



Examiners' Report/ Lead Examiner Feedback

June 2014

NQF BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Firsts in
Travel and Tourism

Unit 7: Travel and Tourism Business
Environments (21627E)

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Introduction

This report has been written by the lead examiner for the BTEC Travel and Tourism Business Environments unit. It is designed to help you understand how learners performed overall in the exam. For each question there is a brief analysis of learner responses. You will also find example learner responses from Level 2 Pass, Merit and Distinction learners. We hope this will help you to prepare your learners for future examination series.

General Comments

This was the first series of Unit 7 Travel and Tourism Business Environments. It was pleasing to see how many candidates attempted the majority of questions. In particular, examiners were pleased with the range and application of responses in questions 3 and 4. These items tested both the higher order command words and Merit and Distinction grade descriptors.

Generally, learners were able to show an understanding of types of business ownership and structure and the introduction and application of new technology. However, it should be remembered that this was the first series and as such for many learners, examination technique was not as effective as it could have been. Appropriate practice and preparation for external examinations should be a priority for tutors and centres.

The paper was wide ranging in terms of grades to be awarded and for some learners this generated a number of blank responses throughout. Often questions asked learners to explain **two** ways, or provide **two** reasons, but many learners limited the number of marks they could be awarded by only providing one explanation or reason. Learners found some difficulty with the terminology used within the examination although the same terminology is used within the specification. For example, 'demographic and socio-economic trends' could not be identified by the majority of learners.

Feedback on specific questions

Q1(a)(b)(c)

These were multiple choice questions relating to a scenario about a hotel chain (LSF). Learners were required to use the information to identify LSF's business structure, size and geographical scale. A significant majority of learners gained marks here, especially in 1(a).

Q1(d)(i)

The majority of learners were able to identify 'accounts' or 'finance department' to gain the available mark here.

Q1(d)(ii)

A significant minority of learners were not able to gain the marks available here, either because they did not have the knowledge of the functions of a human resource department or they provided vague answers which could have been a function of a number of different departments, e.g. 'staff wages'. Learners need to demonstrate their knowledge in these types of questions and therefore need to provide specific answers about the functions of different departments. Sometimes responses were too similar to award twice, for example:

- 1. Responsible for recruitment**
- 2. Taking on the right people for the right role**

Again, this indicates that learners are unable to demonstrate more than limited knowledge of a variety of functions of specific departments, such as human resources. However many learners provided full and accurate answers fully demonstrating their knowledge of this topic:

- 1. Ensure staff receive relevant training for their job**
- 2. Hiring the best quality people for different roles**

Q1(e)(i)

The majority of candidates were able to identify flat or horizontal as a staffing structure. Many learners also used the term matrix, again correct.

Q1(e)(ii)

This was a more challenging question where often, if they did score marks, learners only scored 1 out of the 2 marks available. Often a full explanation was missing: learners seemed to have basic knowledge but were unsure in their explanation, for example:

- ***Lots of different levels so takes time for messages***
- ***Too many layers - it will take a lot of time***

Limited response may be a symptom of underdeveloped exam technique that should be addressed by centres when preparing learners. When explaining a disadvantage it would be expected that the learner would identify the disadvantage and then will use explanatory words such as 'because' or 'due to' to illustrate the reason how or why the identified disadvantage is a disadvantage.

One response that demonstrates this technique and gained the full 2 marks available:

If a business has a steep hierarchy the communication will be poor due to the amount of staff and departments.

Q2(a)

Many learners were able to gain the mark available here by defining the term correctly. Others did attempt a response but thought this money was connected to companies rather than individuals, e.g. 'money coming into the company'.

One response gaining the mark available:

A part of income to spend on what a person wants ie leisure activities.

Using an example to back up a statement is not required but is good practice as often it reinforces the demonstration of knowledge.

Q2(b)(i)(ii)

Most learners correctly identified the years and gained the marks available here.

Q2(c)

Often learners only gained 1 out of the 2 marks available here. Again, the second answer was too similar to the first to be able to credit twice. For example:

- 1. Companies not making a profit**
- 2. Businesses failing**

Learners needed to demonstrate their full knowledge of the impact of high unemployment and should know and be taught several ways that high and low employment rates impact the travel and tourism sector.

A minority of learners also gave vague answers such as *'not enough people visiting'* which could not be credited as the response was not clearly linked to the question asked. Learners need to read the question carefully to ensure they fully grasp what is being asked and once they have ascertained this they need to demonstrate their full knowledge through the answers provided.

One response that did gain the two marks available:

- 1. Overall demand will be reduced**
- 2. More people go on holiday in this country rather than abroad**

Q2(d)

This question was not well answered and the majority of learners did not attempt a response. Knowledge of this part of the specification appeared to be lacking. One response that did gain the marks available:

- 1. Age of population increasing**
- 2. Decline in youth markets**

Q2(e)(i)

This was a multiple choice question. Some candidates missed the opportunity to score the two marks available as they did not read the question carefully and therefore did not realise that they needed to identify **two** potential trends and therefore only identified one. Single mark questions are different as they offer fewer choices.

