AQA

# General Certificate of Education

# Leisure Studies
# 8641/8643/8646/8649

**LS04** **Leisure Facilities**

# Report on the Examination

*2008 examination - June series*

# GENERAL

The specification has now been examined for two years and there has been a steady improvement in the quality of candidate's preparation before the exam and their performance in it. The best candidates are now producing work of a very good standard and even the poorer ones generally produce work of quite reasonable quality. Much of the improvement seems to be a result of candidates being well prepared to respond to the command words used. In particular they are now better prepared to 'evaluate' and 'assess'.

Preparatory folders have been called for from several centres and it is clear that most candidates are able to call on well-prepared material that certainly helps them to produce this improved work. However, there have been a small number of cases where candidates' preparatory folders have not followed the instructions laid out in the specification and on the question papers. The Instructions and Guidance for Teachers and Candidates state:

> "The preparatory folder, which must contain only notes written by the candidates and material collected from the organisations studied….."

> "Nothing may be added to the folder during the two-week assignment period and no other material may be taken into the examination sessions."

and:
> "The folders must be kept under secure conditions until after the Enquiries upon Results deadline."

Where candidates infringe these instructions they risk being disqualified from the paper on which the infringement has taken place.

## What was particularly good

As in January:
1. It appeared that many candidates had produced excellent, thorough folders of material in preparation for the examination. Their preparation seemed to have covered all the possible topics that might appear on the paper. What is more, many of the candidates had thought clearly about how this information could be used to answer the Assignment Tasks set.

2. The better candidates seemed to have thought much more clearly about how to address the higher level command words, particularly 'evaluate'. These candidates wrote answers that stated what was to be assessed, discussed the criteria for good performance in theses areas and then went on to consider how well the criteria had been met. Their answers showed good knowledge that had been clearly applied.

3. Candidates at some centres have been encouraged to think in a vocational way about all aspects of the topic.

## What was not so good

1. Some of the weaker candidates failed to adapt their knowledge and the material from their files to the specific demands of the questions. There was evidence of pre-prepared material being repeated with little thoughts as to how it needed to be adapted to answer the questions set.

2. In particular, the weaker candidates did poorly on questions that asked for 'evaluation'. Such answers were often just descriptive, sometimes with a statement almost thrown in

at the end to say something like "It is quite good" or "It is not up to standard" but without any justification for such a statement.

3. A small, and decreasing, number of candidates still write their answer from a customer point of view or from the individual staff member's point of view. They often ignore the vocational, "organisation-specific" point of view.

The paper appeared to be accessible to the full range of candidates. Almost all of them made a reasonable attempt to answer all sections of the paper, with only a very small proportion failing to produce sensible answers for all four Assignments. However, the paper differentiated well across the range of candidates and produced a mark range from the mid teens to the low seventies. A large majority of candidates had been well prepared and it seemed as though they were able to do themselves justice in the exam.

In general candidates seemed to have done good preparatory work and to have prepared good case study files to take in to the examination. Then they generally used their information sensibly.

## Assignment Task 1

### Part (a)(i)
There was quite a lot of information provided in the introduction to this question but candidates were also expected to use the plan in the Insert. If candidates just copied out information from the introduction they were able to gain 1 of the 2 marks if they had selected sensibly and written a relevant answer. However, to get both marks they needed to go beyond this and use the plan to help develop their answers.

Most candidates did this and gained both marks.

### Part (a)(ii)
There were three main themes that could be developed for this answer – accessibility of a city centre site to both private and public transport; the presence nearby of other leisure facilities that could attract visitors who might also go to the Ikon; and the presence nearby of offices from which the workers might visit the gallery during breaks and after work.

Generally candidates were able to write reasonable answers and many gained 3 or 4 marks. Unfortunately many candidates were content just to deal with a single aspect of the question and comparatively few developed their answers in sufficient depth and/or detail to reach 5 or 6 marks.

### Part (a)(iii)
This section was often more challenging. The examiners had hoped that candidates might consider the disadvantages of a city centre location. This could mean that the gallery was isolated from the local residential communities making 'debate and participation' difficult or it could make the area noisy and busy and so make concentration on the art more difficult. Very few candidates picked up on these points that were specific to this particular facility.

Instead many wrote very general answers, often mentioning the same points that they had seen as advantages in (a)(ii) – such as competition from other nearby facilities and the fact that people working locally would not be able to find time to visit. Particularly disappointing was the tendency of many candidates to see the distance

from car parks as a major drawback when the map shows that there is a car park about 100 metres away.  Even disabled visitors, who always cause such a concern to candidates, can generally manage to travel 100 metres, even if they do not use their blue badges to park closer.

## Part (b)

Good answers to this question used the structure provided by the bullet points but linked these points together to write a logical answer that addressed the question and *evaluated* the *location* of the chosen facility.  On the other hand the weaker answers often treated the three bullet points as separate questions and failed to link the different sections and did not produce an evaluation.

Level 3 answers usually gave a brief outline of the main functions of the facility. Then they described the target market in terms of either the class/ income group that was being targeted or the geographical area that was the main target.  Then they described the accessibility for the specific groups and/or areas that were the main target.  In other words the target groups could be seen as providing the basis of the criteria by which the accessibility could be evaluated.

## *Assignment Task 2*

## Part (a)(i)

Most candidates answered this question well. Simple points like:
- plenty of space
- attractive building and
- affordable rent because of the redevelopment could gain single marks.  If any of these points were developed, they could gain further marks.

## Part (a)(ii)

This question was also generally well answered.

