

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

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PL Hospitality (HO301)
Paper 01

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Unit 1: Investigating the Hospitality Industry

(HO301)

General comments

This was the third January series of the external examination paper for hospitality taken in Phase 2 of the Diploma. HO301 requires candidates to demonstrate an understanding of a number of key aspects of the UK and worldwide hospitality industry; these include the scope of the sector, types of outlets, the impact to the economy, career opportunities, social, economic and industry trends, research methods and sources.

The exam paper performed as expected with candidates being able to give a range of responses to a number of questions related to the unit specification. The overall performance of the paper indicated that the analytical questions again presented a challenge for a high proportion of candidates. It is clear that strong emphasis has been placed upon learning key aspects of the UK and worldwide hospitality industry and it was positive to see that the majority of candidates made a good attempt at the examination paper and were allocated marks accordingly.

Q1 (a)

This question gave candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of outlets within the commercial sector of the UK hospitality industry. This question was answered well by most candidates as they were able to give correct examples of outlets within the commercial sector thus being allocated marks accordingly. The range of responses given were very similar and consisted of restaurant, hotel and public house, however it was clear that learning had taken place and most candidates were able to differentiate between outlets in the commercial sector and the hospitality sector of the hospitality industry. Only a couple of candidates did not achieve full marks for this question based on incorrect responses to the question criteria.

Q1 (b)

This question allowed candidates to expand upon their knowledge of the differences between the hospitality services sector and commercial sector within the UK hospitality industry. The range of responses included an outline such as the types of outlets, services offered by the sector and whether the sector operated for a primary or secondary purpose.

Around 50% of learners answered this question satisfactorily being able to identify two differences between the hospitality services sector and the commercial sector of the UK hospitality industry. There still appeared to be some confusion about whether the hospitality services sector operates for a profit and/or is run by government. This is where learner responses

were incorrect and did not differentiate between the two. The remainder of candidates were either allocated no marks due to insufficient responses such as confusing the sectors or not demonstrating any knowledge whatsoever. Only a very small percentage of candidates were allocated a total of 4 marks for a full outline.

Q2

Q2 required candidates to explain the importance of inbound tourism to the economy of the UK hospitality industry. The majority of learners were able to give partial responses to this question thus being awarded a limited amount of marks.

It was clear from the range of responses that candidates did not understand the term 'inbound' tourism as the range of examples included; people travelling abroad, disposable income and generally wanting to travel. The majority of responses did not address the question with overall performance of this question being weak; it was also evident from the range of responses that some candidates struggled with the explanation part of the question. The small minority of candidates that did perform well on this question were the ones who were able to give a full or partial explanation to the question criteria and use a variety of examples to support their response. Other candidates included a brief outline that indicated that they had some knowledge of the importance of inbound tourism to the economy of the UK hospitality industry but did not expand their response to be explicit enough to gain full marks or demonstrate a greater degree of knowledge and understanding.

Q3 (a)(i)

This question appears to have proved challenging for some candidates, requiring them to analyse how economic trends impact on the UK hospitality industry. Whilst the majority of learners showed some understanding of trends the analysis part of the question was lacking. Responses were mainly of a descriptive nature and ranged from a variety of economic trends including, a rise in VAT, recession, disposable income and unemployment.

The depth of knowledge was weak overall with only the odd learner being able to fully demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the set criteria. Some candidates did appear confused with economic, social and/or industry trends and gave responses suitable for other elements of Q3. The remainder of candidates were allocated no marks based on either a confused response or no analysis whatsoever.

There were a significant number of students that did not fully attempt the question by giving very short responses, however by doing this they did not provide an analysis of the trends and therefore failed to score highly. There was a lost opportunity for candidates to fully demonstrate their

knowledge and understanding and therefore analyse the impact of economic trends which was disappointing.

Q3(a)(ii)

Similarly as with Q3(a)(i) the grasp of trends was somewhat limited. The majority of learners attempted the question thus being able to be awarded partial marks. However, the analysis element was again weak with this being reflected in overall learner performance. Favoured responses included; coffee shops, healthy eating and staying at home to eat and drink as oppose to dining out. The majority of candidates were allocated 2, 3 or 4 marks demonstrating only some knowledge of social trends affecting the UK hospitality industry.

Q3(b)

This question presented an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of how the UK hospitality industry responds to changes in economic and social trends. Whilst the majority of learners had showed some understanding in the earlier parts of Q3 this element was slightly more positive. Although the responses were mainly of a descriptive nature they did show some understanding of how the UK hospitality industry responds to changes in economic and social trends.

The main responses detailed included; offers and promotions, incentives for customers to visit UK hospitality establishments, price cuts, offering different products and services and carrying out industry specific research. The ranges of responses given were not very comprehensive although the majority of learners were able to collect marks for this part of the question. There were partial marks awarded across the board demonstrating that candidates did understand the question and were able to respond accordingly.

