

Unit 10: Business Travel Operations

Unit code:	H/600/9495
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

This unit will develop learners' knowledge of the business travel environment and the operational practices necessary to meet the needs of customers. The unit will also enable learners to gain an understanding of factors that are currently affecting business travel. Learners will also develop skills in selecting, costing and providing information for business trips.

● Unit introduction

Business travel is an often overlooked sector of the industry; however business travel is a high quality, high yield sector, which operates globally to high levels all year round. The business travel industry has to respond quickly to change in order to meet the needs of its customers. Business travel is a highly valuable, year round component industry within the travel and tourism sector.

Understanding how business travel organisations operate and how they meet the needs of their customers is essential for those who aspire to a career in business travel. It is important that learners appreciate the complexity of working within a business travel organisation and the wealth of skills and knowledge needed to be successful. This unit aims to develop knowledge and understanding in key areas and, as such, links very closely with other units in the qualification such as *Unit 9: Retail Travel Operations*.

Learners will explore the business travel environment, looking at the different types of business travel and the range of business agents and the products and services they provide. They will then examine business travel operations, including the day-to-day working practices, related legislation, trade associations and licensing, all essential in the success of any business travel organisation. Many factors, both national and global, affect business travel and the unit also provides opportunities for learners to explore recent and current factors and the effects that they have on the business travel environment. Learners will also gain the skills required to meet the needs of customers, by being able to select, cost and provide information on business travel requirements.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Know the business travel environment
- 2 Know business travel operational practices
- 3 Understand the factors affecting business travel
- 4 Be able to select, cost and provide information for business trips.

Unit content

1 Know the business travel environment

Types of business travel: incentive travel; exhibitions and trade fairs, conferences and meetings; corporate events

Business agencies: role; independent; national; global; implant; e-agent

Products and services: accommodation only; full service scheduled flights (economy, business and first class); low cost flights; transfers; surface transportation; ancillary sales eg insurance, airport parking

2 Know business travel operational practices

Working practices: procedures and documentation for selling products and services; global distribution systems eg Galileo, Amadeus, Evolvi; commission levels; sales targets; cost saving techniques (on flights, accommodation); promotional schemes eg loyalty, frequent flyer; service level agreements; working to the company and passenger profile

Related Legislation: Data Protection Act; European Union Package Travel Regulations 1992

Trade associations and Licensing: Guild of Travel Management Companies (GTMC); Civil Aviation Authority – ATOL; Association of Train Operating companies (ATOC); International Air Transport Association (IATA)

3 Understand the factors affecting business travel

Factors: global economy (growth and recession, exchange rates); technology (web and telephone conferencing, e-meetings, web-based seminars); other eg terrorism, health epidemics, political unrest

Effects: changes to company travel budgets; decrease in sales for business travel products eg first and business class travel, city centre 4 and 5 star hotel rooms; competition for the business traveller eg from budget airlines, from rail; increase in use of web-conferencing companies eg SABA, WebEx

4 Be able to select, cost and provide information for business trips

Resources: internet eg CRS, GDS; brochures

Customer brief: type of customer eg managing director, salesman; party size; dates; class of travel; departure point; board basis; standard and type of accommodation; transfers; ancillaries eg car hire

Business trip: short haul; long haul; purchasing components from a number of organisations eg flights, accommodation, car hire; surface transportation; room supplement eg single

Costings: conversions to GBP; using net rates; adding commission; multiplying rates by number of nights; accurate

Itineraries: client details; check-in details; flight numbers; departure and arrival times; accommodation information eg address, telephone number, room type; transfer arrangements; baggage allowance; elapsed travelling time; reconfirmation procedures

Information: passport information; visa information; vaccination information; procedures for alterations to booking; other eg directions, possible delays, business protocols

Format: clear; accurate; chronological

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 describe the current business travel environment	M1 explain how factors are currently affecting the business travel environment and operational practices	D1 discuss the current business travel environment and how business travel agents are responding to current challenges.
P2 describe business travel working practices		
P3 summarise business travel legislation, trade associations and licensing requirements		
P4 review the current factors affecting business travel		
P5 use appropriate resources to select, accurately cost and provide information for two business itineraries [IE 3, IE 4].	M2 justify how the costs, the itineraries and information provided fully meet the customer brief.	

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

This unit provides learners with knowledge and understanding of the business travel environment and operational practices, along with the skills needed to undertake the practical tasks required of a business agent.

Tutors could introduce the unit by discussing the difference between business travel and leisure travel, the different types of business travel and the reasons business travel is undertaken. Learners should be encouraged to consider people they know who travel for business purposes and to discuss with them how and why they undertake business travel. The discussion could lead on to the different types of business agent, providing learners with named examples that can be researched on the internet. This should be followed by looking at the role of a business agent. Tutors should facilitate discussion with learners on the range of products and services business agents provide, ensuring that learners understand the differences between these products and services, especially full service scheduled with first and business class and low cost flights and the importance of offering a wide range for business customers. Learners should spend time researching different types of business agent to identify the range of products and services they offer. Tutors need to ensure that learners understand that business agents offer most products and services on behalf of other companies and therefore act as an agent.

