Unit 8: The Airport Experience

Delivery guidance

Approaching the unit

Airports have changed a great deal in recent years, due to a complex combination of legal, safety and security requirements together with a vastly increased number of passengers, whose expectations of service continue to rise. In this unit, learners will find out how airports have adapted, developed and improved efficiency to meet these demands and what the airport experience is like, both for passengers and employees of the airport.

You should give your learners the opportunity to visit a commercial airport, especially if they have never flown, so they can look at landside operations. If it is possible for you to form a partnership and arrange an official visit, that would be ideal. Alternatively, if possible, you could buy low price tickets on a budget airline for a day trip; this would give learners the experience of passing through two airports for departure and arrival. You could incorporate this with another unit (such as units 1, 2, 4 or 10), to go to a visitor attraction, for instance. Other useful resources include online airport plans, virtual tours and websites (see the Resources section at the end of this guide). Some learners will have their own personal experience of airports as travellers and you can encourage them to incorporate this in their assignments.

Access to the internet is essential for this unit to enable learners to research up-to-date immigration and visa information, airport plans and programmes relating to airports.

Delivering the learning aims

Learning aim A

This learning aim is all about examining who uses airports, the journeys they take through the airport and what happens at each stage of the process. To fully understand the facilities on offer, learners will need to investigate economy, business and first classes airside and landside in departures and arrivals. A sensible way to do this would be to compare the experience of a business passenger as they pass through the airport with that of an economy passenger. This will prepare learners well for the assessment task. Learners will need to consider the key areas of safety and security, together with passenger needs and wants. Your focus will be the geography/layout and other key aspects of an airport and how these interconnect from the point of view of the passenger. If you can arrange a visit to an international airport, it will really help learners' understanding of this aim.

Learning aim B

This learning aim focuses on legislation and regulation of airports and air travel while also considering the role of people working at the airport. You should introduce your learners to each of the different stages of the airport experience for passengers. Introduce them to the correct documentation and the ways in which multiple flights from different airlines are managed to ensure that the timetable is followed effectively. You could ask learners to consider the wider consequences of an inefficient airport (delays elsewhere, wrong luggage arriving, planes out of position etc.). You need to prepare learners so that they can take on the role of airport staff for their assessment. They will need to be familiar with procedures and able to use their knowledge to meet passenger needs effectively, while not compromising the safety or security of the passengers, airport staff and airline cabin crew.

Learning aim C

This learning aim focuses on how airports are managed in order to maintain their efficiency on a day-to-day basis, during peak times and unforeseen circumstances. Learners should consider what happens landside and airside, outbound and inbound, and how airports prevent congestion within the terminal. You can also ask learners to examine extreme situations and their impacts on passengers and airports, for the airport studied and others worldwide.
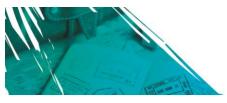
For both learning aims B and C, you could invite a guest speaker from an airport who undertakes one or more key roles, in particular to talk about those areas of an airport that are not accessible by the general public, which your learners will not be able to see for themselves. Or you could use Skype or similar if visits are not practical. Alternatively, there are also plenty of news websites available online, which can also be good sources of evidence.