Q4(a)

Q4(a) required candidates to identify two accommodation focussed job opportunities that would offer a career in the hospitality industry. The majority of learners were able to answer this question correctly giving two examples of accommodation focussed job opportunities within a hospitality setting. A small proportion of learners gave other job opportunities that were not accommodation specific so were therefore not awarded marks.

Favoured responses consisted of receptionist and housekeeping job opportunities. There were some candidates who confused accommodation focussed job opportunities and gave more general responses that included chef, general manager and/or duty manager. Marks were not awarded on this basis as they were not explicit enough in relation to the question

criteria. It is essential that candidates can act on the question in order to be allocated full marks for what is a relatively easy question.

Q4(b)

This element of the paper required candidates to state four different skills needed to successfully fulfil one of the job opportunities identified in Q4(a). Most candidates were able to answer this question in partial format stating the skills that were needed to successfully fulfil one of the job opportunities. A range of skills were identified that included customer service, people management, IT/computer skills and handling complaints. Only a small proportion of learners did not achieve full marks for this question as they gave more generic responses that included attributes as oppose to skills.

Q4(c)

This question allowed candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the range and responsibilities of a supervisor in the hospitality industry. All learners attempted this question with a high degree of success thus being able to be awarded a spread of marks across the question criteria. Typical responses included managing staff, monitoring standards, ensuring that staff fulfilled their work duties and dealing with problems and complaints. It was positive to see that candidates had understood the question and were able to respond with examples that were directly relevant to the question criteria.

Q5(a)

Q5(a) gave candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the benefits to a school/college leaver of pursuing a career in the hospitality industry. It was clear from the range of responses that candidates understood the benefits to pursuing a career within the hospitality industry and gave examples that consisted of ability to travel, increased salary and the opportunity to develop a variety of skills.

Some candidates gave responses that included meeting new people and job satisfaction; however these were not awarded marks as they were not explicitly related to the hospitality industry or the question criteria. Candidate responses indicated they could identify a range of factors that would influence an individual's choice when pursuing a career within the hospitality industry; however it would have been positive to see a greater range of responses taken explicitly from the specifications.

Q5(b)

Q5(b) required candidates to describe the different routes to achieving a management role in the hospitality industry. This question was the most successful of the paper with most learners being awarded partial or full

marks based on their responses. The majority of candidates correctly chose an industry and academic route when pursuing a management role within the hospitality industry thus demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of progression routes available to them. A low proportion of candidates stated the education/apprenticeship and industry route which was positive to see. The remainder of candidates chose the education and an industry position gaining promotion as the most effective way to achieving a management role in the sector.

It is positive to see that candidates are aware of the current routes available to them when entering the UK hospitality industry and have the ability to discuss such routes to demonstrate a good level of knowledge and understanding to meet question criteria.

Q6(a)

Q6(a) required candidates to identify two research methods that could be used to explore trends and changes in the UK hospitality industry. A high proportion of learners achieved full marks in this element of the examination paper demonstrating they had a good knowledge of research methods used within the sector. Only a small minority of learners did not achieve full marks for their responses as they had stated sources, not methods.

Q6(b)

This question required candidates to state two sources that a hospitality manager can use to identify changes in consumer demand. Similarly as with Q6(a) the majority of learners were able to answer this question correctly stating the types of sources available demonstrating they had a good knowledge of research sources used within the sector. Only a small minority of learners did not achieve full marks for their responses as they had stated methods, not sources.

Q6(c)

Q6(c) required candidates to analyse how research methods might improve business performance in a hospitality context. This question was designed to challenge candidates and allow them to demonstrate their knowledge of the application of research methods for a specific task. Unfortunately, no candidates were awarded full marks for this element of the examination paper due to the lack of analysis, depth and clarity in the response.

Most candidates were only awarded partial marks for an identification or outline of how research methods might be used to improve business performance. Overall, there was a lack of analysis in the responses and a lost opportunity for the Mark Band 3 learner to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the set criteria. Typical responses included researching the competition, speaking to customers and changing products and services. Similarly as with previous questions candidates demonstrated a low level of analysis within their response.

Some candidates were able to provide a more justified analysis and gain partial marks but the majority listed the advantages of using research methods to gain information about the hospitality sector, not how it might improve business performance. A more comprehensive answer that detailed and analysed 'how' research methods might be used to improve business performance would have allowed candidates to be awarded a higher grade.

Recommendations for centres:

- Ensure that candidates are able to understand, and distinguish between the use of active verbs in the question i.e. state, identify, outline, describe, evaluate and analyse.
- Use practice revision sessions for candidates to assist them in structuring examination answers to ensure full marks can be allocated.
- Ensure that centres cover the whole unit content in delivered sessions and practice assessment of each component where necessary.
- Use past exam questions and mark schemes with candidates to identify where allocation of marks are awarded.
- Use SAM material to develop a range of skills within the Diploma programme.
- Use practice assessment sessions when necessary to allow candidates to develop confidence and ability in examination technique.
- Attend appropriate Edexcel training events that focus on planning and preparation for future Diploma assessment.

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