 considers a destination in the less economically developed world, in this series Sri Lanka was the stimulus. Question 3 usually tests understanding of the unit content terms and opportunities for students to give evidence of their research into responsible tourism, impacts of tourism or management strategies at destinations studied.

Questions were also devised to meet the weightings requirements of the Assessment Objectives (AO). Details of the relevant weightings can be found on pages 166 and 167 of the GCE Travel and Tourism Specification.

The assessment objectives are as follows:

A01 – students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the specified content, and of related skills in vocationally-related contexts

A02 – students apply knowledge and understanding of the specified content, and of related skills in vocationally-related contexts

A03 – students use appropriate research techniques to obtain information to analyse vocationally-related issues and contexts

A04 – students evaluate information to make judgements, draw conclusions and make recommendations about vocationally-related issues and problems.

Therefore in preparing students for external assessment centres need to be mindful of the fact that question papers are solely designed around the unit content as set out in the specification. Questions are designed to test the student's knowledge and understanding of the content and terms stated in the unit specification as well as incorporating the assessment of skills ranging from the application of knowledge to analytical and evaluative skills. As such teaching and learning should be designed to ensure that understanding all of the unit content and the terms stated is embedded and provides a solid foundation on which to develop the higher level skills of analysis and evaluation and enables synthesis of knowledge.

Summary of Student Performance

Overall student performance varied as would be expected with some students scoring good marks across most of the questions whilst for others, scores were disappointing in some respects. Examiners commented on the number of blank responses seen in questions testing understanding and knowledge of unit content particularly 3a) and 3b). Also some students completely misinterpreted terms and also what was required of them for instance in 1b), 2d) and 3d). Some students either overlooked the key command words – in 1c) 'evaluate', 2c) 'justify' and in 2d) 'analyse', or else did not know how to do this. Students sometimes seemed to struggle in articulating their thoughts to produce coherent responses.

On the other hand there were some excellent responses that demonstrated sound knowledge of the unit content and high standards of QWC and higher level skills.

Student Performance

Question 1

All the questions were based upon the city of Belfast in Northern Ireland.

1a)

This question was well answered and the vast majority gained both the marks available for correctly identifying the stages on the TALC model diagram provided.

1a)

This was a popular question that was well answered by the majority. Understanding of the key characteristics of the stage was evident and over three quarters gained at least two marks here.

1a)

The majority of students were able to identify two appropriate destinations that had reached this stage and two thirds gained both marks.

1b)

This question worked well and the vast majority of students gained all four marks available. The two most incorrectly matched were the Titanic Foundation Ltd and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

1b)

This question required students to describe the role of each of three given organisations and responses were mixed. Some students incorrectly wrote about aims and objectives, others gave generic responses unrelated to the scenario. The role of Belfast City Council was perhaps the least well understood and many wrote about advertising and promotion. The most popular role described was granting planning permission but few made the link to the new Titanic attraction. Understanding of the role of the Tourist Board was much better and many gained all the three marks available here. Descriptions of the role of the Titanic Foundation were again varied although many scored one or two marks, some did achieve three for descriptions relating to 'educating visitors', 'preserving heritage', 'making sure the story

isn't forgotten', 'fundraising' and 'donations'. Around one third of students gained at least five marks out of the nine available.

1c

This question required students to evaluate the positive impacts that rejuvenation has brought to Belfast. It was quite well answered, just over a half of students gained L2 5 – 7 marks for some application and basic evaluation. However examiners felt that many students did not really know how to evaluate and they tended to either describe or explain the positive impacts. Most applied their responses to the scenario but would often refer to theoretical impacts some of which were not really relevant to Belfast or linked to rejuvenation. Some re-worded the case study with no evaluation. Links to the characteristics of the stage were sometimes muddled and unclear and in general the level of QWC was reported as being quite low. Overall it would seem that a number of students did not really know how to approach the question or how to do an evaluation or else had not read the question carefully enough.

Examiner tip for students

For the higher marks in this question examiners were looking for 'focused responses with sustained evaluation and application. Characteristics of rejuvenation will be clear. There will be a range of positive impacts. At this level students are likely to reflect that there may be some aspects that are not wholly positive' and also in terms of QWC 'use of specialist terms consistently, good focus and organisation, and that spelling punctuation and the rules of grammar are used with considerable accuracy'.

A useful technique to help you approach the extended writing style questions is to Stop, Select, Skill and Structure.

Stop. There are 10 marks available so there is time to organise your thoughts. Avoid writing straightaway. Double check what the question is asking. Underline the key words. In this question 'evaluate', 'positive impacts', 'rejuvenation'. Now read the information provided again and highlight positive impacts brought about by rejuvenation.

Select. Select impacts or characteristics that show you know the rejuvenation stage and that you can write confidently about and expand upon. It is better to write in detail about a small range of impacts – this will give you the depth examiners look for. Think beyond the most obvious and also consider if there are any negatives.