The two main changes referred to were the changes to turn small classrooms into large open galleries and the construction of lifts on the outside of the building.  Weaker candidates were able to gain marks by referring to points made in the extract provided and by writing simply but clearly about these points.  Once again, there was considerable emphasis placed on the needs of the disabled visitors.

The best candidates showed a very clear understanding of the reasons for the conversion – in particular of the reasons for building the new steel frame structure inside the shell of the building.

## Part (b)

This question produced answers of a very varied standard.

A very small proportion of candidates did not understand what 'refurbished' meant and so gained very few, if any marks.

Fortunately most candidates did know what they were writing about and were able to describe aspects of their refurbishment reasonably well.  Most of these also explained why the refurbishment was necessary.  However, the main differentiation that occurred was in the quality of the evaluation of the outcome.

Some candidates gave evaluations that were completely subjective – like stating that more space was needed and more had been provided so the refurbishment was successful. Others tried to be much more objective and used much more precise measures of success – or failure. Of course their ability to do this depended to a great extent on the thoroughness of their preparation before the exam and the quality of their preparatory files.

## Assignment Task 3

### Part (a)

In many ways this question performed in a similar way to 1(b). Weaker candidates answered in two disconnected parts, writing about the aims of the organisation and then writing quite separately about the layout of the facility. The stronger candidates were able to link the two in well argued and logical answers. These good answers referred to the part of the facility where the main activity takes place, and so where the organisation's aims are rally met. Candidates who did not link their aims and layout sections often wrote in too much detail about comparatively unimportant parts of the facility.

In previous reports on LS04 it has been necessary to comment on the fact that, when asked to discuss design, too many candidates limited themselves to writing only about layout. Surprisingly, on this occasion some candidates wasted time by writing about various other aspects of design rather than limiting themselves to layout as the question asked.

### Part (b)

There were five options in this question and candidates were asked to choose two. The most popular choices were car parking and eating/vending facilities; emergency exits was also a reasonably common choice. The Principal Examiner is not aware of anyone choosing to write about refuse disposal!

However, the quality of answer did not follow the same order. The best marks were often achieved on answers referring to emergency exits because people were able to establish very clear criteria by which they could be assessed – number and size, clarity of signage, closeness to all occupied areas, ease of passage from the exits to the assembly areas and so on. Car parking and catering were sometimes evaluated well but many candidates found it more difficult to assess these.

'Electrical/ computer requirements' proved to be an unpopular choice. Possibly candidates were unsure exactly what they should be writing about, even though this phrase was taken directly from the specification. There were two main types of answer on this topic. Some candidates wrote about the IT hardware that was available whilst others concentrated on the software in use. Either of these was acceptable to the examiners. Candidates who wrote about the software in use generally found it easier to evaluate what was available.

## Assignment Task 4

Before starting to mark AT4 the examiners expected that this would be the least well answered part of the paper. In fact the topic had been placed at the end of the paper so as to allow candidates more time to think about the topic (although they obviously could not add anything to their preparatory folders). In fact we were pleasantly surprised by how well candidates actually answered AT4.

### Part (a)

Some answers went into enormous detail about different brands of cleaning material, although more general answers were also able to gain good credit as long as they showed an awareness of a variety of materials and equipment needed for a variety of cleaning and maintenance tasks.

More differentiation was shown when candidates commented on the arrangements for safe storage.  Some answers were limited to comments such as 'out of the way' and 'in a locked cupboard'.  Others were able to illustrate a detailed application of knowledge of the Health and Safety at Work legislation.  Such answers accessed good Level 2 marks in a very efficient way.

## Part (b)

The choice of facility for study had a big effect on the type of answer to this question.  When candidates had studied two very different facilities from different sectors of the industry the more able candidates wrote answers that compared the very different demands of the two facilities. Comparing the cleaning and maintenance regimes of a museum and a sports centre offers plenty of scope but it can be difficult to structure an answer comparing very different places.

On the other hand, those candidates who wrote about two leisure centres, one large and one small or one private with one run by the local authority, found it easy to make the comparisons but often found fewer differences between the two.  The examiners were able to award a complete range of marks to both types of answer.  This was very reassuring.  It shows that LS04 can be set and marked in such a way that centres are not disadvantaged by their choice of facility for study – as long as they are sufficiently different to allow comparison in candidates' answers.

## Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates

In this section of the Report, as in the introductory section, it is worth restating and developing some of the points made in the January 2008 report.

1. Evidence suggests that some centres are producing superb, detailed, well organised folders of information oh their chosen facilities.  In other cases candidate work suggests that the folders are less detailed and/or less well organised. It is to be hoped that centres will have built up some good contacts with leisure facilities now and that the quality of candidates' folders will continue to show the steady improvement that is happening in some centres now.

2. However, centres must ensure that their candidates are aware of the types of material that can and cannot be put in the preparatory files.  They are strongly advised to read the section at the start of the paper headed **Preparing for the assignment**.  Candidates who taken in prepared answers to questions, seemingly written collaboratively, risk disqualification from the exam.

3. Some candidates appear to need more practice at writing answers that are clearly targeted to meet the particular demands of the questions set – rather than providing a rewrite of material that has been collected in the folders.

4. Candidates need to think more clearly and broadly about the meaning of "design" as related to leisure facilities.  Too many answers still write about "design" purely in terms of "layout".

5. All candidates must be encouraged to remember that they are taking an applied subject. They must consider work-related aspects of topics from the organisations view point and not fall into the trap of writing purely from the point of view of the customer or the individual junior member of staff.

## Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results statistics** page of the AQA Website.

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