Tourism

2011 Assessment Report

Government of South Australia

SACE Board of SA

TOURISM

2011 ASSESSMENT REPORT

OVERVIEW

Assessment reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The resilience of Tourism as a subject was demonstrated in a year of significant change which saw the introduction of an external examination, greater flexibility in assessment, and a vigorous focus on performance standards. In 2011, 709 students achieved a result in Tourism in South Australia and the Northern Territory.

As in previous years, the design of the assessment task was a vital aspect that contributed towards students' ability to demonstrate various assessment design criteria. Moderators noted that well-focused tasks which provided a moderate level of structural guidelines were more useful than complex, multilayered, and excessively scaffolded tasks. Additionally, the alteration of clarifying questions to suit some tasks occasionally compromised the rigour of the assessment; thus some students were unable to demonstrate adequately the performance standards at the highest level.

The word-count policy applies strictly to practical activities and investigations, and recommendations are made for the completion of folio tasks. Limiting the number of words per task ensures that all work is comparable, and that students' workloads are manageable. This year saw very few instances of word-count breaches. Those who did go beyond the specified word-limits often did so by excessive use of tables that contained analysis. Students and teachers are reminded that, according to the subject outline, tables should be used for data and summaries, and any analysis (including tables, annotations, and footnotes) is included in the word-count. As the policy states that teachers are not to assess beyond the word-limit, some students' ability to meet the knowledge and understanding, analysis and evaluation, and investigation and application assessment design criteria was compromised.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 1: Folio

The focus of folio activities is the interpretation and critical analysis of secondary sources of information appropriate to the tourism themes and topics being studied. Various tasks were used to assess evidence of students' learning, with teachers using a range of supervised structured assessments, comparative studies, oral presentations, and issues investigations. Responses presented at moderation highlighted the importance of designing tasks to enable students to provide evidence at the highest level of the performance standards for this assessment type.

Performance standards for folio tasks require students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of tourism concepts and models. Teachers are encouraged to support their students in providing a range of opportunities to gain an understanding of concepts, including sustainability, cultural diversity, industry sectors, the role of government and non-government agencies, market segmentation, and motivations for travel. The most successful responses demonstrated an in-depth understanding of one or two aspects of the industry, and the concepts and models being assessed.

The analysis and evaluation assessment design criterion is also assessed through folio tasks. Here students must demonstrate an ability to draw conclusions regarding the validity, bias, and accuracy of information. This was achieved either as a separate section in responses, commenting specifically on each source used, or within the text by balancing one source against another to either verify or question the source. As in previous years, students' ability to draw conclusions about their research was dependent on their understanding of validity, bias, and accuracy, and their ability to be critical of accessed information. Students also interpret and analyse different perspectives of tourism-related issues, and prepare opinions, conclusions, and recommendations as part of this criterion. Effective task designs allowed for this in a number of ways. In some cases students were directed to include a section that presented their conclusions and recommendations, while in other tasks opinions, conclusions, and recommendations were naturally embedded throughout responses.

Moderators also noted that, although there are considerable similarities between folio tasks in the current Tourism subject outline and coursework tasks of past years, they are not identical in nature. Where teachers used previous tasks, moderators identified the importance of updating these tasks to suit the assessment design criteria, performance standards, and assessment type requirements of the current subject outline. Where this was done, student responses also tended to address the requirements of the subject outline more effectively.

Finally, some clarification of subject outline requirements of folio tasks should be noted. First of all, the 'recommended length' of folio tasks is a maximum of 1000 words or 6 minutes for an oral presentation. While some flexibility is permitted by the word 'recommended', teachers should be mindful that a 2000-word task creates an unnecessary addition to student workload and, more importantly, is not in the spirit of the recommended length. Second, while the subject outline describes two types of folio tasks (comparative study and supervised structured assessment), teachers should feel free to design a range of tasks and not limit themselves to these suggestions. Third, while supervised structured assessments are useful as preparation for examination conditions, moderators observed that students were often disadvantaged if tasks contained an excessive amount of reading material or an insufficient length of time to complete the task, which was usually a sources analysis.