Assessment model

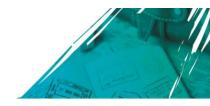| Learning aim	Key content areas	Recommended assessment approach
A Investigate outbound and inbound leisure and business passenger- handling processes, facilities and services in airports	**A1** Different types of passengers **A2** Outbound passenger handling (landside) **A3** Outbound passenger handling (airside) **A4** Inbound passenger handling (airside) **A5** Inbound passenger handling (landside)	An airport plan on which learners have plotted the outbound and inbound passenger journey through the terminal for leisure and business travellers. Notes or inserts should be added or linked to the plan to explain the processes, facilities and services along the route. Supplementary evidence in written or verbal format that further explains and evaluates how the key processes comply with legal and regulatory requirements to ensure the safety and security of everyone.
B Carry out passenger- handling processes in the role of the passenger service agent at check-in and at the gate	**B1** Passenger communication and handling processes at check-in to comply with legislation and regulations and ensure passenger safety **B2** Passenger-handling processes at the gate to comply with legislation and regulations and ensure passenger safety	Teacher observation report of role play with different passengers at check-in and at the gate.
C Examine how airports ensure efficient outbound and inbound passenger flow through airports during normal, non-standard and irregular operations	**C1** Areas prone to congestion during normal operations **C2** Situations that cause major congestion or closure and their potential impact **C3** Measures to overcome minor or major congestion problems and minimise potential impact on passengers	A report or presentation with visual aids and an airport plan that identifies and plots areas prone to congestion during normal operations, with linked explanations of the measures that can be taken to prevent or minimise these situations. A report or presentation with visual aids evaluating how other situations cause major congestion or even airport closure, with linked explanations of the measures that can be put in place. A further evaluation of how both minor and major congestion situations can potentially impact passengers and whether the measures taken are effective.

Assessment guidance

The recommended assessment of this unit is through three internally assessed assignments. Assignments are holistic for this qualification so tasks should not prescribe pass, merit or distinction criteria, but allow learners to achieve all the criteria by completing the task in full.

For learning aim A, Assignment 1 could be undertaken by producing a plan of an airport that shows one passenger's route with additional information explaining the facilities and the legal paperwork needed to move through the airport to board a flight, and when disembarking. Learners will need a clear and detailed plan for this and therefore downloading this from the relevant airport's website and printing it at a high quality and at a reasonable size will be a critical element of the learner being able to adequately access this task. Learners will need to annotate each area of the airport and comment on each section, analysing the choices available to enhance the experience for both outbound and inbound passengers and the potential use of technology. This could be presented on a display board, perhaps using colour coding, to suggest facilities/services, processes and regulation/law and to ensure learners cover all aspects. Using two separate identical plans mapping outbound on one and inbound on the other, may make the display easier to understand. The plans could be supported by a written evaluation of how key processes comply with legal and regulatory requirements to ensure the safety and security of everyone in the airport.

For learning aim B, Assignment 2 involves practical activities requiring focused and detailed simulated role-plays for different scenarios at airport check-in and the gate. Learners need to prepare thoroughly so they can demonstrate they know how to deal with passengers. You will need to video their performances and/or use 'Observation Records' to give sufficient evidence, as well as learner notes. The role plays must cover all aspects of the actual process as though the learner was working in an international airport.

Assignment 3 can use a plan identical to the one in Assignment 1 so that the learner is familiar with the layout of the airport. Clear identification of congestion points that occur regularly, and those that may result from extraordinary activity must be added to the plan. Learners should offer ways of relieving the congestion for each location within the airport and in a number of situations (for instance, delays from weather would be dealt with very differently to a terrorist attack). Learners also need to be able to comment on their information (either on paper and/or as a face-to-face presentation). To access higher criteria, learners must evaluate how these congestion issues may affect passengers and whether the management strategies used are effective.

Getting started

This gives you a starting place for one way of delivering the unit, based around the recommended assessment approach in the specification.
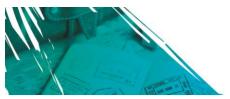
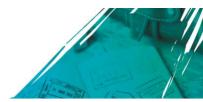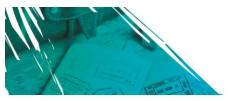| Unit 8: The Airport Experience |
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| **Introduction**

Where possible, a visit to an airport would be an excellent introduction to this unit. Ideally, the airport should be of a reasonable size, although not so large as to be unmanageable. Regional international airports are probably ideal, or just one terminal of a larger airport will suffice. (As this unit requires a focus on visas/immigration, there is little point selecting a domestic airport.) You should arrange this visit with the airport management rather than just turning up, even if you are not meeting with any airport staff or going airside at any point. As airports are busy working places and security is of paramount importance, having a cohort of learners wandering around aimlessly could cause unnecessary angst! Also, make sure your learners have some rules of etiquette in place for the visit: move out of the way of people who are in a rush, hold doors open for people with luggage, move out of the way of people with luggage, do not have conversations relating to terrorism while on site (even in the context of learning about it), only use phones where allowed etc. Discuss with learners why such rules are needed as it will strengthen the concept of the purpose of airports to them.