Q2(e)(ii)

Many learners identified trends from the table rather than explaining how the trends seen could have a positive effect on hotels. It appeared that learners did not always understand the concept of interpretation of data and this skill needs further development. It is set out clearly in the specification requirements.

Often learners gained 1 mark out of the 4 available for stating that hotels would be likely to gain more profit eg:

- 1. There are more trips so more people so they get more profit***
- 2. Trips are getting longer***

The response above gained the 1 mark for saying they get more profit. The other parts of the response are identifying trends without application to the positive effect on hotels and therefore cannot gain marks. One response that gained 3 marks:

- 1. In 2009 the mount of trips increase so more people will be spending money on hotels (1)***
- 2. Increased customer base (1) gives the hotel more money to develop their business (1)***

In the first response they gained the mark for spending more money in hotels. The second response outlined a positive outcome for hotels of the trends and then gave an explanation of how this positive outcome could help hotels further.

Question 3

It was apparent that learners felt comfortable with 3(a)(i) and 3(a)(ii) as it was about the use of technology. They had knowledge to come up with ways that EDT could use different technologies. However, further development of exam technique could help them understand the requirements of question terminology to ensure they gain the second explanatory or descriptive mark.

Q3(a)(i)

Most candidates gained 1 out of the 2 marks available. They could identify an example of an opportunity for EDT but failed to explain the opportunity and therefore did not gain the second mark. Responses such as 'advertising on Facebook' appeared many times and this is a good example of gaining the mark for 'the way' but not gaining the second mark for explanation.

One response that gained the 2 marks available:

Advertising on Facebook means many different age groups will see their products 24/7 and they can write a review.

In the response above a way has been identified and then an explanation follows of what this will mean in terms of an opportunity. At the end of the response a second way has been identified which is not creditable. Again this shows lack of knowledge of exam technique. Learners can save valuable time by providing the correct type and amount of responses as specified in the question.

Q3(a)(ii)

Learners could usually demonstrate knowledge of how mobile technology could be used, but clear application to the scenario was often missing or limited and therefore the second mark could not be awarded. For example:

They could have a way of booking quick and easy through a phone.

This contrasts with the response below which has been developed and fully applied to the scenario:

They can come up with an app which can be downloaded on a phone to show customers the times of flights which is a good way of giving information to customers.

Q3(b)

This was a demanding question with a detailed scenario. Generic answers that could apply to any takeover situation did attract marks, but full application to the scenario provided was necessary to gain 3-4 marks. For example:

There might not be enough time to run another company

This response gained 1 mark as it is true but generic and not fully applied to the situation in the scenario. Contrast this response with the one below:

***1. They wouldn't be used to selling skiing holidays
2. Skiing isn't all year around so they have to realise that they would only take 5-6 months earnings across a year.***

Both of these disadvantages are fully applied to the situation in the scenario. The first point would gain 1 mark, however, the second point is both developed and fully applied and therefore worthy of the 2 marks available.

Q3(c)

This was a demanding question and unfortunately it would appear some learners did not read and assimilate the top line – ‘EDT decided to buy Maple Tours and is now offering a range of ski holidays in Canada’.

Learners who did not read and assimilate this information tended to provide answers assuming EDT and Maple Tours were competitors and therefore their answers could not be credited.

In some instances learners confused the role of the Canadian Government with that of a rival tour operator, again leading to responses that could not be credited. This demonstrated a lack of knowledge of the travel and tourism sectors.

One response that gained 3 marks:

- 1. The Canadian government's campaign is a threat as it means that more UK tourists may not want to use EDT to book a holiday to Canada but use other better known holiday companies operating there giving them more competition***
- 2. Another threat is that by having this campaign showing all of Canada people may want to travel around the country and not just ski.***

Further development of the second point, to describe the different holiday types EDT is not offering, could have improved the explanation sufficiently for the second mark to be awarded.

Q4(a)

This question was a good discriminator. The majority of learners engaged with the scenario and although this was quite a challenging question, gained 1-2 marks. They could identify ways the event provided an opportunity but could not clearly explain why they provided an opportunity. For example:

- 1. More people will need somewhere to stay***
- 2. A lot more people will know about the hotel***

Learners who scored 3-4 marks could more fully explain two different points connected to the scenario and the way their idea provided an opportunity. For example:

- 1. Inbound tourists wouldn't be able to fly out so they would need to stay at their current accommodation longer or find accommodation to stay in***
- 2. Because of the event more people from the UK may decide to go on domestic holidays to avoid negativity from the volcanic eruption affecting their holiday arrangements***

Q4(b)

Currency exchange rates is a challenging topic and learners demonstrated a wide variance in their demonstration of knowledge and understanding. This was a question targeted at Merit and Distinction responses, therefore learners needed to demonstrate understanding through full application to the scenario given. The two explanations provided also needed to be different as marks could not be awarded twice. Again learners need to demonstrate good knowledge and understanding. For example, if learners provided two responses on offering deals, then the maximum marks that could be awarded would be 2.