Learners are required to develop their knowledge of the working practices of business agents. Tutors should describe and illustrate, preferably by visits, the range of global distribution systems in operation and the procedures and documentation for selling travel services. Meeting the needs of the customer is essential for a successful business agent; tutors should facilitate discussion about service level agreements and the importance of working to the company and passenger profile. Many customers will be undertaking numerous business trips therefore the business agent must be able to implement cost saving techniques and take advantage of promotional schemes and commission levels in order to benefit the traveller, achieve required sales targets and keep the customer account. Tutors should facilitate discussion on these aspects and learners should be encouraged to investigate the range of promotional schemes available from airlines and accommodation providers. Tutors should explain to learners the legislation that business agents must adhere to; this explanation should allow learners to gain understanding of how this legislation applies and how business agents ensure this is followed by their employees.

Examples could be linked into working practices, for example data protection requirements must be followed when completing booking documentation. Trade associations and licences are vital for enabling a business agent to operate and be successful; tutors should discuss with learners the range available to business agents, what they permit the agent to do and their importance. Learners must understand that different types of business agent may have different types of licence and belong to different trade associations. Learners should investigate different business agents to identify which licences they have and to which trade associations they belong. Learners should also be encouraged to investigate the different trade associations and licences available to understand the benefits they can bring to the business agent. A visit to a business agent, or a presentation by a guest speaker, would help to develop learners' understanding of the operational practices undertaken by a business agent.

Business travel is affected by many things; tutors should discuss with learners the factors affecting business travel. Learners should undertake research on the different factors discussed to obtain current information. Group work on individual factors could be undertaken with groups presenting their findings to others, leading to open discussion. Once learners' understanding of the factors has been achieved then the effects of these factors on business travel should be discussed. Learners should be encouraged to consider the effects on the business travel environment and the operational practices.

The final learning outcome requires learners to use brochures and the internet to select and cost business travel requirements to meet the needs of customers. As a starting point, tutors should ensure learners understand the difference between short- and long-haul travel. This should be followed by tutors explaining to learners that many business trips are often put together using a number of different components from different companies in order to obtain flexibility, cost effectiveness and variety. Tutors should explain that business trips are not package -holidays- and that often a combination of products from a brochure and the internet will be used. Tutors should give examples of typical brochures, such as an accommodation-only brochure, and work through the content with learners to raise their awareness of the information included and how it can be used to meet the needs of the customer. This should be followed by tutors discussing different internet options with learners and providing examples of these. Learners should be provided with case studies to develop the ability to research and construct business trips to meet specific customer needs. This should be followed by a clear explanation of how to cost a business trip, and a number of different examples should be provided to allow learners to develop the skills needed. Examples should be varied, enabling learners to use a range of techniques to become familiar with pricing and product considerations for different types of business trip, including applying supplements and discounts. Learners are also required to provide the customers with the essential travel information they would need when travelling on the business trip they have selected. Tutors should explain the importance of providing this information to customers and demonstrate the range of sources that can be used to locate the information that must be provided.

Business travellers require travel information to be presented accurately in a clear and chronological format; tutors should explain the importance of this to learners and provide them with completed examples for illustration. Tutors should explain in detail how the information should be presented and provide learners with various exercises so that learners can develop the skills needed to present information in a clear and chronological way.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way of planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

Introduction to the unit and the assessment plan

Classroom discussion on the types of business travel

Learners to investigate the different types of business travel and identify different locations that offer facilities for business travellers

Classroom investigation into the different types of business agent, their roles using textbooks, websites

Learners to have a named example of each type of agent

Classroom investigation into the different products and services offered by different types of agent, using websites and visits to business travel agents if possible

Input on the different global distribution systems available to business agents

Learners to investigate, using websites, what these systems offer to business agents

Classroom discussion on the procedures and documentation for selling products and services and service level agreements and company and passenger profiles

Learners to complete booking documentation

Classroom discussion on cost saving techniques, promotional schemes, commission levels and sales targets

Learners to investigate, using websites, the different promotional schemes available to business travellers

Input on the different legislation that business agents must adhere to

Classroom investigation on the different legislation, using websites and textbooks

Learners to complete given case studies using gained knowledge of legislation

Classroom investigation into the different trade associations and licensing options available to business agents, using websites

Learners to consider the benefits that joining a trade association or obtaining a licence can bring

Classroom discussion on the different factors affecting business travel

Small-group activity to investigate these different factors to be presented to the rest of the group

