Unit 13: Special Interest Tourism

Unit code: M/601/1752
QCF level: 5
Credit value: 15

Aim
This unit enables learners to gain understanding of special interest tourism, its management and issues, the types of products, services and tourists, and its appeal and motivation for customers.

Unit abstract
Special interest tourism (SIT) is replacing the traditional ‘sea, sand and sun’ type holiday for many people. Examples range from weekend painting in the Dales to working as a conservation volunteer in a remote part of the world. Most types are available all year round, somewhere, through the large range of providers, which can now reach their market via the internet. Growth and diversity give an exciting dimension to the range of tourism products on offer.

In this unit learners will develop their knowledge and understanding of the evolution of special interest tourism and the nature of its providers, their product range and the diversity of their customers. They will explore competitive factors, appeal and motivation of tourists taking these ‘packages’, and investigate the sometimes complex management needs and issues which affect operations and delivery.

Learning outcomes
On successful completion of this unit a learner will:

1. Understand the nature and development of special interest tourism
2. Understand how special interest tourism matches customers, products and services
3. Understand the appeal and motivation of special interest tourism for customers
4. Understand management needs and issues of special interest tourism.
Unit content

1 **Understand the nature and development of special interest tourism**

*Nature*: niche market provision, aims and purposes eg active/creative, social, educational, discovery, hobbies, challenge/excitement and relaxation or health and therapy; the ‘mosaic’ of provision and product differentiation and tourist types

*Development*: factors facilitating growth eg globalisation, transport, disposable income; market diversification and competition among providers and destinations eg new man-made features, remote locations, urban attractions eg regeneration, natural features; improved infrastructure; shift away from traditional tourist desires/packages; role of the internet; social trends

2 **Understand how special interest tourism matches customers, products and services**

*Range*: classification of products and services eg passive social gatherings, outdoor pursuits, adventure activities, cultural events, multi-stay packages, archaeological tours, sports competitions, language courses, educational trips, hobbies and interests, spectatorism; classification of environments on or under water, on or under the land, in the air, rural, urban, wilderness, sportscapes

*Diversity*: classification of tourist types eg groups, individuals, teams, clubs; psychographic/demographic types; grey market, youth market, family market, other identifiable groups

3 **Understand the appeal and motivation of special interest tourism for customers**

*Appeal*: locations and features – UK, European, worldwide eg man-made, natural, attractive, remote, urban, popular, spectacular, novel, dangerous; weather; amenities eg ski, climb, sail, canoe, raft, views; social; range of comfort; level of challenge

*Motivation*: intrinsic eg thrills, challenge, skill improvement, escape, discovery, relaxation, health, therapeutic; extrinsic eg status, image, newness; sustainability; personality types; methods of stimulation/promotion; pricing; seasonality; socio-cultural and economic influences; modernism

4 **Understand management needs and issues of special interest tourism**

*Management*: considerations eg profitable attractive packages, segmented approaches, logistics, support and selection of leaders and reps, ‘fit’ with local plans, access, visas, permits and licences, insurance, accommodation, levels, quality of equipment, regulations and laws, contingency plans, ensuring customer satisfaction and evaluation, liaison with organisations

*Issues*: health, safety and security; risk assessment; socio-cultural impacts eg education and cultural awareness/respect, codes of practice, cultural sensitivity, exploitation, crime, demonstration effect, language; environmental impacts eg eco-tourism principles, protection, conservation, sustainability; economic impacts eg multiplier effects, employment
## Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment criteria for pass</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>On successful completion of this unit a learner will:</strong></td>
<td><strong>The learner can:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LO1 Understand the nature and development of special interest tourism</strong></td>
<td>1.1 discuss special interest tourism in terms of product differentiation and tourist types</td>
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<td>1.2 assess the contribution of tourism trends, factors and shifts in holiday interests to special interest tourism development</td>
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<td><strong>LO2 Understand how special interest tourism matches customers, products and services</strong></td>
<td>2.1 evaluate how providers can match products and services to different customer types</td>
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<td><strong>LO3 Understand the appeal and motivation of special interest tourism for customers</strong></td>
<td>3.1 analyse the appeal to customers of special interest tourism features and benefits</td>
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<td>3.2 evaluate how the motivations of tourists are met by special interest tourism locations and features</td>
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<td><strong>LO4 Understand management needs and issues of special interest tourism</strong></td>
<td>4.1 evaluate the organisational and support logistics involved in the management of special interest tourism trips</td>
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<td>4.2 assess how operators resolve issues that affect special interest tourism</td>
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**Guidance**

**Links**

This unit links with:
- **Unit 1**: The Travel and Tourism Sector
- **Unit 6**: Contemporary Issues in Travel and Tourism
- **Unit 7**: Sustainable Tourism Development
- **Unit 9**: Tourist Destinations
- **Unit 14**: Tour Operations Management
- **Unit 17**: Work-based Experience.

**Essential requirements**

Learners must be made familiar with relevant tourism, leisure and management theories, as well as current developments in the special interest tourism industry, investigating emerging activities and interests.

Learners must explore the impact of certain special interest tourism activities and investigate the work of a number of tourism charities which campaign on tourism-related issues in developing countries.

The unit is especially appropriate for fieldwork-based investigation and a portfolio of research could form part of the assessment. Learners must be encouraged to consider different special interest activities and locations throughout their study and this should be reflected in the assessment evidence.

**Employer engagement and vocational contexts**

A team of employers could be identified to support the different units. Employers could help tutors, for example, with the planning of programmes of learning, or provision of visits, guest speakers and mentors. They could also help to design assessment activities.

The delivery of this unit would be enhanced by employer engagement involving, for example, specialist or niche tour operators.

As there are a number of relatively complex issues in relation to the unit, particularly regarding sustainability and management techniques, case studies resulting in class discussions or debates may be a particularly worthwhile approach.