SQA Advanced Unit specification: general information for centres

Unit title: Business Travel: An Introduction

Unit code: HV7M 47

Superclass:	NK
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Unit purpose:

This Unit will provide candidates with an understanding of the business travel sector of the travel and tourism industry. It focuses on the services, suppliers and customers of business travel agents and how these differ from those of retail travel agents and the leisure sector. Candidates will explore the business travel environment, looking at the different types of agents, their products, services and suppliers and consider the factors that influence the demand for business travel. They will consider the corporate client environment and components of a managed travel programme which together with the demands of individual travellers influence purchasing decisions and impact on the role of a business travel consultant. In understanding how business travel organisations meet the requirements of corporate clients and their individual travellers, candidates will appreciate the breadth of skills and knowledge needed for a career in business travel. Candidates will also investigate travel technologies that influence both the business travel agents and the corporate client.

The Unit has been designed to prepare candidates interested in working in business travel and could be undertaken as part of the SQA Advanced Certificate/SQA Advanced Diploma in travel and tourism or as a standalone Unit.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

1   Identify different types of business travel agents and describe the range of products and services they provide.
2   Describe the corporate client environment and the factors that influence corporate clients' purchasing decisions.
3   Analyse and evaluate different travel technologies.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However it is recommended that candidates have qualifications in written communication and underpinning knowledge of the Travel and Tourism Industry and Travel Geography. This may be evidenced by the possession of the following:

♦ National 5 English, a National Course in English (at SCQF level 5 or above) or the National Unit (D01B 11): *Communication*
♦ National 4 Mathematics, a National Course in Mathematics (at SCQF level 4 or above) or the National Unit (D11T 10): *Core Mathematics 3*
♦ SQA Advanced Unit HV79 47: *Structure of the Travel and Tourism Industry*
♦ SQA Advanced Unit HP57 46: *International Tourist Destinations*

Credit points and level

1 SQA Credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from National 1 to Doctorates.

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

Context for delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

The assessment exemplar for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable instrument of assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the assessment exemplar to ensure a comparable standard. Assessment exemplars are available on SQA's secure website.

SQA Advanced Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Identify different types of business travel agents and describe the range of products and services they provide.

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦   Reasons and requirements for business travel
♦   Types of business travel agents
♦   Business travel products and services
♦   Role of the business travel agent
♦   Sources of income
♦   Factors that affect the demand for business travel

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

♦   Identify the corporate clients' main reasons and requirements for business travel
♦   Identify at least three types of business travel agents that could provide products and services for the corporate client
♦   Select one particular type of business travel agent and describe its role in meeting at least six requirements of a corporate client taking into consideration its products and services
♦   Identify the main sources of income for the business travel agent
♦   Evaluate the factors that may affect the demands for business travel

Outcome 2

Describe the corporate client environment and the factors that influence corporate clients' purchasing decisions.

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦   Business Processes
♦   Travel and Expense Policy
♦   Cost Models
♦   Management Information
♦   Service Level Agreements
♦   Legislation

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can, **under controlled conditions and without access to resource material**:

♦ Describe the aims and relevance of each of the business processes (ie travel budgeting, booking and authorisation process, payment process)
♦ Identify the purpose and content of a travel and expense policy and how this influences purchasing decisions
♦ Describe and differentiate between the main cost model options
♦ Explain the importance of accurate management information
♦ Identify the purpose and content of a Service Level Agreement
♦ Provide examples of legislation that corporate clients take account of when managing their travel programme

Outcome 3

Analyse and evaluate different travel technologies.