Alternatively, there are multiple television series relating to working airports which follow staff around and show how the airport functions. You will need to choose your episodes/excerpts carefully to give relevant information to learners.

In addition, some airports offer a virtual tours experience (see the Resources section at the end of this guide and/or type 'airport virtual tour' into a search engine), which you could also use to good effect here. |

Learning aim A: Investigate outbound and inbound leisure and business passenger-handling processes, facilities and services in airports

- For content area A1, ask learners to suggest a range of passenger types that are likely to use an airport and then sort them into categories as listed in the specification. For each passenger group, ask learners to identify the three most important facilities needed for that group (e.g. for those needing assistance – children's buggies/prams to the gate, Braille signage and T-loops). You could also ask learners to take this list of facilities with them to the airport when they visit (or look at an airport plan online) and see which are/are not provided. At this stage, you are not asking your learners to look in-depth, but rather helping them to gain a general overview so that they start engaging with passenger needs and wants and airport infrastructure. This will broaden the horizons of the learner from their own needs at an airport to the needs of other people and widen their perspective beyond the immediate airport terminal building to include the whole airport site.

- For content area A2, allocate learners different airports and origin points for passengers in pairs. They have to find out transport options for each and for different passenger types.

- Learners can create a collection or display of signage from airports around the world (you can easily collate these by an internet image search of 'airport signage'). Can learners identify which language(s) are used in the signage and link this to passenger needs? Discuss why signage is so uniform across all airports and why symbols are used in favour of words. Set up and ask learners to undertake a similar task with departure boards. How are signs and screens used in airports and where are they put? Consider why they are put where they are.

- For check-in processes, set learners a task to find the next five departures at an airport of your choice, using their own smartphone/tablet (or the classroom computer, if learners do not have access to a device of their own). How quickly can they manage this and what other information about flying from an airport can a passenger get from their phone? Why have airports used this technology when many aircraft do not allow phones to be used on board in wi-fi mode?

- Where appropriate, ask learners to share their own experiences of check-in technology and see how many ways to check-in they can suggest from this. You could give learners a photo of a check-in hall from an airport and ask them to identify the methods of check-in and bag drop. How has this advanced in the last few decades and what may it look like in the future? Using a range of airport websites and also those of the learners' own government (see Resources), ask learners to find out what baggage restrictions are in force in airports currently (this is likely to change in the life of the specification as politics and technologies change) in terms of size, shape and specified restricted items. You can also ask learners to investigate the range of help available for those needing special assistance by looking at airport websites, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) websites for more generic information and advice.

- One way to investigate the role of passenger service agents (PSA) could be to invite a passenger service agent to give a talk, followed by a question and answer session so learners can ask about the international and domestic aviation requirements relating to luggage (checked and hand). Alternatively, you could give learners job descriptions, and show TV programmes or trade press interviews to illustrate the role of PSA.

- Ask learners to search online to locate one set of airport security rules and the roles of police and security officers and how they deal with breaches of the security rules by passengers (unattended bags, unruly passengers etc.) and the reasons behind the rules.

- For content area A3, use video if learners have never experienced a security check (you can search YouTube for, e.g. 'Airport Security videos' and 'How to Get Through Airport Security'). You can also show video clips of what happens to checked luggage (search for 'What Happens to Your Checked Luggage at the Airport'). Ask learners to discuss why so much time, expense and effort is made to ensure planes are kept safe.