Skill. These types of questions assess your skills. Here examiners are looking for evidence that you can evaluate information provided. This involves judgement and opinion. So for each impact and in each paragraph you need to make a judgement on the importance or significance of the impact and this is when you should use the information given or your own knowledge to substantiate your opinion. 'I think rejuvenation has greatly benefited the local economy in Belfast because ...' or 'this will be good for the economy because'...

Structure. QWC is also tested here but all extended writing style questions should have an introduction and conclusion. Organise your writing into distinct paragraphs and aim for one key point per paragraph. So in this question in one paragraph you could evaluate the positive impacts on the economy. Avoid repeating yourself and starting every sentence with 'Another impact is...' Always check spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Question 2

The questions in this section of the question paper are all based around a case study in Sri Lanka.

2a

Overall the question was quite well answered and over three quarters of students gained at least two out of the possible three marks for describing one principle of responsible tourism. Many gave precisely worded principles whilst others were less confident and gave various versions, some of which were incorrect. However, it was pleasing to see students following the instructions and including an example, many of which were appropriate.

2bi

This question was not well answered by some who gave impacts or principles rather than economic objectives of tourism development. Just under a quarter did not gain any marks; whilst around a half gained one mark. The main weakness were responses relating to 'creating jobs for locals' rather than considering the much wider focus at a national level appropriate for government. Just over a quarter gained full marks for responses relating to 'attracting overseas visitors to increase foreign currency earnings', 'employment opportunities to boost the economy' and 'use the income to rebuild the country' and responses relating to 'attracting overseas investment'.

2bii

Achievements in this question that required a political objective were similar to 2bi. However responses were more confident and showed students had engaged well with the information given. Excellent responses that gained both marks often related to the need to 'change the war torn and damaged image of Sri Lanka to show overseas visitors it is now a safe place to visit'.

2c

A popular question that was well answered by most who managed to gain some of the six marks available. Over a half gained L2 4-6 marks. Examiners reported that students demonstrated a good understanding of the characteristics of the stages and that the common weakness that restricted access to the top marks was lack of justification. Many students did not know what was expected or missed the instruction.

Examiner tip for students

On this question examiners were looking for two things; firstly that you knew the differences between the characteristics of the two stages. The second thing they were looking for were links between the characteristics

and the information provided about Sri Lanka. This is easily shown by simple statements that reinforce your understanding. For instance – “It is evident that Sri Lanka is now in the development stage because one of the characteristics of this stage is that more facilities are provided for tourists. This could include accommodation. International hotel chains such as the Hyatt and Marriott have started building hotels in Sri Lanka to cater for the increasing number of visitors and this is a key indication that the development stage has been reached”.

2di

This question is a good discriminator in terms of ability and was quite well answered overall, around a half gained L2 4- 6 marks for some basic analysis and application. All students followed the instruction to look at the positive and negative impacts however as reported in 1c many students seemed to overlook the key command/instruction ‘analyse’ and the need to look at ‘developing tourism’. Consequently whilst responses were clearly applied, analysis and focus was weak for many. There was some evidence, albeit in the minority, of students planning their response with a rough sketch, list of impacts made on the paper. It was also clear some had considered their QWC, spelling errors were corrected and symbols were used by some to show new paragraph i.e. //.

The key weakness in these types of questions is in the interpretation of the information given which tends to be basic and lacking any real substance. Impacts considered tend to be those most obviously stated. Here very few picked up on the threat to the areas of outstanding natural beauty that have been earmarked for development. They could have considered the negative impacts of all the construction during development and the disruption and pollution, need to clear forests for road building and that the main attraction of the areas their beauty could be destroyed by unsympathetic development. All too often students wrote about litter and erosion.

Some really competent responses were seen where students gave details of other destinations to substantiate their analysis. These showed higher level skills and tended to gain marks in Level 3 being sustained and well articulated.

2dii

This was not particularly well answered by most overall although around one third gained 3 or 4 marks. Responses were mixed. Some students just gave lots of suggestions many of which were quite simplistic. Common suggestions included traffic management, how to reduce litter, signs and rules. On the whole though they lacked any expansion or justification as to why they would reduce negative impacts and some were inappropriate i.e. ‘congestion charges’. Some students however were able to give good responses relating to ‘restricting numbers’, ‘visas’, ‘zoning’ and ‘codes of conduct’ that included some expansion/detail and reasons were given to justify the suggestions.

This is an example of a good response that scored four marks:

“One negative impact is the possible threat to wildlife and natural habitats. This can be reduced by introducing planning laws. Laws could dictate what

is built and where it is built and also materials used as well as a clause that says any lost habitats have to be restored for wildlife. This can then protect important areas for wildlife as the laws will prevent overdevelopment that could put a strain in the land and interfere with nature"

It is clear what the impact is. Details are given about the way/'how' the impact could be reduced. This is justified with reasons given.