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Travel technologies and information systems
♦ Current and future developments

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

♦ Analyse the main travel technologies and information systems used by a chosen business travel agent
♦ Identify current and future developments in travel technologies and evaluate their potential impact on the business travel agent and its service provision

SQA Advanced Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Business Travel: An Introduction

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit is designed for candidates intending to seek employment in the business travel sector of the travel and tourism industry. This may include business travel agents, their client organisations, or those sectors of the industry represented in this Unit. It is essential that preparation for this Unit takes account of current industry developments and candidates are given the opportunity to visit an actual business travel agency if possible. Candidates should also research tourism texts, trade press and websites for their evidence. Candidates should be encouraged to research websites which contain information on products and services, technology demonstrations, client case studies and other related information. These may include:

Trade Organisations
ATOC (Association of Train Operating Companies) **http://www.atoc.org/**
GTMC (Guild of Travel Management Companies) —
member database provides good information　　**http://www.gtmc.org**
IATA (International Air Transport Association)　　**http://www.iata.org**

Trade Press
Business Traveller　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**http://www.businesstraveller.com/**
CIT (Conference and Incentive Travel)　　　　　**http://www.citmagazine.com/home/**
ITCM (Incentive Travel and Corporate Meetings)　**http://www.incentivetravel.co.uk/about-us**
Travel Weekly　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**http://www.travelweekly.co.uk/**

Technology
Amadeus　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**http://amadeus.com**
Evolvi (rail booking system)　　　　　　　　　　**https://www.evolvi.co.uk/**
Sabre　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**http://www.sabre.com/**
Travelport　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**http://www.travelport.com/**

Industry Updates/Research
Tnooz: Talking Travel Tech　　　　　　　　　　**http://www.tnooz.com/**
Travel Market　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**http://www.travelmarketreport.com**

Outcome 1: Provides an introductory study of the business travel environment. Candidates should consider the difference between business travel and retail travel/leisure sector and identify the main reasons for business travel. Research and identify the wide range of different types of agents and the range of products and services they offer (many on the behalf of suppliers). Investigate one of these agents, describe the products and services they provide and discuss their role in meeting the needs of a corporate client. Main sources of income to the agent should be identified. Factors that may impact on the client's demand for business travel should be evaluated.

Reasons for business travel: Meetings, training, corporate events, business demands, conferences, conventions, exhibitions, trade fairs and corporate events.

Requirements of the corporate client: Types and classes of travel (air, ground transportation, domestic, short-haul, long-haul), accommodation standards and locations, ancillary services, complex itineraries, advance and last minute bookings, destination information and advice, security updates, out of hours service, regular or ad-hoc travellers, individual traveller requirements, travel on specific days of the week and at specific times of the day, last minute changes and cancellations, friendly and knowledgeable staff, quick response times, quick and efficient confirmations, self-booking tools, ticketing options (electronic, TOD), billing options, management reporting, account management, types of technology currently utilised.

Types of agents: Independent, national, global, implant, outplant, Travel Management Company (TMC), call centres, e-agents, hotel booking agents, group travel organisers and MICE organisers (meetings, incentives, conferences and events) Some travel management companies house specialised divisions within their organisation such as a group travel or MICE divisions.

Products and services: Main products and services provided by a business travel agent include scheduled flights (economy, business and first class), net fares, low-cost flights, accommodation, rail, car hire, ancillary services (insurance, exchange, passports and visas, airport transfers), destination information and advice, security updates, out of hours service, ticketing options (e-tickets, TOD), billing options, management reporting and account management. Staff skills, knowledge and experience should also be considered as part of the service provision.

Role of agents: Candidates should understand that not all types of agents provide all products and services. Some agents may provide specialised services to a specific industry such as the construction industry or the marine and offshore industries. Consideration should be given to the different types of agents, their products, services and staff and how these may meet the needs of a corporate client.

Sources of Income: Service fees paid by their corporate clients (ie management fees, transaction fees), mark-ups (ie on net fares), preferred supplier incentives, GDS incentives and supplier commissions. In line with industry developments candidates should consider the dynamic nature of income sources — ie the removal/reduction of commissions by suppliers (ie airlines, rail), the debate on GDSs and the potential reduction/removal of GDS incentives, the increase in demand for low-cost suppliers, the introduction of client service fees.

Factors that affect demand: Changes in the client's business and/or industry, client's travel policy, business travel competitors, business travel suppliers, changes in the chain of distribution, local and global economies, terrorism, health epidemics, political unrest, etc. Technology is not included here as this is explored in Outcome 3.