- Ask learners to identify terminal facilities at different airport sites using airport maps/plans and locating where each of the facilities from the list in the unit content can be located. Different airports will have differing locations for facilities, so ask your learners to identify similarities and differences relating to the location/situation and accessibility of some elements (e.g. business lounges and their facilities). Learners could create a series of labelled/highlighted maps to help them become familiar with airport plans for the assessment task.

- Show learners 'EasyJet explained' videos to illustrate aspects of gate services and embarkation including 'boarding and embarkation'. The 'SeatGuru' article (see Resources) shows methods of boarding procedure, and learners could look at benefits and drawbacks of each method for passengers, summarising their results in a table.

- As for check-in PSA or Customer Service Agent (CSA), one way to find out about this would be first-hand from a person who does this job (often check-in and gate roles can be undertaken by one PSA/CSA). You may be able to use Skype, or you could source TV documentaries about airports to demonstrate these procedures to your learners.

- For content area A4, you will need to help your learners to use a range of independent research skills to look at each of the elements of airside arrival, as it is unlikely this can be done by a visit. Watch the video 'Dubai Airport Baggage Handling Inner Workings in 4k' (see Resources) with learners. Ask them to note the various stages of the process of baggage coming off the aircraft, and then use 'Landing in Dubai International Airport & Terminal 3' (17 minutes onwards – see Resources) to show them how passengers disembark and leave an airport and the stages they go through. Talk to learners about why some areas are not filmed (security checks on entry to the country may not be recorded, for instance).

- Learners can research specific airports for their transfer and transit policies (Munich or Hong Kong – see Resources). If working with a large group, ask learners to research different airports and compare and contrast the transit/transfer arrangements. What is always the same? Why is this so?

- Ask learners to use government websites relating to customs and excise and border control (see Resources) to create a comprehensive guide or poster as to what can and cannot be brought into the learners' own country.

- You could also ask learners to look up the role of police at individual airports and official codes of practice so that they can then create flow diagrams showing passenger rights and police responsibilities.

- Learners need to investigate three relevant public health acts: This could be done in teams of three where each learner looks at one act each and then presents their findings to the rest of the group, thereby developing their skills in presenting (required for the suggested assignments). This is a challenging activity for learners so a gapped handout could be supplied to help direct and focus their research and record findings.

- One way to consider content area A5 is onsite during an airport visit, where this is feasible. Ask learners to start at the meet and greet section of the arrivals hall and then find their way to a short-stay car park, a long-stay car park (including shuttle bus, if possible), the car hire desks, the train station, the bus station and the taxi link. They could complete a self-created survey relating to ease of this activity (a simple 1–5 score would suffice). For authenticity, they could use a full suitcase and hand luggage to fully experience how the passenger navigates the area. Ask learners to note down how long each of these activities takes and how convenient/easy each of the transport methods therefore are. You could also ask learners to find out the location of the transport timetables and tourist information. (NB: many airports will allow learners to do this **only** if they do not speak to staff or interfere with the running of the airport, so be sure to plan independent activities and have permission from the airport management.)

Learning aim B: Carry out passenger-handling processes in the role of the passenger service agent at check-in and at the gate

- The assignment for this learning aim relates to customer service and the learner's ability to communicate with passengers and know the regulations so they are able to apply them to the situation. If possible, watching documentaries based at airports would be helpful here as it will not be possible to go to an airport and watch this (but emphasise the fact that TV programmes are edited and incidents are selected for entertainment purposes).

- For content area B1, ask learners to review the requirements for baggage from learning aim A and also to research flight information relating to a flight they have taken or another member of the group has taken. Learners can bring all their ideas together from research and their own experience (and the TV/video clips they have watched) to identify some of the questions that the PSA will ask at check-in. Ask your learners also to think about challenging questions that passengers might ask and passengers who might be more challenging, so they are ready for all eventualities.

- Give learners the opportunity to examine customer service techniques and think about their importance. You could use the video clip 'Excellent Customer Service Skills' (see Resources) to ensure learners know how to speak to passengers, considering that for some travellers this could be their first interaction on their holiday of a lifetime!

