Advanced Certificate in Market & Social Research Practice

EXAMPLAR EXAM PAPER & ANSWER GUIDE

NEW SYLLABUS – EFFECTIVE JUNE 2020

Duration: 2hrs 30 minutes

Instructions given to Candidates

- Time allowed 2 hours 30 minutes
- Candidates must answer questions A, B, & C in Section 1
- Candidates must answer TWO questions from the six in Section 2
- All answers must be written in your Examination Answer booklet

Important Note: The requirement is for candidates to complete questions A, B & C in Section 1 and two questions from six in Section 2. Failure to do this by either selecting more or fewer questions than the requirement may result in the paper being marked as non-compliant. Recommended times and question weighting are detailed in each section to assist candidates in completing all the questions in the time available.

Instructions for Examiners

The following Answer Guide is not intended to provide a comprehensive guide to all possible points in response to exam questions.

Examiners should give credit for any points not included in the Answer Guides but which are credible responses to the question asked.

Examiners should note that the aim of many of the questions is to test the candidate's ability to apply knowledge to given contexts. However, candidates may fail to make full reference to the context in some cases. In these cases, examiners are required to assess the extent to which the information given meets the needs of the context. The following guidance has been produced for examiners:

- Credit should be given for information which is relevant to the question, even if it does not make overt reference to the context
- Some credit should be given for information which has some relevance to the context but which needs to be more focused to be fully effective
- Credit should not be given for information which is not relevant to the context.

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MRS Advanced Certificate Exemplar Exam Paper & Answer Guide
New Syllabus – Effective June 2020

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Section 1: Compulsory question (Recommended time: 50 minutes)

This section tests problem identification and problem solving using a number of skills. The section accounts for one-third of the total marks.

Read the following case study and answer ALL 3 questions overleaf.

Every year, all 15-year-old school students across the country complete a 2-week Work Experience Programme towards the end of the school year. Each student spends two weeks working for an employer who has volunteered to offer a placement. The programme is intended to help the students make career and study choices and to prepare them for the world of work. However, the government is concerned that the programme is not achieving its aims. Recent news stories have highlighted complaints from the students and their parents about the range and quality of placements, and from employers about the support provided for them and for the students.

The government has commissioned your research agency to find out how the Work Experience Programme could be made more effective. This research will involve gathering information from the students and employers along with parents and school staff.

Before commencing with a national programme of research, the agency intends to conduct an initial study at six schools in different regions of the country. It hopes that information gathered during this initial study will help inform the national study. The schools involved have agreed to participate in the research.

Question A

Outline the benefits that might be gained from conducting this initial study prior to roll-out of the full national study. Illustrate your answer with examples.

(Weighting: one third of total)

Minimum requirements: *In order to achieve a Pass grade in this task, candidates are expected to identify a minimum of two benefits that might be gained from conducting this limited study. Stronger answers might identify a wider range of benefits and/or provide clear and useful illustration that demonstrates depth of understanding.*

Potential benefits include:

- ***Approach/method****: the opportunity to determine if a full study is feasible; the opportunity to investigate which research approach (including sampling approaches) is most suitable and most workable for each group; the chance to decide on a feasible sample size; the chance to identify possible problems and how to overcome them – e.g. unforeseen issues which prevent groups from participating; bad times to conduct the research etc; the chance to work out what resources might be needed.to complete the work on time*
- ***Ethical and legal issues including data protection****: the opportunity to ensure that all aspects of these issues are identified, addressed and managed in a professional way*
- ***Content/coverage****: the opportunity to identify issues/ areas which can be included in the wider study; the opportunity to generate hypotheses which can be tested at the next stage*
- ***Data collection****: the chance to establish vocabulary appropriate for the target populations; the opportunity to develop and pilot the data collection instruments (e.g. questionnaire); opportunity to develop a more closed-ended questionnaire for the wider study, resulting in greater cost-efficiency for the quantitative stage*
- ***Analysis****: the opportunity to assess preliminary findings and plan ahead for analysis.*

Question B

The agency has decided to conduct some qualitative research first. It intends to hold qualitative group interviews with groups of students and groups of staff at each school. Once this is concluded, the agency intends to conduct telephone interviews with a number of parents and employers in each of the selected areas using semi-structured questionnaires.