Question 3

This section of the paper tested understanding and knowledge of a range of unit content terms as well as evidence of students' own research of destinations and how impacts are managed. The final question was similar to that seen on previous papers and related to how organisations can support responsible tourism.

3a

All the questions in 3a related to the impacts of tourism.

3ai

It was disappointing to see that this straightforward question was not particularly well answered and around a quarter did not gain any marks for describing one positive environmental impact of tourism. Marks were commonly not awarded for incorrect impacts although just under a half scored both marks and showed a good level of understanding.

3aii

This was quite well answered by many and the majority of students gained some marks here for explaining the impact. This term has not been tested on this question paper before however most wrote enthusiastically and some included examples showing a reasonable level of understanding. The most common weakness was not applying to tourism. It was surprising how few students explained that this is a negative economic impact.

3aiii

This was not answered well and over half of the students did not gain any marks. This impact is given in the specification but it would seem most students were either unfamiliar with it or could not explain what it means. It was pleasing to see that many students who really didn't know had an educated guess rather than leaving their answer blank, which very many did. Many related diversity to cultural differences or tourists and locals getting along. However some students did gain all the marks and wrote confidently, demonstrating that they were fully familiar with the impact. Few students referred to the impact being a negative environmental impact which would have given them one mark at the very least.

3b

All the questions in 3b related to the strategies used to manage the impacts of tourism.

3bi

Understanding of this term has been tested on previous papers in a slightly different context, and so it was surprising that students did not perform

better than they did as just under a half did not score at all. Most seemed unaware that this strategy is about helping the local people who live in tourist destinations. Many incorrectly wrote of the benefits to tourists.

3bii

As in 3bi understanding of this term has been tested before. Most students did attempt to answer the question and showed some knowledge although around one quarter did not score any marks. Most popular responses related to the multiplier effect, keeping money at the destination and improvements; few referred to destinations actively seeking ways such as with festivals and events to encourage tourists to stay longer i.e. more overnight stays/weekend breaks rather than day visits.

3c

This question discriminated well between those students who had an in depth knowledge of tourism at destinations studied and who could write about how impacts had been managed with some specific detail gaining marks in Level 2 – 4 to 6; just over one quarter. Many engaged really well and wrote enthusiastically about how specific impacts were being managed. Some did not score as highly as they might as they did not fully show a sound understanding of the impacts or wrote in the vaguest terms. Students are advised that not all destinations experience the same impacts and writing clearly and in detail about two or three impacts is usually more successful than covering lots of impacts some of which will not be appropriate to the selected destination/s. Over one third scored marks in Level 1 – 1 to 3 marks for responses that tended to be theoretical and/or relating to TALC stages and not impacts.

3d

This was not well answered by the majority, just under a half failed to gain any marks here. As four statements were required many just gave the four principles of responsible tourism and had clearly not read the question, time pressure at the end of the paper may have been an issue. Others gave ideas of how tourists could act responsibly – this has been asked before but was not required here. The majority either gave inappropriate statements or ones that were too vague or simply gave variations along the 'local' theme. Most students showed knowledge but were unable to expand their knowledge to make their statements specific for the context. Some misinterpreted the context for 'responsible' and wrote about being trustworthy, providing good insurance cover, good reviews and satisfied customers.

This is an example of a typically vague/repetitive response:

- We employ locals
- We use local produce
- We respect locals
- We use environmentally friendly products

The best responses were from those who had read the question carefully, did not rush their answers and were able to show some insight into how a tour operator may support responsible tourism. These were in the minority but demonstrated higher level thinking skills being tested here.

Appropriate statements included:

- We use locally owned transport providers such as taxis and coaches for transfers
- We have an optional surcharge of £10 per booking which goes to our fund to help pay for books and computers for local school children
- We only use hotels that have an ecotourism policy
- We are investing in a new fleet of aircraft that have low emissions

These students showed an ability to apply their knowledge to make recommendations that were appropriate and specific.

Based on their performance on this paper, students should:

- Have a sound understanding and knowledge of all the terms in the unit specification and be able to describe or explain them
- Research a range of tourist destinations from the UK, Europe and worldwide (More Economically Developed World and Less Economically Developed World) so they can give real examples
- Know the different type of organisations involved in tourism development - their roles and objectives and the difference between a role and an objective
- Be used to planning and structuring their answers; using the scenarios and extended writing style questions from past question papers to practise skills
- Know what each command word means
- Deploy good exam technique in the exam, underlining the key requirements of each question and checking that answers meet the requirements
- Always pay attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar, especially on questions labelled with an asterisk * that test QWC
- Attempt every question.

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>