

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

Principal Learning
Hospitality, Unit 1

HO301: Investigating the Hospitality
Industry

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General comments

This is the fourth summer series of the Principal Learning examination paper for hospitality taken in Phase 2 of the Diploma. Unit HO301 requires learners 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 and research sources. During this June 2013 series the examination paper performed as expected with learners being able to give a range of responses to questions related to the unit specification. The overall performance of the paper indicated that the analytical questions and questions related to trends within the UK hospitality industry again presented a challenge for a high proportion of learners. However, it was clear from the range of responses provided that overall knowledge and understanding had been demonstrated effectively thus enhancing the final grade. Responses further demonstrated that the majority of learners made a good attempt at the examination paper and were therefore allocated successful marks accordingly.

Question 1 (a)

This question allowed learners to demonstrate their understanding of the commercial sector and the hospitality services sector of the UK hospitality industry. The majority of learners were able to answer this question correctly providing a suitable outline and naming establishments in each of the relevant sectors. Typical responses included the types of outlets, services offered by the sector and whether the sector operated for a primary or secondary purpose. Unfortunately, there were a small number of learners that still appeared to be confused about whether the hospitality services sector operates for a profit. This is where learner responses were incorrect and did not differentiate the primary function of the hospitality services sector. Learners are still having difficulty differentiating between the commercial and hospitality services sector of the hospitality industry and in a small number of cases confusing the establishments in each.

Question 1 (b)

This question gave learners the opportunity to state indicators of how the UK hospitality industry is measured. Over half of learners were able to respond to this question correctly being able to state indicators used including; number of people employed, number of outlets and economic contribution to the economy. Other responses could have included; types of outlets, profit within the sector, food and drink sales and/or number of meals served by the UK hospitality industry. Unfortunately there was slight confusion with some learners about the indicators that could be used with responses including primary and secondary, unfortunately these were not explicit enough to be allocated appropriate marks. One learner did not

attempt the question at all and therefore missed an opportunity to collect valuable marks at this early stage in the paper. The remainder of learners responded with suitable examples and picked up marks accordingly.

Question 2

Question 2 required learners to give an outline of how the UK hospitality impacts on other industries in the UK. This question appeared challenging for some learners with confusion being demonstrated about 'how' the hospitality industry impacts on other industries. However, all learners attempted this question and were able to collect a proportion of marks based on responses such as profit and growth within the sector and links to tourism. It was felt that learners had not fully understood question criteria. There was some outline within the responses but they were non-specific in most cases. Other correct responses included economic growth, employment, changes in consumer spend and growth of niche markets/establishments. Some learners presented a very brief outline not fully explaining their response thus not being able to collect full marks. However, within the range of correct responses it was clear that some learners had understood the question and responded accordingly.

Question 3 (a)

This question allowed learners to analyse how economic trends impact on the accommodation sector of the UK hospitality industry. It was clear that the majority of learners had a good grasp of economic trends with responses ranging from recession, taxation, VAT, disposable income, rise in customer confidence, change in consumer demand, revenue generated and employment rates. Whilst the majority of learners demonstrated a good understanding of economic trends responses provided were mainly of a descriptive nature and did not specifically analyse the impact to the accommodation sector. Confusion in differentiating industry, social and economic trends led to some learners responding incorrectly against question criteria. Whilst their incorrect response did demonstrate understanding of other trends it seems that the question was unfortunately misunderstood. The depth of response was satisfactory overall with only a small number of learners being able to fully demonstrate knowledge and understanding to a moderate analytical level. There was overall a lost opportunity for learners to fully analyse the impact of industry trends to the accommodation sector. However, most learners were able to collect partial marks for this question which was positive.

Question 3(b)

This question presented an opportunity for learners to describe how a hospitality manager with a knowledge of social trends can increase revenue in a commercial hospitality outlet. The majority of learner responses for this element of Question 3 were positive and demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the question criteria. Typical responses included; changing

menus and introducing new products. Unfortunately these responses were not explicit enough to allow learners to obtain full marks for the question. Other responses that may have been given could have included offers and promotions, incentives for customers i.e. loyalty schemes, price cuts, offering products and services specific to a customer group and carrying out research on other establishments to match what competitors were doing. All learners attempted this question with moderate success and it was clear from all responses that they had some understanding of what social trends were.

Question 3(c)

This question required learners to explain one other trend, other than economic and social trends that currently impacts on the UK hospitality industry. It was clear from responses given by learners that they had understood the question and correctly identified industry trends as the other suitable example. Typical responses ranged from the demand for boutique hotels and value range of hotels to vegetarianism, healthy eating and the popularity of café culture. Whilst these responses were positive and demonstrated learner knowledge and understanding of question criteria they were again limited across the majority of learners and did not demonstrate a wide enough range to allow learners to obtain full marks for this question. It was however positive that all learners attempted this question and were able to be allocated marks accordingly.