- Describe the sampling criteria the agency should use for choosing students and staff to take part in the qualitative research
- identify the sample sources or sampling frames the agency might use for obtaining a sample of parents amd employers for the telephone survey

Give reasons for your suggestions.

(Weighting: one third of total)

Minimum requirements: *This question requires candidates to demonstrate that they understand the principles of sampling for exploratory research. In order to achieve a Pass grade in this task, candidates should identify at least one criterion for sample selection for each of the groups within the target population and how that sample might be identified. Stronger answers may provide a wider range of criteria and may provide greater depth of rationale. Weaker answers may provide simply a list of suggestions with no analysis.*

The answer might include some or all of the following:

Group / criteria	***Source / Frame***
Students: ○ *Past participants* ○ *Students about to participate* ○ *Satisfied students* ○ *Dissatisfied students*	○ *School register for recent and planned participants* ○ *No frame available for former students, so other approaches to recruitment required – e.g. social media 'friends' of the school*
School staff: ○ *Teachers of year groups involved in programme* ○ *Staff involved in organising placements* ○ *Senior staff involved in running of the programme*	○ *School staff list*
Parents: ○ *Those with children who have participated* ○ *Those with children about to participate*	○ *School register of parents*
Employers: ○ *Those who have offered placements* ○ *Those who have volunteered to offer placements* ○ *Major employers who have not (yet) participated* ○ *SMEs who have not (yet) participated*	○ *School list of employers which have provided placements* ○ *Local directories for contacts of non-participating employers* ○ *Chamber of Commerce for contacts of local employers*

Question C

Before fieldwork can begin the government wants assurance that the research will be conducted in an ethical and professional way. Prepare a report identifying the ethical and/or legal issues involved in conducting the research and describing how these will be addressed. Give reasons for your suggestions.

(Weighting: one third of total)

Minimum requirements: *This question requires candidates to demonstrate their understanding of ethical considerations in sampling and how these affect recruitment. In order to achieve a Pass grade in this task, candidates should identify the following key issues and provide appropriate ideas for addressing these issues:*

- *the MRs Code of Conduct requirements for conducting research with under 16s, in particular the need for informed consent from parents as well as students*
- *data protection issues relating to the use of school databases for access to personal information*

Stronger answers may identify a wider range of considerations and provide well-justified approaches to recruitment. Weaker answers may fail to identify key issues but may fail to demonstrate an understanding of how they can affect recruitment and how they might be addressed.

Some issues and recruitment ideas might include the following:

Issue	***Possible approach to recruitment***

Students
○ *Current group are under 16 therefore parent/responsible adult permission is needed for research*
○ *Research agency cannot have direct access to school database*
○ *Access to students who have left school difficult*
	○ *For 15-year-olds / all current pupils – ask School to send letter to parents asking for permission and response*
	○ *For former pupils:*
	    ○ *Contact via social media (e.g. school facebook page)*
	    ○ *Snowball sampling – asking participants to encourage others to contact*

Staff ○ *Current staff school email addresses can be used – but not personal ones*	○ *Email to relevant staff using staff email* ○ *Notice in staff room?*
Parents ○ *As with students, school database cannot be used directly by agency without the parents consent*	○ *Invitation letter from school?* ○ *Social media invitation to parents following school?*
Employers ○ *School database cannot be used directly unless permission for research purposes has been agrees with the employers* ○ *Identifying non-participants may be difficult – how can an appropriate selection be made?*	○ *Invitation directly from school asking for permission to contact?*

Section 2: Optional Questions (Recommended time: 100 minutes)

This section accounts for two-thirds of the total marks.

Answer any TWO questions from the SIX in this section. Give a full answer to each of the questions you choose.

Question 1

Last year, a large retail company, with 5,000 employees in branches around the country launched its *Well At Work* initiative. *Well At Work* provides a range of confidential services to improve staff morale and wellbeing. This range includes services such as free health checks, free financial advice and support to stop smoking. The company wants to find out how staff view these services, how useful they are, and if they have helped improve staff satisfaction. In particular, they would like to know which staff groups, according to grade and geographic area, are making most use of the services.

Your research agency has been commissioned to carry out this research. Last week, the agency circulated a link to an online questionnaire containing the questions below to all employees. They have been asked to submit their completed questionnaires by the end of next week.