Assessment Type 2: Practical Activity

According to the subject outline, a practical activity in most cases is undertaken outside of the classroom and involves primary sources of information. Students may also apply their knowledge and skills in conducting a range of different tourism activities, such as event planning and tours, or preparing tourism-related documents. Where this occurs, teachers must ensure that the task design covers all aspects of the performance standards selected for that task. For example, moderators identified many tasks where specific feature IA1 (as numbered in the subject outline) was used in the task design. Here students must show ‘investigation and critical analysis of connections between primary and secondary sources of information’. Effective task design gave clear directions to the students regarding the need to use secondary sources to analyse primary research. Where task designs and student responses were unclear regarding which primary sources and practical skills were used, moderators noted that student achievement against the investigation and application criterion was limited. Likewise, when designing practical activities, teachers should ensure that students engage in a diverse range of practical tourism skills across the set of assessments. Students who used the same methodologies across the set of tasks were often unable to demonstrate a diversity of practical tourism skills, thus limiting achievement against the performance standards.

Practical activities also provide opportunities to assess the communication assessment design criterion. Of particular note was specific feature C3, the ‘incorporation of a variety of visual and graphical evidence’. Outstanding responses used a range of visual techniques, such as annotated images, graphs and tables, and modified or student-constructed diagrams and maps. In many cases, however, students tended to insert images, tables, and diagrams into their work with little or no connection to their text. Students should be specifically taught how to integrate visual and graphical evidence within their assessment tasks.

Practical activities were often used to fulfil the requirement for at least one assessment involving collaborative work. Moderators reported that it was at times difficult to know how students were assessed in these tasks, as it was unclear from the task sheet how marks were allocated. Task design should communicate to the students whether each group member will receive the same grade or whether they will be graded individually in collaborative tasks. If graded individually, it is important that students are aware of how their grade will be determined in the context of group work. As discussed in the clarifying forums, collaborative skills, if taught, could also be considered an example of a practical tourism skill and thus can be assessed as such. A small number of tasks challenged students to evaluate their collaboration. Care needs to be taken in task design to encourage students to demonstrate insightful, rather than superficial, evaluation of their work. An example of a task designed for collaborative work can be found in the Stage 1 Tourism support materials on the SACE website.

Assessment Type 3: Investigation

The investigation challenges students to investigate a tourism trend, development, and/or contemporary issue. This broad range of focuses resulted in the emergence of new investigation topics. For instance, the growth of new niche markets such as medical tourism and the impact of events such as natural disasters were popular topics this year. Although students carry a substantial responsibility for this task, it is another area where the task design and selected specific features from the performance standards had a significant impact on student achievement. Where the task design was clearly structured, allowing students to understand the stages of the process and the intent of the task, responses tended to be well-developed. Scaffolding the task for the students without taking control of the research away from them allowed students to demonstrate their own ability to develop systematic investigations.

Despite teachers being required to incorporate all four assessment design criteria, this year was the first time teachers could determine which specific features of the performance standards to assess with the investigation. Caution must be applied, however, as selecting too few performance standard features may result in students not covering all aspects of the task as described in the subject outline. For example, visual and graphical evidence is particularly relevant in this assessment type, thus it is critical that the relevant performance standard (C3) be included in the task design. The assessment type description also identifies that the task needs to involve 'identifying, selecting, analysing, and evaluating primary and secondary sources of information' (which equates to specific feature IA1). While the majority of tasks submitted to moderation covered most or all of the performance standards in the knowledge and understanding, investigation and application, and communication assessment design criteria, a small number did not and this resulted in less informed and more superficial investigations.