Outcome 2 Considers the corporate client environment and some of the components of a managed travel programme so that candidates can gain an understanding of factors that impact on a corporate clients' purchasing decisions and individual traveller choices. It is important that candidates appreciate how these are also considered in the service provision of the business travel consultant and that corporate clients place high expectations on the level and value of services they receive in return for a fee.

Business Processes — *Travel Budgets:* Organisations may set travel budgets for the company, divisions, and/or individual travellers. The budget limits may vary dependent upon

the permitted type and class/standard of travel/accommodation. Each budget holder will be responsible for monitoring spend within their budget.

Business Processes — *Booking and Authorisation Process:* Determined by the corporate client and adhered to by both their staff and the agent when making bookings. Organisations will nominate personnel responsible for authorising the cost of business trips and may appoint personnel who are permitted to make bookings (ie registered travel bookers only and/or appointed travellers themselves). Bookings can be made in different ways and processes may be manual, semi-automated or fully automated or a mix dependent upon the service being booked and the company structure.

Business Processes — *Payment Process:* Invoice accounts (TMCs may provide weekly/monthly e-invoice summaries), lodge card or business travel accounts (type of central charge card that captures required data) or individual traveller corporate card cards. The type of payment method chosen will depend on the corporate client's company structure and culture.

Travel and Expense Policy: May include information on permitted type and class of travel relevant to the journey, permitted standards of accommodation, travel budgets, traveller expenses, (ie that may be charged to accommodation account), booking and authorisation process, payment methods, cost codes. There may also be reference to relevant legislation and policies (ie health and safety, security).

Cost Models: Determines how the corporate client will pay for the agent's services. There are several different cost models but the main two are management fees where a total cost is agreed in advance (eg annual charges) or transaction fees where a fixed fee is applied for each component of the booking process (eg domestic air, international air, hotel booking, cancellation charge). Dependent upon the company structure fees may be charged Point of Sale (POS) or monthly/quarterly.

Service Level Agreements: Service levels (ie products and services to be provided, response times for enquiries, response times for confirmations, number of options provided for each enquiry, travel policy compliance, authorisation process), billing and payment methods, agent fees (management fees or transaction fees).

Legislation: Data Protection Act, EU Regulations, Health and Safety at Work Act; Duty of Care, Corporate Manslaughter Act, Environmental Protection Act.

Outcome 3: Research travel technologies used by a business travel agent and discuss the role they play in meeting the client's requirements. Candidates should refer to research when discussing current and future developments of travel technologies and evaluate the impact they may have on the business travel agent. This will include GDS/CRS, travel agent desktops, web-based technology, mobile technology, self-booking tools (for the corporate client), online booking tools (business travel agents and suppliers), e-meetings, remote conferencing, web-based seminars, in-house and external communications.

Some websites provide demos of travel technologies and candidates should be encouraged to try these.

Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

This Unit is part of the SQA Advanced Certificate/SQA Advanced Diploma in Travel and Tourism and is ideally suited for delivery in the first year. It is recommended that the Unit is completed following the mandatory Unit *Structure of the Travel and Tourism Industry* (HV79 47) and the optional Units, if relevant, *International Tourist Destinations* (HP57 46) and *Retail Travel Practice (HP5C 47).* Alternatively the Unit may be undertaken as a standalone Unit for candidates interested in working in business travel.

Approaches to delivery should be candidate-centred with ongoing lecturer input and guidance. The delivery of the Unit would be greatly enhanced by the use of guest speakers and/or an industry visit to a business travel agent.

Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

As this Unit is intended for candidates aiming to seek employment in the business travel sector, candidates should be able to have open access to any appropriate reference materials for Outcome 1 and 3 assessments. Outcomes 1 and 3 can be combined. Having successfully completed an agent's internal response/review document (Outcome 1) the candidate should use this as a basis for the evaluation of travel technologies (Outcome 3). Outcome 2 will be assessed under controlled conditions without access to any resource materials.