Each day, you download a spreadsheet report containing all of the data received from completed questionnaires. You are providing the HR Director with a daily update on the number of completed questionnaires. However, the HR Director has now asked to look at the spreadsheet report so she can get a feel for the results for each area and staff group. You do not feel it is appropriate for the HR Director to look at all of the raw data. You have identified ethical issues and you are concerned that she might misinterpret or be misled by the data.

Question3:
Which geographic area do you work in? (Tick appropriate answer)
a) North b) Central c) South d) West e) East

Question 4:
What is your employee grade? (Tick appropriate answer)
a) Assistant b) Team Leader c) Group Manager

Question 5:
We would like to know if you have made use of the *Well At Work (WAW)* services listed below. Please indicate if you have used any of these services in the past 6 months. Circle the appropriate response for each area.

(Y = yes / N = no / X = rather not say)

a) WAW Health Check Y / N / X
b) WAW Financial Advice Service Y / N / X
c) WAW Smoking Cessation Plan Y / N / X
d) WAW Mediation Advice Y / N / X
e) WAW Return to Study Advice Y / N / X

a) Identify the main issues you need to consider before sharing this raw data and state why each is important. You should consider:

- ethical issues
- issues which could result in the HR Director misinterpreting or being misled by the data

(Weighting: one half of total)

Minimum requirements: *In order to achieve a Pass grade in this task, candidates are expected to demonstrate a basic practical understanding of some of the key issues in the preparation and analysis of quantitative data and the ethical issues involved in sharing this data. They should identify a minimum of two issues to consider in relation to ethical issues and two in relation to the data being misinterpreted or to the HR director being misled and provide some rationale for these.*

In order to Pass, answers MUST identify the need to abide by any statements regarding the sharing of data which formed part of the agreement for informed consent.

Stronger answers may provide a wider range of considerations and/or particularly clear rationale for their inclusion. Weaker answers may identify some basic issues but fail to provide an (accurate) explanation of their importance.

Issues may include some/all of the following:

- *The pseudonymisation or anonymisation of the data*
- *Examining the basis of informed consent and abiding by any commitment made to participants in relation to the sharing of data e.g. assurances of anonymity*
- *Data privacy and the Code of Conduct (being able to identify an individual employee by their answers on geographic area and employee grade)*
- *Sample size: Does the sample for each group represent its proportion in the population as a whole?*
- *Absolute sample size and its statistical reliability*
- *Response rates –how they may impact data interpretation (especially if it varies by geographic region)*
- *Missing/incomplete data: The HR Director has looked at the questionnaires, but the data may not have been edited for analysis – e.g. some questionnaire responses may be incomplete*
- *What is being compared? Looking at the questionnaires, the HR Director may be noticing only limited comparisons (e.g. managers in different areas/ responses to one particular service). Need to be clear about what is being compared*
- *How are 'rather not say' areas being interpreted? Does company need to know this? Or are they only counting definite yes/nos?*
- *Questions may be misunderstood by participants. The company may be referring to its geographic regions, but these may differ from standard regions therefore making it unclear which definition the participant has used*

b) Describe at least two ways in which you might analyse the data in order to provide the company with the robust information they need. Giving reasons for the suggestions you make.

(Weighting: one half of total)

Minimum requirements: *In order to achieve a Pass grade in this task, candidates are expected to demonstrate familiarity with a limited range of approaches to presenting/analysing data in order to provide required information. Answers should identify a minimum of two techniques that could be used to extract the required information from this data. Stronger answers may provide a wider range of suggestions and/or greater depth of rationale. Weaker answers may provide only generic descriptions of analysis, without linking these to the information requirements of the context.*

Possible techniques include:

- *cross- tabulation*
- *percentages - for each geographical and/or staff group against each WAW service*
- *weighting – so that results for disparate sizes of groups can be compared*
- *analyse the different combinations of training received*

Question 2

A city council is concerned about increasing traffic congestion and rising pollution levels in the city centre. One possible solution to these problems is to introduce a city-centre cycle hire scheme. Although the scheme would be expensive to establish, the council proposes to cover the costs with the revenue raised through the hire fees. However, in a time of cuts to budgets, there is considerable opposition to the introduction of a scheme. Before going ahead, the council needs to have confidence that the cycle-hire scheme would address the needs that have been identified.

a) Outline briefly why market research would be useful to the city council. Describe the programme of primary and secondary research that you would recommend, giving reasons for the recommendations you make.