Typical 1 mark answers:

- 1. Offer budget flights with meals included***
- 2. Create special offers like discounts***

The responses above show the learner could think of ways the airline could respond but the explanation of the ways is missing. The explanation in each case should be fully applied to the scenario provided.

A full mark response:

- 1. Diamond Air can offer budget flights to Sydney which would be more appealing as passengers wouldn't have to spend lots on the flights and have more to spend on holiday**
- 2. They could create all-inclusive deals with hotels as well which will encourage tourists to buy them as they will not have to worry about budgeting and the weak currency exchange rate**

The response above is fully applied to the scenario provided and is then further explained to show understanding of the impacts that weak currency exchange rates can have on customer needs.

Q4(c)

This last question is a different format from others on the paper. This question provides an opportunity for the learner to really demonstrate their ability to look at a travel and tourism scenario or issue, identify key areas to consider and to provide a rounded response.

In this series the majority of responses gained 'Level 1' marks. There were a number of reasons for this:

- Some learners provided advantages and disadvantages of the new plane rather than addressing the actual question of how Diamond Air could respond
- Other learners made one point quite clearly but then continued to repeat this point several times rather than expand on their argument or consider other areas
- Some learners appeared to have run out of time and to have hurriedly put down bullet points or left the whole answer blank

The response below gained 4 marks. The learner answered the question and looked at 2-3 ways the airline could respond with some explanation:

Diamond Air can respond by designing one themselves which gets to Sydney in a quick time and without getting off the plane and on another one which wastes time and is stressful.

Another thing is they could have special deals on their old planes like 2 for 1 which will attract families and other tourists because of how cheap the flight is. The plane will have to be efficient inside by having good entertainment touch screen TVs.

They could also use their planes to go to other places like the US or special events like the world cup.

The response below was the highest scoring response for this question (Level 3 -7 marks). The learner clearly planned the response and looked at a range of points explained in detail. The answer is well-balanced, giving weight to a variety of responses and there are always clear links to the situation in the question.

As this is a large threat to Diamond Air they will need to do something about it. Customers will prefer travelling in 4 hours however it will be more expensive and can only seat 12 people. This means that Diamond Air could offer deals and lower prices to attract more custom however this could have them lose money if it does not go well.

They could also expand their flights to different countries which will bring in a lot more custom as they will be heard of more. Or they could offer flights from higher up the country like Manchester as travelling to London is difficult for some people.

Summary of performance on the paper

Based on their performance on this paper, in future learners should:

- Be aware that there is an hour to complete this paper and plan time accordingly. The lengthier questions come towards the end of the paper so more time could be allocated for later questions.
- Spend time reading each question thoroughly to ensure the question asked is the question answered.
- Study the specification to ensure key aspects that could be tested are known, such as, for example, the types of business ownership and structure and business functions, types of economic trends, examples of demographic and socio-economic trends etc.
- Look at the command work in the question – outline, describe, explain, discuss. These words provide information on the type of response required and how the answer should be phrased. For example outline is often a basic response, whereas an explanation will require an initial idea or way to be outlined followed by expansion and/or examples to apply and illustrate why this idea or way is suitable.
- If two outlines or explanations are required half the marks will be awarded for the first response and the other half will be awarded for the second response. So if only one outline or explanation is made than half the marks allocated for the question will be lost.
- Plan the response to the last question which will require a number of different aspects to be addressed, with reasoning, for higher marks to be awarded.
- Practise responses to questions. Exam technique is important and appropriate preparation will ensure that learners approach the exam more confidently and with knowledge of how to respond to different types of questions.

Grade Boundaries

Unit	Max Mark	D	M	P	L1	U
21627E – Unit 7: Travel and Tourism Business Environments	50	41	31	21	11	0

External assessment

The suite of 'next generation' NQF BTECs include an element of external assessment. This external assessment may be through a timetabled paper-based examination, an onscreen, on demand test or a set-task conducted under controlled conditions.

What is a grade boundary?

A grade boundary is where we 'set' the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade (Distinction, Merit, Pass and Level 1 fallback).

Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries - this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark should be for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that learners receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries ensures that a learner who receives a 'Distinction' grade next year, will have similar ability to a learner who has received an 'Distinction' grade this year. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to make sure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

Variations in externally assessed question papers

Each exam we set asks different questions and may assess different parts of the unit content outlined in the specification. It would be unfair to learners if we set the same grade boundaries year on year because then it wouldn't take into account that a paper may be slightly easier or more difficult than the year before.

Grade boundaries for all papers can be found here:

<http://pastpapers.edexcel.com/content/edexcel/grade-boundaries.html>

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