- Role-play practice will then be essential. The best way is to give mock situations to learners to practise with one another. Build up to this by first asking them to write full scripts of the conversation between the PSA and the customer and making them practise the conversation with each other. For a level 3 qualification, learners should understand the role fully and not be reading from a script when they are doing their assessment, so it is important that learners have a clear picture of the questions they will need to answer and the information they will need to be able to do this for their real assessment. Practice really is the key here and learners should be guided through a step-by-step process in groups of three – two participants and an observer – so that they can rotate roles and you can monitor their progress.
    - Step 1: role model (perhaps two tutors could do this) so learners can see what they are aiming towards.
    - Step 2: give them a model script to act out.
    - Step 3: ask learners to create their own script.
    - Step 4: learners act out the scripts they have written.
    - Step 5: learners respond to an unseen situation without a written script. Recording mock situations and showing learners their own performance could be one way to improve their manner and demeanour.

- You will need to allow plenty of time for learners to do this repeatedly before they are recorded and assessed for their assignment.

- For content area B2, the requirements for this section are much the same as the first part of this learning aim. To make this more realistic and fun, have scales for weighing bags and use mobile phones on loudspeaker to do mock announcements (or the school/college tannoy system if you can do so out of hours!). The customer services skills from the check-in task will transfer easily to conversations at the gate, but learners will need to be totally familiar with documents and procedures from learning aim A. Possible issues may arise concerning the use of passports that are copies (not legal) or real (not always safe to keep identity documents in a school environment), so it is worth thinking beforehand about how best to manage this.
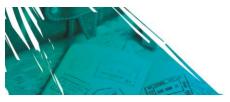
Learning aim C: Examine how airports ensure efficient outbound and inbound passenger flow through airports during normal, non-standard and irregular operations

As airports become busier, their layout is crucial to the smooth management of large volumes of people in a restricted space.

● Areas prone to congestion during normal operations
   o Give learners maps of different airports (three or four different airports will suffice) and ask them to identify areas that are busy/places where passengers have to queue and why this happens. Organise learners into a group for a discussion on what similarities there are between the areas they have identified.
● Situations that cause major congestion or closure and their potential impact and how to overcome them
   o Use media sources to identify situations that have previously caused issues in airports (Icelandic volcano, Belgium airport bombing, Heathrow Terminal 5 baggage belt failure on launch, British Airways IT failure 2017). Ask learners to create a table to show short-term and long-term effects of these events on passengers and the travel and tourism industry.

Event name	Short-term effects		Long-term effects	
	Passengers	**T+T industry**	**Passengers**	**T+T industry**
Belgium airport bombing 2016				
Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull 2010				
Etc.				

● While negative impacts are likely to be most prevalent, ask learners to try to think of some of the positives that have come from some of these events.

● Give learners a selection of photos showing the potential impact on aviation operations, e.g. de-icing aircraft, clearing runways of snow, cancelled flights, need for overnight accommodation and stressful situations (see C2, second and third bullet points in the specification/unit content). Add to these photos some of the common congested areas, e.g. check-in and security queue (from C1). Ask learners to identify: (1) what each image is showing; and (2) the impact on aviation operations and passengers (most images will have both types of impact). Ask learners to suggest what the airports and the airlines could do to overcome these problems. These links are necessary to prepare them for the assignment for learning aim C.
   o Select two contrasting events (or ask learners to select their own) that have caused airport congestion in the past and ask learners to think of ways such events could be prevented from occurring in the future. Is it possible or likely such measures are likely to be put in place and if not, why not?

Details of links to other BTEC units and qualifications, and to other relevant units/qualifications

This unit links to:

- Unit 1: The Travel and Tourism Industry
- Unit 2: Worldwide Travel and Tourism Destination
- Unit 4: Customer Service in Travel and Tourism
- Unit 7: Sustainable Tourism
- Unit 10: Global and Domestic Passenger Transport

Employer involvement

This unit would benefit from employer involvement in the form of:

- talks from ground handlers, security-screening organisations and airport police
- visits to landside areas of an airport
- demonstrating check-in and gate procedures
- taking a short-duration report flight from a local airport to experience passenger-handling procedures first hand as both an outbound and inbound passenger.