The investigation and application criterion presented several challenges to students in this assessment type. For example, students must demonstrate a comprehensive and diverse application of practical tourism skills in order to achieve at an 'A' standard. When assessing this, teachers need to consider the range and nature of the sources accessed, and the skills demonstrated. The design of the primary data collection methods also had an impact on achievement, as students were able to develop perceptive conclusions that drew from a range of sources. As with practical activities, consideration of the validity, bias, and accuracy of research varied. It is important for students to fully understand the impact of these assessment design criteria on the quality of their findings. Weaker responses tended to describe rather than analyse and evaluate sources and findings.

The subject outline specifies a maximum of 1500 words for a written text or 10 minutes for an oral presentation. This placed further constraints on the task design as students, in negotiation with their teachers, needed to ensure that the task could be completed within this limit. While small in number, there continue to be instances where students breach the SACE Board Word-count Policy through their use of tables to present analysis. Students and teachers need to ensure that the final focus of this assessment task is broad enough to allow a considered response, yet manageable within the word-limit.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 4: Examination

As indicated in the subject outline, the newly introduced examination has a significant focus on the *interpretation* and *analysis* of sources, as well as the *application* of student learning from the four tourism themes studied throughout the year. The sample examination, published in 2010, exemplified this focus. The marking team noted that, while students typically found the examination accessible, it also provided opportunities for the more capable students to excel, especially in Part B: Extended Responses.

A wide range of achievement levels was awarded to students, and several factors — besides how well students achieved against the designated performance standards

— accounted for the discrimination between successful and limited responses. First of all, better papers showed strong evidence of effective time management. Some tried to write in too much detail, often beyond the space allocated, in Part A: Short Responses, and doing so often compromised the quality of answers to Part B, as students ran short of time to complete the exam effectively. A number of opportunities to practise writing concisely in timed conditions throughout the year may help overcome this problem. A second functional discriminator was the ability to read and answer specific aspects of the questions. Markers commented on the number of answers that did not address the requirements of some questions (for example, see the comments on Question 7(b) below). Third, especially in relation to Part B of the paper, responses that made clear reference to specific sources tended to achieve higher marks than those with limited or inconsistent use of the sources provided.

It should also be noted that, while all assessment design criteria deliberately and strategically underpinned the construction of the exam, some themes received a greater focus than others. For example, a significant number of questions concentrated on the economic impacts of tourism. This aspect of the exam is typical of many subjects' exams, and future papers are likely to reflect a shift in emphasis, while still requiring students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

Assessment Design Criteria

This section of the report discusses the exam in relation to the four assessment design criteria of the subject outline.

Knowledge and Understanding

While this year's exam focused substantially on economic factors, as well as the interaction between tourism and host communities, those students who attained a high level of achievement demonstrated an in-depth knowledge and comprehensive understanding of a wide range of tourism concepts and models. Teachers should ensure that they teach a diversity of models and concepts associated with the themes outlined in the subject outline.

Analysis and Evaluation

A major focus of the exam is the *interpretation* and *analysis* of tourism-related sources and issues. Excellent responses showed a comprehensive interpretation of graphs and diagrams, as well as a perceptive analysis of different individuals' and groups' perspectives on tourism issues. Similarly, better answers not only understood tourism models and concepts, but analysed them perceptively and provided well-supported opinions, conclusions, and recommendations. Poor responses exhibited only a superficial understanding of validity, bias, and accuracy of sources (for example, in Questions 5(b) and 6(d)).

Investigation and Application

Another major concentration of the exam was the *application* of tourism knowledge in a range of contexts (IA2 and IA4). High achievers were able to demonstrate their knowledge of the four Tourism themes, comprehensively applying this knowledge to the given models and situations.

Communication

Markers commented on this assessment design criterion as a discriminating factor of student achievement, especially in Part B: Extended Responses, in which marks were specifically allocated to effective communication and appropriate use of tourism terminology. For example, responses that were coherent and concise scored higher marks than those that communicated poorly. Similarly, answers that incorporated clear and appropriate use of a wide range of tourism terminology outscored those with only occasional or limited use of tourism terms. Some markers also noted that better responses showed evidence of being able to communicate by constructing, where appropriate, clear and insightful diagrams. Students should be taught not only to interpret given models and diagrams, but to think logically to create their own in order to illustrate their understanding of the relationship between tourism concepts.