(Weighting: one half of total)

Minimum requirements

In order to achieve a Pass grade in this task, candidates should identify at least two potential benefits, each with convincing illustration, and should set out a suitable programme/list of suggestions for research.

Stronger answers may identify the problems to be addressed by the research and identify a wider range of benefits relevant to this particular business problem and/or provide a more detailed and comprehensive programme. Weaker answers are likely to identify more generic benefits of research, may fail to make clear connections with the research problem under discussion and may not set out an appropriate programme or describe a programme in sufficient detail.

The business problem: increasing traffic congestion and rising levels of pollution
Proposed solution: cycle hire scheme
Complicating issue: cost of establishing scheme
Information needs: will the cycle hire scheme achieve enough uptake to decrease traffic congestion and pollution levels; and is the cycle scheme a cost effective way of tackling congestion and pollution, how long will it take for the hire fees to cover the costs of establishing the scheme?

Possible benefits of market research centre around gathering information:

- *To determine what level of uptake over what period of time would impact on congestion and pollution levels*
- *To gauge the acceptability of the scheme to the population*
- *To identify possible challenges/problems which have not been anticipated*
- *To gauge the likely uptake*
- *To determine the profile of potential users of the scheme*
- *To find out what would encourage people to leave the car at home and hire one of the bikes*
- *To find out for what purpose or type and length of journey the hire scheme would be used for*
- *To determine likely frequency of use*
- *To inform processes such as price setting (what would be acceptable?); location/placing of hire facilities, methods of payment etc.*

The research programme may include some or all of the following:

- *Secondary research (e.g. published reports on similar projects, local authority plans) to identify:*
    - *the impact of similar schemes in other cities*
    - *factors which are seen as important to success, or which act as barriers*
    - *any potential issues within the city which might constrain this development (e.g. planning restrictions; cycle-friendly routes; city layout etc)*
    - *any available traffic/travel data for the city to identify patterns and potential problem areas.*

- *Primary research*
  - *Focus groups with influencers and pressure groups to identify where support and barriers lie*
  - *Survey of wider population in the city*
  - *Observation to help identify possible areas to target with the cycle scheme*
  - *Observation to identify possible dangers to cyclists for which the local authority might be held responsible*
  - *Research with experts in the field such as government transport depts., planning experts to identify key considerations/challenges (e.g. legal issues, planning issues, regulatory issues)*

b) The city council has decided to commission a research programme and has asked you to devise a brief for circulation to research agencies. Outline the information which should be included in the brief to ensure that the research agencies understand what is required in the project. Give reasons for the suggestions you make.

(Weighting: one third of total mark)

Minimum requirements: *In order to achieve a Pass grade in this task, candidates need to demonstrate that they are aware of the information which a brief should contain and how it should be structured, along with some justification for their suggestions. Weaker answers are likely to provide a list of the information to be included, with little or limited rationale. Stronger answers are likely to provide greater depth of rationale. Very strong answers may also identify possible options for information to be included, with rationale for how those options might be selected.*

The answer should touch on the following issues:

- *Background information: what does the agency need to know about the proposed scheme and reasons for its possible introduction?*
- *Business problem: what does the agency need to know about the business problem facing the council?*
- *Research problem: what are the objectives for the research agency*
- *Suggested methodology: are there any recommendations for how the problem should be approached?*
- *Timing*
- *Budget (budget at their discretion – many clients choose not to divulge it at this early stage).*
- *Any reporting requirements?*
- *Contact names*
- *How results will be used.*

Question 3

Next month, the Government's Health Department will host a national 2-day conference for up to 1,000 healthcare staff from across the country. Information about the conference has been sent out to healthcare staff by the Health Department Marketing & Communications team using a variety of media. This includes a conference website, leaflets, posters and a conference Facebook page and Twitter account, all branded with the hashtag #HConf20.

The Conference Organising Committee are particularly keen to find out how useful the conference is in helping staff to engage with and share new ideas. The Head of Marketing & Communications has suggested that social media listening can be used to gather some of the information that the Committee needs. However, most of the Committee have never heard of social media listening as a data collection tool. They have asked the Head of Marketing & Communications for a presentation on what social media listening involves, and how it might be used to gather the information they want. You are the market researcher in the Marketing & Communications team, and you have been tasked with preparing the presentation.

a) Define what is meant by 'social media listening'. Discuss the benefits and limitations of this approach in gathering the information the Conference Organising Committee needs.