Classroom discussion on the effects of these factors on business travel

Learners should be encouraged to consider the effects on the environment and operational practices

Small-group activity to produce a fact sheet on one selected factor and the effects

Preparation for assessment

Assignment 1: Today's Business Travel World (P1, P2, P3, P4, M1, D1)

Feedback on assessment.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

Input on the differences between short- and long-haul travel

Classroom discussion on how a business trip can be constructed

Classroom activity working through the content of an appropriate brochure (accommodation only), discussing the range of information throughout the brochure

Classroom discussion on the range of internet options available to book business requirements

Learners to investigate, using websites, the range of different options and the products they provide

Learners to complete activities to put together and cost business trips, using individual components

Classroom discussion on the information that should be contained within the customer itinerary

Learners should investigate how this information can be obtained

Input on the different additional information needed by travellers

Classroom discussion on where this information can be located

Learners to complete activities to locate and interpret travel information required by customers

Input and class discussion on how to present information to customers in an appropriate format

Preparation for assessment

Assignment 2: Business Itineraries (P5, M2)

Feedback on assessment and unit review

Assessment

The criteria can be grouped together to enable learners to expand on one criterion in order to gain higher grades. The links are as follows: P1, P2, P3, P4, M1 and D1; P5 and M2. Where possible, learners should be encouraged and given opportunities to achieve the relevant higher grades at the same time as they attempt the appropriate pass criteria.

Centres should design their assessment strategies to meet a range of individual needs and the local work environment. Assessment should encourage the learner to apply knowledge gained from this unit and reflect on understanding gained from other units.

P1 – P2 – P3 – P4 – M1 – D1

For P1, learners are required to describe the current business travel environment. Their descriptions should include the role of a business travel agent with named examples of the different types of business agent and the different types of business travel. Learners' descriptions need to show awareness that not all types of business agents deal with all types of business travel. Business travel agents offer a wide range of products and services and learners should provide examples for those listed in the content. To demonstrate their knowledge, learners could include a short definition of what is meant by the various terms used: accommodation only; full service scheduled flights including detail on the different classes of service available; low cost flights; transfers and ancillary sales.

To achieve P2, learners are required to describe the business travel working practices of different types of business travel agents, ensuring that learners cover all the required content. The descriptions should be detailed and learners should include findings from independent research that has been undertaken.

To achieve P3, learners are required to summarise the related legislation, trade association and licensing requirements that business travel agents require and adhere to in order to operate successfully. Learners' summaries should cover the specified content and should be detailed. The evidence can be presented in a written or verbal format.

For P4, learners are required to review current factors that are affecting the business travel environment. The factors reviewed should include the global economy, technology and one other that is relevant at the time of delivery. For each factor, the effects associated with it should be identified and learners must include those effects listed in the content and any others relevant within their review. The evidence can be presented in a written or verbal format, eg a powerpoint presentation with supporting handouts.

To achieve M1, learners are required to explain how the three factors discussed for P4 are currently affecting the business travel environment and the operational practices. For this criterion learners should develop the information provided for P4 and then develop their explanation to discuss the effects on working practices, related legislation and licensing requirements. Learners should include industry examples to allow a full explanation to be provided. The evidence can be presented in a written or verbal format, eg a verbal presentation with time for questions and answers.

To achieve D1, learners are required to discuss the current business travel environment and explain how business travel agents are responding to today's challenges. For example learners could discuss the effect of the global recession on businesses and how this is changing the products and services being offered by business agents. Technology is often replacing the need for business travel and learners could discuss how this is impacting business agents and how they are responding to this change. Learners should be encouraged to use statistics and other published information to add depth to their evidence. The evidence can be presented in a written or verbal format, eg a verbal presentation with time for questions and answers.

P5 – M2

To achieve P5, learners should be presented with two different customer briefs allowing coverage of the specified content for selecting and costing business trips using both brochures and the internet. Client brief 1 must be for a short-haul business trip and include a minimum of two centres, eg Paris and London. The brief must allow learners to locate components from a number of organisations and include surface transportation. At least one component must come from a brochure. Client brief 2 must be for a long-haul business trip and include a minimum of two centres, eg New York and Washington D.C. The brief must allow learners to locate components from a number of organisations and apply a room supplement. Learners must submit an itinerary for both briefs. Itineraries should be accurate and presented clearly and chronologically, specifying all necessary details as listed in the content and include any additional information, eg directions, business protocols, together with a full costing. To reflect business practice, costings should include at least one component that requires conversion to GBP and at least one component that is provided at net cost and requires commission to be added. For the purposes of assessment, this evidence must be supported by copies of brochure pages, screen shots or printouts to confirm costs of the individual components and all the arrangements, together with calculations relating to the costings, eg the currency conversion, addition of commission rates, rates per person per night multiplied by the number of nights.