Exam Questions

The exam mean was 61%. Students found questions 7 and 9 difficult but the other questions were answered well.

In this section of the report, specific comments are provided on each question in the exam.

Part A: Short Responses

Question 1(a)

Almost all responses identified two popular activities such as visiting friends and relatives, and eating at restaurants.

Question 1(b)

Destination A was the most popular choice on the basis of its distance from Adelaide. More comprehensive answers discussed the nature of activities at Destination A, which generally require more time to enjoy. Those who argued that Destination B would be affected negatively (because Destination A would benefit) showed an insightful interpretation of the question. Some, however, misinterpreted the question and focused on the shortage of workers.

Question 1(c)

Most candidates had little trouble interpreting the model. Weaker responses did not refer to the terms used in the tourist types model (for example, ‘relatively adventurous’). However, those who specifically linked the activities in Destination A — such as ‘water activities’ — to the ‘relatively adventurous’ category of the tourist types model (or ‘visit wineries’ in Destination B to the ‘non-adventurous’ category) showed a greater understanding and analysis of the models provided.

Question 2(a)

Very few students had difficulty answering this question. Markers did, though, comment on responses that did not mention specific jobs but instead listed a place of employment (for example, ‘concierge’ was an acceptable answer, whereas ‘hotel’ was not).

Question 2(b)

This question asked how a tour guide would be able to *demonstrate* cultural understanding, thus better responses focused on language, communication, diet, social customs, and accommodating religious differences.

Question 2(c)

For 4 marks, students were required to explain how the tour guide might 'collaborate with other tourism sectors'. Better responses did not just list but described how a tour guide would need to work with, say, the accommodation or transportation sectors, whereas those that demonstrated little understanding of other tourism sectors received lower marks. Markers noted that, generally speaking, the simple diagrams were not well done, as they often did not clearly indicate the tourism industry sectors or the nature of the working relationship between the sectors.

Question 3(a)

The overwhelming majority of responses demonstrated at least a competent interpretation of the graph, yet some were unsure of the meaning of the word 'trend'.

Question 3(b)

Weaker answers either did not understand the terms 'domestic' or 'outbound', or briefly listed contributing factors. Better responses were able to explain factors such as a stronger Australian dollar or the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) making outbound travel less expensive for Australian tourists. Other perceptive explanations included low-cost international fares and successful overseas advertising campaigns.

Question 3(c)(i)

The requirements of economic analysis and an understanding of the role of the government in tourism effectively discriminated between student responses in this question. An understanding of the role of tourism in creating government revenue, as well as economic multipliers and employment benefits, were articulated by the more able students.

Question 3(c)(ii)

In this question focusing on specific features KU2, AE4, and IA4, students were required to apply their tourism knowledge to a given context. While most workable strategies were rewarded with at least some marks, better responses were able to suggest solutions that were specifically related to the role of government agencies (for example, tax breaks for tourism businesses, or stimulus packages for tourism attractions and events). Technically, reducing air fares and building attractions are not roles of the government.

Question 4(a)

While some responses showed uncertainty about the term 'stakeholder', most students were able to identify four groups; for example, the NT Government, businesses, community organisations, the tourism industry, tourists, and Indigenous groups.

Question 4(b)

This question required students to demonstrate an understanding of the 'sustainability' of tourism, applying it specifically to the context of a uranium mine in Alice Springs. The Tourism subject outline details environmental, economic, and social/cultural factors in the theme relating to sustainability, and many students successfully referred to and briefly explained these impacts (also known as the triple bottom line approach) in their responses.

Question 4(c)

Students were directed to explain a 'tourism-related' benefit, and better responses adhered to this instruction, ably discussing aspects such as visiting friends and relatives, business tourism, and niche markets. Some marks were still allocated to those answers that mentioned the more general economic benefits of multipliers and employment in the host community.