Question 4(a)

This question allowed learners the opportunity to compare the different range of skills needed for an events coordinator and housekeeping supervisor working in the UK hospitality industry. A high proportion of learners were able to answer this question correctly stating the difference and similarities in skills for the two named job roles. It was positive to see that learners had understood the question and demonstrated their knowledge accordingly. Some learner responses did lack depth of comparison but were still able to collect partial marks for this question. Other learners provided a detailed comparison and it was clear from these responses that they had a good knowledge of question criteria. The remainder of learner responses contained a description of the skills and did not fully expand their response to provide a comparison as was stipulated in the question. However, a good range of responses were given for this question by each learner with marks being allocated successfully across various levels.

Question 4(b)

This question gave learners the opportunity to explain why customer service skills are important to work successfully in the UK and worldwide hospitality industry. The majority of learners were able to respond accordingly to this question correctly stating the importance of customer

service skills within the hospitality sector. Learners provided some good examples on the importance of customer service skills including repeat custom, word of mouth recommendations, enhanced reputation and an increase in profit. Overall, learners demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of the question criteria and were allocated marks accordingly.

Question 5(a)

Question 5(a) required learners to state four benefits offered by the hotel sector of the UK hospitality industry that could influence a person's career choice. Most learners were able to demonstrate a good knowledge of the benefits of working in the hotel sector of the UK hospitality industry and were successfully allocated marks. Responses ranged from ability to travel, enhanced incentives, development of new skills and higher pay. Other typical responses included the opportunity to gain qualifications and develop new skills. There were some learners that gave responses that included meeting new people and job satisfaction which were not awarded marks due to not being explicit enough and could have been applied to any sector. There was however overall high marks awarded for the majority of learners for this question which was positive to see as it also demonstrated they had understood question criteria and had an insight into the range of what the sector has to offer its employees.

Question 5(b)

Question 5(b) gave learners the opportunity to evaluate the routes to achieving a senior management position within the UK hospitality industry. This question was answered successfully by the majority of learners with responses being directly applicable to the question criteria. The routes all learners were able to evaluate included the industry and educational route. Most learners were able to also give examples within each case thus further demonstrating their understanding of the question. Responses included an industry and/or academic route i.e. undertaking training at a college or university, developing skills by working their way through positions within the industry and gaining promotion and securing a place on a trainee management programme with an employer. A low proportion of learners also stated the apprenticeship option which was positive to see. It was clear that learners had understood the question and were allocated marks accordingly. Only a small minority of learners did not provide a fully explicit response but were awarded partial marks based on their response.

Question 6(a)

Question 6(a) allowed learners to identify one example of primary research used by the hospitality industry. The majority of learners were able to collect full marks for this question in responding accordingly to examples of primary research sources. Whilst the main responses included questionnaires and surveys it was positive that full/partial marks could be

awarded. An understanding of primary research was demonstrated by the majority of learners for this element of the HO301 examination paper.

Question 6(b)

Question 6(b) allowed learners to identify one example of secondary research used by the hospitality industry. The majority of learners were able to collect full marks for this question in responding accordingly to examples of secondary research sources. Whilst the main responses included internet, magazines and newspapers it was positive that full/partial marks could be awarded. An understanding of secondary research was demonstrated by the majority of learners for this element of the HO301 examination paper.

Question 6(c)

The final element of the HO301 paper gave learners an opportunity to gain valuable marks when analysing how a hospitality manager can use primary and secondary research to provide an insight into the changing UK consumer market. Overall there was a moderate response to this question with learners being able to explain how primary and secondary research could be used. However, unfortunately the 'analytical' part of learner responses was lacking thus not allowing full marks to be awarded. There was however some good insight provided by learners as to what can be measured when researching the UK consumer market, although detail of 'how' primary and secondary can be used in this context was lacking. Responses included researching the competition, understanding trends and identifying niche markets within the industry. Whilst the correct responses demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of question criteria it was again the analysis part of the response that lost learners vital marks. Some learners were able to provide a more justified response and were awarded higher marks accordingly. A more comprehensive answer that analysed 'how' primary and secondary research could be used to provide an insight into the changing UK consumer market would have allowed all learners to be awarded a higher mark overall.

Additional comments

Most learners made a good attempt at the examination paper in this summer 2013 series and their responses indicated that the majority had a satisfactory/good understanding of issues affecting the UK and worldwide hospitality industry. Again, and unfortunately it was the more in-depth questions that learners did not expand upon their responses to. This resulted in valuable marks being lost as learners were unable to provide explicit responses to question criteria. As with previous series learners did not fully adhere to the active verb within the question which impacted on their overall mark.

Recommendations for centres

- Ensure that learners 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 learners 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 learners 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 learners 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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