To achieve M2, the learner must build on the evidence provided for P5 and justify how the selected components meet the requirements of the customer brief. Learners should comment on why they selected the components; this could be for convenience in relation to time and/or in relation to cost etc. It is not possible to achieve M2 if the evidence for P5 is not accurate, the selections not appropriate and the itineraries are not presented in a professional format.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, P2, P3, P4, M1, D1	Assignment 1: Today's Business Travel World	You are working for a business travel agent and have been asked to put together a powerpoint training presentation with supporting handouts about the business travel environment and the operational practices of business travel agents	A powerpoint presentation with supporting handouts
P5, M2	Assignment 2: Business Itineraries	Working as a business agent, you have been asked to deal with two different customer requests	Production of two business itineraries and associated costings

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC travel and tourism sector suite. This unit has particular links with:

Level 2	Level 3
The UK Travel and Tourism Sector	Investigating the Travel and Tourism Sector
	Retail Travel Operations
	Airfares and Ticketing I

Essential resources

For this unit, learners need access to the internet and access to published material including the travel trade press, national newspapers and travel and tourism textbooks.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

It is highly recommended that learners investigate and, where possible, visit a number of different business travel organisations in order to understand the range of products and services they offer and their working practices. For the purposes of assessment it would be very beneficial for learners to form links with at least two business travel agents so that they can investigate working practices and gain knowledge of the products and services they provide their business customers. Links would also facilitate discussions about the factors that are currently affecting business travel.

This unit links to the following NOS in Travel and Tourism:

- TT25 Contribute to business travel account management.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Dale G – *BTEC Level 3 National Travel and Tourism Student Book 1* (Pearson 2010) ISBN 9781846907272

Dale G – *BTEC Level 3 National Travel and Tourism Student Book 2* (Pearson 2010) ISBN 9781846907289

Dale G, Kelly M, King C and Jefferies M – *BTEC Level 3 National Travel and Tourism Teaching Resource Pack* (Pearson 2010) ISBN 9781846907296

Davidson R and Cope B – *Business Travel and Tourism: Conferences, Incentive Travel, Exhibitions, Corporate Hospitality and Corporate Travel* (Pearson Higher Education, 2002) ISBN 9780582404441

James E, Thirlaway J and Woodhouse U – *BTEC National in Travel and Tourism* (Hodder Education, 2007) ISBN 9780340945735

Trade Publications

Travel Trade Gazette

Business Traveller – available at www.businesstraveller.com

Websites

Amadeus	www.amadeus.com
Association of Train Operating Companies	www.atoc.org
Civil Aviation Authority	www.caa.co.uk
Columbus World Travel Guide	www.worldtravelguide.net
Evolvi	www.evolvi.co.uk
Expedia	www.expedia.co.uk
Foreign Office travel information	www.fco.gov.uk
Gazetteers, travel information (please note this website requires a licence)	www.gazetteers.com
Guild Travel Management Companies	www.gtmc.org
International Air Transport Association	www.iata.co.uk

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	exploring different options for business travel, considering different perspectives and evaluating information [IE 3, IE 4]

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Creative thinkers	exploring possibilities for business itineraries [CT 1]
Self-managers	Meeting assessment deadlines [SM 2, SM 3, SM 5, SM 6]

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	exploring business travel legislation, trade associations and licensing requirements
Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used	planning assignment work
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	exploring business travel legislation, trade associations and licensing requirements
Follow and understand the need for safety and security practices	ongoing
Troubleshoot	as required
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	exploring business travel legislation, trade associations and licensing requirements
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	exploring business travel legislation, trade associations and licensing requirements
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records. 	summarising business travel legislation, trade associations and licensing requirements
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	summarising business travel legislation, trade associations and licensing requirements
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	summarising business travel legislation, trade associations and licensing requirements
Evaluate the selection and use of ICT tools and facilities used to present information	as required
Mathematics	
Understand routine and non-routine problems in a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations	using appropriate resources to select, accurately cost and provide information for two business itineraries
Identify the situation or problem and the mathematical methods needed to tackle it	using appropriate resources to select, accurately cost and provide information for two business itineraries
Select and apply a range of skills to find solutions	using appropriate resources to select, accurately cost and provide information for two business itineraries
Use appropriate checking procedures and evaluate their effectiveness at each stage	using appropriate resources to select, accurately cost and provide information for two business itineraries

Skill	When learners are ...
Interpret and communicate solutions to practical problems in familiar and unfamiliar routine contexts and situations	using appropriate resources to select, accurately cost and provide information for two business itineraries
Draw conclusions and provide mathematical justifications	using appropriate resources to select, accurately cost and provide information for two business itineraries
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	discussing business travel legislation, trade associations and licensing requirements
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	exploring business travel legislation, trade associations and licensing requirements
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions effectively and persuasively	summarising business travel legislation, trade associations and licensing requirements