



External Assessment Report 2010

Subject	Travel and Tourism
Level	Higher

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the Examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

The paper was unchanged, with questions similar in style and content to those in 2009. Generally the paper was felt to be fair and accessible. It is very disappointing, therefore, to report a decline in both uptake and performance in the 2010 examination.

The number of centres presenting the Course decreased by three to five, and the number of candidates dropped significantly below the 100 uptake benchmark. The percentage number of candidates achieving Grades A–C also dropped. However, there was an upper A pass.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Good candidates were able to:

- ◆ describe the coach holidays market — Question 1 (c)
- ◆ describe skills required for working in the transport sector — Question 1 (d)
- ◆ explain vertical integration and the benefits it offers — Question 2 (a)
- ◆ name the ‘producers’ in the travel and tourism industry — Question 2 (b)
- ◆ describe channels of distribution in travel and tourism — Question 2 (c)
- ◆ differentiate between product and market orientation — Question 3 (b)
- ◆ demonstrate a good knowledge of the Scottish tourism product — Question 5
- ◆ demonstrate general knowledge of overseas tourist destinations — Questions 7 and 8

Areas which candidates found demanding

Candidates found it difficult to:

- ◆ give definitions of travel and tourism terms — Question 1 (a) — this is quite surprising as many of the candidates had progressed from the Intermediate 2 Course, in which there is intensive teaching of definitions and terminology
- ◆ explain the role and function of IATA — Question 1 (b)
- ◆ explain interdependence within the travel and tourism industry — Question 2 (c)
- ◆ demonstrate a knowledge of current trends within the travel sector — Question 2 (f)
- ◆ explain fully the role of Visit Britain — Question 3 (a)(i)
- ◆ explain SWOT analysis in context — Question 3 (a)(iii) — candidates did not answer the question in full, and generally did not make reference to the London 2012 Olympics
- ◆ evaluate improvements to the marketing mix — Questions 4 (a) and (b) — many candidates gave the same answers to both questions and did not answer in context
- ◆ describe electronic methods of promotion — Question 4 (c) — many candidates did not read the question properly and quoted non-electronic examples

Less able candidates were unable to:

- ◆ devise a touring itinerary within Scotland — Question 5 (a)(ii) — feasibility and routing of itineraries was generally poor

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Good candidates were once again satisfactorily prepared in the following areas:

- ◆ Scottish tourism product knowledge, including mapping skills
- ◆ tourist destinations, including resort information and mapping skills

Centres should maintain the high standard of teaching in these areas.

There were several areas in which candidates' knowledge and skills were lacking:

- ◆ definitions and terminology
- ◆ interdependence of the various sectors of the industry
- ◆ the role of trade and professional bodies in the industry, eg in this paper knowledge of the role of the IATA was particularly lacking
- ◆ application of SWOT analysis in the context of the question
- ◆ relating marketing research to the market mix and evaluating improvements to the marketing mix
- ◆ analysis of modern methods of promotion in travel and tourism

Centres should prepare and advise candidates on how to:

- ◆ read questions carefully and pay particular attention to the marks value of each question
- ◆ learn and develop detailed responses to the level expected at Higher
- ◆ keep up with what is happening in the industry and be able to comment on current trends and developments
- ◆ lay out itineraries in accordance with industry practice

The desire expressed in previous years to encourage discursive writing is once again repeated. Weaker candidates should continue to receive guidance on reading examination questions properly, ie careful reading of rubrics to avoid writing inappropriate responses. Centres are encouraged to scrutinise the marking instructions provided on the SQA website for examples of the type of extended response required, particularly in headroom questions.

For 2010 centre estimates were fairly accurate, which indicates a better understanding of standards compared to previous years.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2009	115
Number of resulted entries in 2010	78

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum mark — 100				
A	3.8%	3.8%	3	68
B	14.1%	17.9%	11	58
C	24.4%	42.3%	19	48
D	14.1%	56.4%	11	43
No award	43.6%	100.0%	34	—

General commentary on grade boundaries

While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.

Each year, therefore, SQA holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Head of Service and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.

The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.

The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.

Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in say Higher Chemistry this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related as they do not contain identical questions.

SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as Arrangements evolve and change.