Question 5(a)

Most students were easily able to identify aspects such as business corporation headquarters, architecture/design, world-class restaurants, and luxury/sophistication.

Question 5(b)

Together with Question 6(d), this question specifically focused on AE2, thus it required students to consider the bias and accuracy of the given sources. More successful responses demonstrated at least some consideration of the positive bias of the travel leaflet, on the basis of its being a government promotional website, and the more balanced nature of Bob's Blog, which mentioned both positive and negative aspects of São Paulo.

Question 5(c)

Responses that received 3 or 4 marks were able to make thoughtful or perceptive recommendations, and demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the role of the government in São Paulo. Less successful students either did not discuss tourism, or did not consider the well-being of the host community.

Question 6(a)

Many students struggled with this question, neglecting to link the written text to the diagram, or at times showing little understanding of words such as 'euphoria' or 'apathy'. Better answers quoted briefly from the source, demonstrating a comprehensive interpretation of the Irridex model provided.

Question 6(b)

This question was answered quite well overall, with most students readily able to explain income (multiplier effects), employment, or infrastructure development. Weaker responses drifted from the *economic* focus of the question.

Question 6(c)

Better responses were able to articulate the roles of the local government and businesses in reducing resident irritation from tourism, while poorer answers lacked any reference to the way local council and businesses might work together, reverting instead to generalised suggestions.

Question 6(d)

In this question — similar to Question 5(b), yet conceptually more difficult — students were required to evaluate the accuracy of the tourism model provided. Marks were awarded for informed and perceptive discussions of the age (currency) of the model, the wide range of individual experiences, and the notion that not all levels (for example, apathy) were experienced in the given example.

Part B: Extended Responses

Generally speaking, this section of the exam was not answered as well as Part A. Some students did not complete all questions. This suggests that students need more formative practice in completing extended responses in timed conditions.

Question 7(a)

This question asked students to explain the economic impact of natural disasters on Queensland tourism, and most students were able to adequately refer to general economic effects such as loss of income and jobs. Better responses followed the instruction of the question and made ‘reference to relevant sources’, citing ‘loss of infrastructure and access disruption’, ‘loss of business activity’, loss of ‘hundreds of millions of dollars’, and reduced cash flow (Source 2); cancelled holidays, trips and conferences (Source 3); and loss of tourism revenue (Source 5). Teachers are encouraged to train their students to make specific reference to relevant sources in their responses.

Question 7(b)

While better responses were rewarded for detailed knowledge and understanding and comprehensive application of tourism concepts, as well as clear use of appropriate tourism terminology, many answers scored few marks for two main reasons. First, students did not follow the question’s instruction of discussing effects *outside* Queensland. Many focused on impacts within Queensland rather than aspects such as higher taxes on a national basis (to cover the rescue package — Source 2), higher prices on some food and electricity in tourism businesses (Source 5), or even the positive impact of a potential increase in interstate and international tourism. Second, many ignored the cue to ‘draw a simple diagram’, or constructed a diagram that lacked a clear tourism focus or logical demonstration of a ‘flow-on effect’.

Question 8

Together with Question 7(a), this question was answered well by many students. Those who structured their responses according to the views of ‘tourism operators, tourists, and the host community’ generally received the highest marks, as they provided a critical analysis of different perspectives of the trend of grief tourism. Some ignored the scaffolding that was provided, tried to argue both for *and* against the issue (rather than the requirement to argue for only one side), or made no reference to Source 1 in their response. Better responses *for* grief tourism discussed provision of income, employment, infrastructure, and community spirit, while effective arguments *against* grief tourism focused on ethics, social costs associated with cultural differences between rich tourists and poor locals, and commodification of human suffering.