(Weighting: one half of total)

Minimum requirements: *In order to achieve a Pass grade in this task, candidates are required to give a clear definition of 'social media listening', and to identify a minimum of two benefits and one limitation of its use in relation to this context.*
Stronger answers may provide a wider range of benefits and limitations, supported by clear rationale. Weaker answers may fail to provide an appropriate definition, and/or may identify only generic benefits/limitations of this approach.

The answer may include some or all of the following points:

Definition: *In this context, social media listening would involve monitoring what is being said about the conference across the internet, primarily on social media channels.*

Benefits *in this context might include finding out:*
- *when and where the conference is being talked about - even before it takes place. You can't do this with post-hoc data gathering*
- *the topics which are generating the most discussion - and the nature of that discussion*
- *which groups of people are engaging most in the conversation?*
- *if the conference generates engagement and interest after the event - do people continue to exchange info?*

Limitations *in this context might be:*
- *the range of people who engage via social media: it might be a restricted group from within the population of interest (i.e. staff groups)*
- *the range of feedback - some aspects of the conference may not attract social media engagement*
- *the amount of feedback - there may not be enough information to identify key themes or trends*
- *the potential for skewing feedback: more active social media users may have particular areas of interest, or particular points to make - there is the potential that the most dominant participants' views prevail*

b) Outline a plan for gathering the data the Committee needs using social media listening. Your plan should include the data sources you plan to use and the steps you will take before, during and after conference to ensure that the social media listening exercise is effective, giving reasons for your suggestions. You should also identify how you will ensure that the data is collected in accordance with relevant ethical and/or legal requirements.

(Weighting: one half of total)

Minimum requirements: *This part of the question requires candidates to demonstrate that understanding of how to plan effective social media listening activities. In order to achieve a Pass grade, the candidate needs to:*

- *identify at least two relevant data sources, with a clear rationale for their choice*
- *identify at least one key step they should take before, during and after the conference to gather the data, with a clear rationale for each step described*
- *identify how they will ensure that data is collected in a way that protects the identity of individuals and does not infringe their rights under Data Protection legislation*

Stronger answers may identify a wider range of data sources and/or greater understanding of steps that can be taken to maximise the effectiveness of the data collection, along with a clear rationale for the points they make. Weaker answers may fail to provide a clear rationale for their sources, and/or may fail to address all three stages (before; during; after).

The answer may include some or all of the following points:

Sources *might include monitoring some or all of the following:*

- *the conference Facebook page and Twitter account*
- *mentions of the hashtag #HConf20 across social media platforms*
- *mentions of the Conference across social media platforms*
- *speakers' blogs and social media accounts*
- *social media accounts of participants who have contributed to conference*

Before the conference:

- *set up a listening plan, which includes identifying how the listening will take place: are you going to invest in a social media listening tool and, if so, which one? who will be responsible for listening, and the minimum sources to be included in the listening plan*
- *identify who will be responsible for generating engagement in social media - e.g. sending out Tweets; updating Facebook page*
- *plan how mentions are to be analysed*
- *encourage the use of the hashtag via Twitter, Facebook and in communications with participants, and monitor for its use before the conference begins*

During the conference:

- *ensure that engagement in social media is promoted (e.g. making Twitter handle and hashtag visible throughout)*
- *ensure that 'live' monitoring is happening - identifying what is generating most conversation, and what the substance of the conversation is*

After the conference:

- *ensure monitoring beyond the conference date - how long is the hashtag being used after the conference, why is it being used*
- *analyse the range of mentions/engagements on social media so key issues can be reported on*

Ethical issues may include:

- *how to ensure that identifiable data (e.g. Twitter handles) is separated from mentions*
- *how to ensure that mentions do not contain identifiable data*

Question 4

Two years ago, a market leading manufacturer of household cleaning products launched a chain of RE-Centres in the capital city. Each RE-Centre sells the company's cleaning products in reusable packaging or refillable bottles, offers a refill service and provides a recycling centre for any type of plastic. Following a successful launch in the capital, the company recently opened RE-Centres in four major towns across the country.

The company has invested heavily in a widespread marketing campaign which included a direct mail shot prior to the launch of the new RE-Centres and wants to know whether and to what extent potential customers are aware of them. Your agency has been awarded the contract to carry out this research.