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 1

Outcome 1 could be assessed by means of an assignment based on a brief or case study of an actual or fictional potential new corporate client which would include details of the client's business and industry and their travel requirements. Candidate responses should be based on an actual or fictional business travel agent and meet all Evidence Requirements. Responses could be in the form of a written report, a presentation or a company profile and be either paper based or an electronic document/file.

Outcome 2

Outcome 2 could be assessed by means of a closed-book assessment of short response questions testing Knowledge and/or Skills.

Outcome 3

Outcome 3 could be assessed by means of an assignment based on a brief or case study of an actual or fictional business travel agent. This should include travel technologies used by the agent, require the candidate to describe the role they play in meeting a client's requirements and refer to future developments that could impact on the business travel agent. Candidate responses could be in the form of a written report, a presentation or a company profile and be either paper based or an electronic document/file.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

Candidates will have the opportunity to develop the Core Skills of *Communication* at SCQF level 5, *Information and Communication Technology* at SCQF level 4, and *Problem Solving* — Critical Thinking SCQF level 6, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Core Skill component	Level	How this is achieved
		Developed in teaching and learning and formatively assessed (Signposted).
Written Communication (Reading)	5	Through all Outcomes by reading and understanding a variety of texts; business travel products, legislation, trade associations and technologies.
Written Communication (Writing)	5	Outcomes 1 and 3 candidates research, analyse and present structured information for the readership in response to a case study.
Using Information Technology	4	Through all Outcomes the candidates use the internet to research and review information. Examples include business travel agents products and services, legislation and travel technologies.
Problem Solving — Critical Thinking	6	Outcome 1 candidates evaluate factors that affect the demands for business travel and Outcome 3 candidates research, identify, and evaluate developments in travel technologies and their impact on a business travel agent and its service provision.

Online and Distance Learning

Although this Unit could be delivered by distance learning it would require candidates to have access to the appropriate reference resources required for completion of the Unit. However, there is also a substantial amount of lecturer input and on-going support required, which restricts self-learning by the candidate.

It would also require a considerable degree of planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of learner evidence and arrangements would have to be made to ensure the closed-book test for Outcome 2 is delivered in a supervised environment.

Equality and inclusion

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

FURTHER INFORMATION: Call SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 44 (0) 141 500 5030 or 0345 279 1000. Alternatively, complete our Centre Feedback Form.

General information for candidates

Unit title: Business Travel: An Introduction

This Unit has been designed to develop your understanding of the business travel sector within the travel and tourism industry and how it differs from the retail travel and leisure sector. Throughout the Unit you will consider the business travel environment, the corporate client environment and different travel technologies. You will be encouraged to undertake research on different agents, client case studies, business travel suppliers, trade organisations, trade press and legislation and take account of current industry developments.

The Unit has three Outcomes:

1   Identify different types of business travel agents and describe the range of products and services they provide.
2   Describe the corporate client environment and the factors that influence corporate clients' purchasing decisions.
3   Analyse and evaluate different travel technologies.

You will consider who business travellers are, why they travel, and what they need from an agent and suppliers. You are required to develop your knowledge of different business travel agents, their products and services and how these meet the needs of different clients and in turn how business travel agents generate income. To improve your understanding of business travel clients and their service requirements you will consider the corporate client environment and some of the factors that influence their decision making and travel purchasing choices. Throughout this process you should gain an appreciation of the role of the business travel consultant and develop some of the skills and knowledge which are essential to be a successful agent. Finally you will research and learn about travel technology developments and be able to understand the impact these have on business travel organisations.

The Unit also provides you with the opportunity to develop Core Skills components in *Communication* at SCQF level 5, *Information and Communication Technology* at SCQF level 4, and *Problem Solving at* SCQF level 6.

In order to complete this Unit successfully, you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance in all assessments. You will apply the skills and knowledge you acquire from the Unit to two written assignments and provide short responses to questions contained within a closed-book assessment.