Question 9

As expected, this question was by far the most significant discriminator of student grades in the exam. Similar to Question 7(b), this was a challenging question for students to answer, although many scored highly. Responses that scored 9 or more out of 12 did so on several accounts. They demonstrated in-depth knowledge and understanding of tourism concepts, making appropriate use of specific tourism terminology, especially in relation to the sustainability of the tourism industry. They also took notice of the instruction to 'write a response to the boat captain', which boosted their mark against C1, or writing coherent responses 'using forms to suit the purpose and audience'. Additionally, higher-scoring responses evaluated the validity of the boat captain's statement, and presented perceptive, well-developed opinions of the boat captain's view. Furthermore, better responses discussed all aspects of the question in a mini-essay form, specifically not only the role of 'exaggerated media reports' but also natural disasters and other factors (for example, the G F C) on tourism in both Queensland and the Murraylands. Those who restricted their discussion to either Queensland or the Murraylands did not score as highly.

Finally, as Part B of the exam was a sources analysis, more successful answers to Question 9 referred specifically to relevant sources. For example, Sources 2, 5 and 6 outline the effect of natural disasters on Queensland tourism; Sources 7(c) and 8 discuss the effect of natural disasters on the Murraylands; Sources 3, 4 and 9 focus on the role of the media in Queensland tourism; Sources 7(a) and 7(b) refer to the part media exaggeration played in affecting Murraylands tourism; and Source 4 mentions the effect of the GFC on Queensland.

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

The moderation team reported several challenges during the moderation process. These, by and large, related to the packaging of materials. The learning area manual includes the Variations in Materials for the Sample for Final Moderation form. This form should be used for a variety of situations, including when student materials are missing from the sample. This may be where a student has not submitted an assessment task or where the task is unavailable at the time of moderation. In many cases this form was not included, making finalisation of a school's results difficult. The learning area manual identifies the materials that need to be included as part of the moderation sample and this should be read carefully by teachers.

Secondly, a small number of schools supplied very little information at moderation to support the teacher's assessment of students' grades. Two good approaches were including a copy of the performance standards rubric from the subject outline, highlighted to show achievement against the performance standards relative to specified tasks; and creating a summary table identifying the assessment design criteria and the grade awarded for each criterion. Care also needs to be taken that there is a clear relationship between the grade allocated for each assessment design criterion and the overall grade awarded to the student for each task. Likewise, the grade awarded for each assessment type should demonstrate a clear relationship to the grades awarded for each task in that assessment type. There were some instances where the assessment type grade reported on the assessment results sheet could not be supported by the results awarded for the relevant assignments, usually a result of arithmetic or clerical errors. This also applies to the distinction between an ‘I’ and an ‘E’ grade. If no work has been submitted in an assessment type, then an ‘I’ grade should be awarded. An ‘E’ grade indicates that the student’s work was of an ‘E’ standard as outlined in the performance standards.

When packaging group materials for moderation, particularly digital materials, each student needs to be clearly identified, for example, by their registration number. There were times when it was difficult to determine the identity of the sampled student in group tasks, as little or no distinction was made in the digital evidence.

Additionally, although not common, it was pleasing to see that, where teachers had adjusted their learning and assessment plan, the addendum had been completed and submitted as part of the moderation package. In addition to assisting moderators understand the samples presented, it also reflected teacher awareness that the work presented to students needs to be appropriate to the class context and thus, at times, plans may need to change.

Schools that combined classes to form one assessment group did so with varying degrees of consistency of assessment standards. The moderation panel noted that schools with assessments showing a common interpretation and application of performance standards appeared to have combined classes early in the school year and had programs with some common assessments.

It was pleasing to see the number of teachers who used or adapted available support materials. Those who did so were able to design effective assessment tasks and develop accurate marking standards, which benefited their students at the confirming or moderation phase of assessment. The Stage 2 Tourism page on the SACE website contains numerous support materials, which include learning and assessment plans, subject advice, and strategies, as well as exemplars of various assessment types and student responses. Teachers are also encouraged to attend planning workshops and clarifying forums, where subject experts provide advice and information for teachers. Another way that teachers can develop in their expertise is to participate in assessment panels. Teachers are encouraged to express interest to be examination markers or to be on the end-of-year moderation panel.

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