The client wants a survey conducted face-to-face. However, this cannot include any form of street intercept as this is not permitted in some of the towns where they have opened the new RE-Centres.

a) Describe at least two sampling methods which could be used for this survey, outlining the advantages and disadvantages of each of the methods chosen.

(Weighting: two thirds of total)

Examiners please note: *This task accounts for two thirds of the total result for this question.*

Minimum requirements: *In order to achieve a Pass grade in this task, candidates should identify at least two sampling methods, each with at least one advantage and one disadvantage, or three methods, with more limited analysis. Stronger answers may link suggestions with the marketing drive identified in the context, whilst weaker answers may provide only generic suggestions. Any generic suggestions given should be clearly applicable to the given situation.*

- ***Random route*** *Choose a representative set of areas and identify starting address in each area; brief interviewers on instructions for route and selection of person to interview; controlled by selection of specific individuals and quotas*
- ***Random location*** *Choose area (e.g. Census ED, telephone numbers in a geographical area) from list stratified by area, geodems; interviewer can choose any eligible person living within that area – controlled by selection of representative areas and quotas. Minimises interviewer selection and therefore bias. More control of sample design.*
- ***Cluster or multistage sampling*** *Sample geographic area from stratified list and select individuals/households within each area. Can be more cost efficient.*

Potential sampling methods include:

Method	***Advantages***	***Disadvantages***
Random	• *Provides a sample across all households in the area which is being targeted – should provide a representative cross section if response rates are relatively high* • *Avoids street intercept by doing door-to-door and/or telephone* • *Can calculate error* • *Representative*	• *Need a universe listing from which households /individuals can be chosen with equal probability* • *Potential non-response: how interested will people be in participating?* • *Could be time consuming & expensive given that call backs will be required*
Stratified random	• *Universe listing is sorted first on key variables to ensure representative sample* • *Can stratify sampling points by area and geodems* • *Depending on how marketing was done, could split households into those which were targeted in marketing drive and those which weren't* • *Possibly more representative of population of interest than pure random or quota*	• *Need to ensure the stratification factor(s) selected are appropriate* • *Potentially more expensive as interviewers will need to do more call-backs than quota sampling as substitutes are not accepted.*
Quota	• *Possibly cheapest option* • *Flexible approach for hard to find samples* • *Interviewer can choose any eligible person* • *Sample controlled by relevant quotas* • *Possible to select potential users based, e.g. on their current supplier*	• *Need a great deal of information about the population of the area: who is to be targeted?* • *As no street intercept is allowed, need to identify appropriate locations for interviews*

b) Which sampling method would you recommend? Give reasons for your choice.

(Weighting: one third of total)

Examiners please note: *This task accounts for one third of the total result for this question.*

Minimum requirements: *The approach to this task will depend on the answer given to Part a. In order to achieve a Pass grade, candidates should provide a clear recommendation for a sampling approach supported by a, convincing justification. Stronger answers may identify how any limitations (which may have been identified in Part a) could be addressed. Weaker answers may provide only a generic answer, rather than focus on the needs of the context. Examiners should judge if any generic points made are applicable to this particular context.*

Question 5

A number of new members of staff have recently joined your organisation. You have been asked to run a training session for them focusing on *conducting individual interviews in both qualitative and quantitative research projects*.

a) Describe the main differences between individual interviews undertaken for qualitative research studies and those undertaken for quantitative research studies. Illustrate your answer with examples.

(Weighting: one half of total)

Minimum requirements: *In order to achieve a Pass grade in this task, candidates should make at least 3 clear comparisons between the two types of interview, supported by some illustrative examples.*

Stronger answers may identify a wider range and provide convincing examples that clearly illustrate the points made. Weaker answers may fail to provide limited generic statements about the different types of interviews with no clear evidence to demonstrate understanding of the practical aspects of interviewing.