Resources

In addition to the resources listed below, publishers are likely to produce Pearson-endorsed textbooks that support this unit of the BTEC International Level 3 Qualification in Travel and Tourism. Check the Pearson website (http://qualifications.pearson.com/endorsed-resources) for more information as titles achieve endorsement.
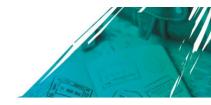
Textbooks

Ashford N J, Coutu P and Beasley J R (2012) *Airport Operations* (Third Edition), McGraw Hill (ISBN 9780071775847) – not a textbook, although it will be a useful reference source for tutors for some elements of the course

Young S B and Wells A T (2011) *Airport Planning and Management* (Sixth Edition)*,* McGraw Hill (ISBN 9780071750240) – not a textbook, although it will be a useful reference source for tutors for some elements of the course

Videos

- 'Airport Security Footage – September 2006. Minneapolis International Airport' (search YouTube) – camera roll of an airport security area from landside to airside
- 'The Airport' series 1 episode 1 (search YouTube) – programme about Cardiff airport
- 'Dubai Airport Baggage Handling Inner Workings in 4k – Dubai Flow Motion: Extended' (search YouTube) – a film video showing what happens to a checked/hold bag on arrival at an airport
- 'EasyJet explained' videos (search YouTube or the EasyJet website) – search an aspect of flights you are interested in, e.g., 'Special assistance', 'Luggage allowances'
- 'How To: Arrive at Heathrow' (search YouTube) – good for content area A4
- 'Landing in Dubai International Airport & Terminal 3' (search YouTube) – useful for content area A5 from 17 minutes onwards
- 'UK border force Discovery and documentary HD Channel official' TV series (search YouTube) – follows immigration officers undertaking their work

Websites

- Airsafe – search for 'kids rules' and airline rules for unaccompanied children (for content area A1)

- BBC News – search for 'How are air travellers screened for security?' (for content areas A2 and A4)

- Birmingham Airport – search for 'Birmingham Airport security police' (for content area A4)

- Birmingham Airport – search for 'Birmingham Airport directions and transport' – advice on how to get to Birmingham airport (for learning aim A, access to airports)

- Birmingham Airport – search for 'Birmingham Airport special assistance useful information'– BHX special assistance and 'Airport Security UK' (for learning aim A, outbound landside)

- Wikivoyage – search for the 'At the airport' guide – a very low-level introduction to airport processes and procedure, good for learners who have never flown or live near small domestic airports

- Heathrow Airport – search for 'Heathrow UK customs' – LHR customs (for content area A4)

- Heathrow Airport – search for 'Heathrow Airport terminal 3 map' – LHR Terminal 3 (for learning aim A, airport mapping)

- Hong Kong Airport – search for 'Hong Kong Airport transfers and transit'– Hong Kong International Airport (for content area A4, transit procedures)

- Korean Air – search for 'Korean Air hand baggage weight limits' – hand baggage weight limits (for Learning aim A, outbound landside)
Luxembourg Airport– search for 'Luxembourg Airport customs and security' – Luxembourg airport security measures (for learning aim A, security measures)

- Manchester Airport – search for 'Manchester Airport security rules' – Manchester Airport security rules (for learning aim A, security)
Munich Airport – search for 'in transit/transfer arrangements' (for content area A4)

- SeatGuru – search for 'Guide to airline boarding procedures' (for content area A3)

- Stanstead Airport – search for 'Stanstead Airport arriving at and departing from the airport' (for content area A4)

Pearson is not responsible for the content of any external internet sites. It is essential for tutors to preview each website before using it in class so as to ensure that the URL is still accurate, relevant and appropriate. We suggest that tutors bookmark useful websites and consider enabling learners to access them through the school/college intranet.