The answer may include some/all of the following points:

Qualitative interviews	***Quantitative interviews***
• *Good for exploring issues in-depth* • *More freedom for interviewer to explore issues* • *Setting can be important, with sensitivity of topic a key determiner in whether phone interviews can be used* • *Can be more than one-to-one (e.g. paired)* • *More time consuming than quant (therefore also more costly per interview, and possibly lower sample sizes)* • *More open questions* • *Less directive than in quant* • *Use of projective or enabling techniques*	• *Good for directional, conclusive and robust data gathering* • *Standard questions (no interviewer freedom)* • *Wide range of settings possible* • *Generally one-to-one* • *Can undertake research remotely, e.g. by phone. May not involve an interviewer – e.g. web- based techniques may be viewed as interviews* • *Usually shorter than qual* • *More closed questions* • *Pre-coding restricts range of possible answers* • *Some probing possible, but less than in qual* • *Cost per interview usually lower, therefore larger sample sizes more achievable, therefore more scope for analysing sub-groups*
The interviewer: • *Must listen and respond to subtle clues* • *Must be skilled at reading non-verbal info* • *Recorded on video/audio, may be transcribed*	*The interviewer:* • *Must ask the questions as they appear on the data collection instrument e.g. questionnaire* • *Listening skills important but less than qual* • *Many ways to record (CAPI, CATI, CAWI)*

b) One of your clients is a large national company which is planning major restructuring. The client wants to conduct research into staff attitudes to the restructure proposals. You have been asked to lead the team of 8 qualitative researchers who will undertake qualitative interviews with staff. Describe the steps you will take to ensure that the research:

- addresses the clients' needs
- is conducted with due regard for ethical and/or legal requirements and
- achieves consistency in approach across the team of researchers.

(Weighting: one half of total)

Minimum requirements: *Candidates may choose to address each of the three requirements separately or may suggest actions which address two or more of the requirements at the same time. In order to achieve a Pass grade in this task, answers are expected address all three requirements and to identify a minimum of three different actions, each with detailed rationale. Answers which identify a wider range of actions may provide less detailed rationale. However, enough information should be given to demonstrate a clear understanding of why the action is justified.*

Stronger answers may identify actions which can be taken in sequence and will provide clear justification for those suggestions. They may also identify issues relating to the fine balance of permitting difference between teams whilst also ensuring the research objectives are met. Weaker answers may provide only generic suggestions for actions, with little or no reflection on how they are related to the context.

The answer may include some or all of the following steps:

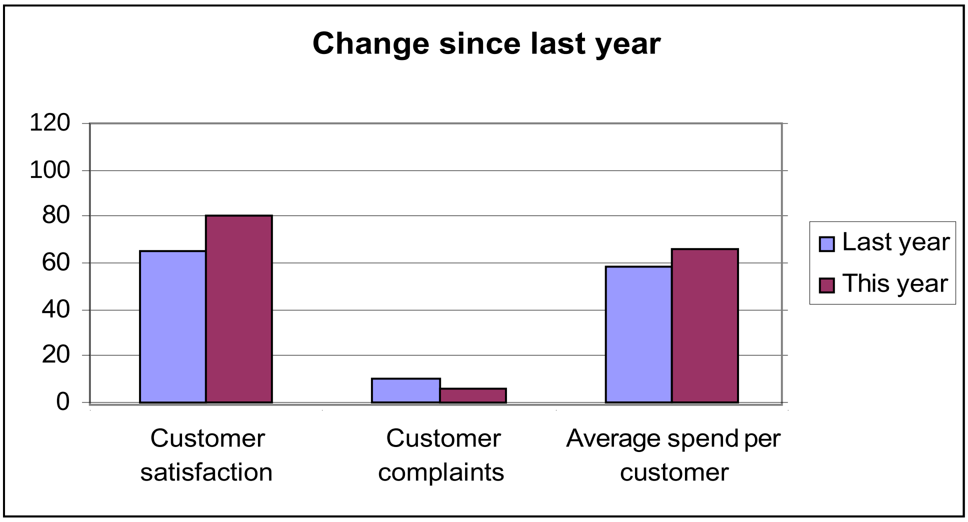
- *Review the research objectives: Ensure that there is shared understanding of the clients' needs and the aims of the research and the type of information required.*
- *Interviewers to have early sight of/involvement in discussion guide development to ensure all are clear and comfortable with content and sequence.*
- *All interviewers briefed at the same time to ensure all have sufficiently similar understanding.*
- *Review the discussion guide: Do all interviewers agree on the aim and interpretation of the questions? Do all feel it can be covered in the time given for the interview?*
- *Discuss the approach and structure of tasks. How are participants going to be warmed up? What types of techniques are to be used (e.g. projective techniques)? What (if any) materials are to be used and how will they be used?*
- *Give approximate times to be spent on each section of the discussion to ensure consistency across interviews.*
- *Ensure agreement on how data will be recorded. Also, what data will be recorded – e.g. are you going to record non-verbal behaviour?*
- *Review the make-up of the sample (i.e. geographical spread, age groups etc): What similarities and differences are there? Can possible impacts on the data collection be anticipated?*
- *Arrange meeting/communication following the first round of interviews if possible, to discuss and resolve any problematic issues, and to do a debrief of early findings and examine their impact.*
- *Ensure that the sample is chosen in a way is compliant with GDPR/DPA.*
- *Confirm and agree the contents of the consent form to be used, and how the participants will be informed of their rights and the use of data in order for them to provide informed consent.*
- *Review how the results of the staff research will be reported to ensure that staff identities are protected.*
- *Ensure that only the minimum amount of personal data to meet the research objectives is*

collected.

- *Agree a protocol for de-identifying or pseudonomyising the data at the earliest possible stage in the research process.*
- *Review the process for the inclusion of verbatims to ensure that they are anonymous and don't inadvertently identify participants e.g. via the language used, scenarios described etc.*
- *Agree a data security protocol for the participant data.*

Question 6

A supermarket regularly monitors a wide range of customer feedback measures. Key data is presented to the Board of the Supermarket every three months. Below is an example of the type of data presented to the Board.



a) Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the graph in conveying information about the research findings, giving reasons for your suggestions.

(Weighting: one third of total)

Examiners please note: *This task accounts for one third of the overall result for this question.*

Minimum requirements: *Candidates are expected to evaluate the graph as a presentation of research findings. In order to achieve a Pass grade in this task, the answer should identify a minimum of one strength and two weaknesses, with appropriate justification. Stronger answers may provide deeper analysis and/or a wider range of strengths or weaknesses.*

The answer may include some or all of the following points:

Strengths include:

- *Clear bar chart, with shading used to differentiate findings from different years.*
- *Key to explain what the shading represents.*
- *Categories being focused on clearly identified in the X axis.*

Weaknesses include:

- *No indication as to what the scale(s?) on the Y axis represents. Can't be percentages as it goes up to 120. Different data sets reported on different scales.*
- *No indication of sample size.*
- *No indication of statistical significance*
- *Ordering of the X axis – sometimes useful to order these according to largest responses down to lowest responses.*
- *Last year/this year are only relevant terms for a relatively short period and only to an audience that knows what time periods were being covered. Would therefore be better to state the specific time periods the research refers to.*
- *Problem of misinformation if non-response/weightings/response rates are not evident.*

b) The Board are considering using the first two categories (customer satisfaction and customer complaints) as the basis of a marketing campaign. The *MRS Code of Conduct* contains rules on the reporting of research results including presentations and the use of research findings. Based on these rules, what advice would you give to the supermarket on the use of research findings in marketing material? Give reasons for the suggestions you make.

(Weighting: two-thirds of total)

Examiners please note: *This task accounts for two thirds of the overall result for this question.*

Minimum requirements: *Candidates are expected to demonstrate familiarity with the range of rules in the MRS Code of Conduct on reporting – clauses 54-64. In order to achieve a Pass grade in this task, answers should identify at least three areas which the researcher should make the client aware of, with some rationale for their selection. Answers which provide only two suggestions may achieve a Pass grade if more detailed rationale is provided to demonstrate that the candidate understands the key principles on which the guidance is based.*

The answer may include some or all of the following points:

Key areas which should be identified include:

- *Results cannot be used to mislead the public*
- *Facts should be clearly differentiated from interpretation*
- *Sufficient technical information should be published to enable the validity of published results to be verified*
- *Research conclusions must be clearly and adequately supported by the research data*
- *Protecting the anonymity of participants in situations where verbatim excerpts are presented*

Guidance to the client may include some or all of the following points:

- *If you are likely to want to attribute verbatim comments, you need to make sure that participants are informed of this and that permission is sought for recontact to seek consent for use of the verbatims*
- *If the findings are to be published (e.g. in marketing or press material), members of the public must be able to access the technical details. How will this be arranged?*
- *Any graphs/charts and other materials drawing on the results provide enough technical detail to 'enable reasonable interpretation' of the validity of the results. This should include:*
    - *Information on sample size*
    - *Information on when data collection took place*
    - *Information on methods of data collection used*
    - *Information on the questions asked and responses offered*
    - *information on weighting*
- *Any marketing material being prepared should be checked by the researcher before publication to ensure that the supermarket is not using the results inappropriately.*