



Certificate in Market & Social Research

Syllabus Overview, Aims & Learning Outcomes

MRS is the world's largest association for people and organisations that provide or use market, social and opinion research, business intelligence and customer insight.

MRS is the awarding body for market and social research qualifications in the UK. It offers a range of government-approved qualifications suitable for different interests and levels of experience

MRS Certificate Syllabus Overview
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MRS
15 Northburgh Street
London EC1V 0JR

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7566 1805
Fax: +44 (0)20 7490 0608
Email: profdevelopment@mrs.org.uk
Website: www.mrs.org.uk

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Structure of the qualification

The Certificate in Market & Social Research comprises the following 3 units:

- Unit 1: Introduction to Market Research**
- Unit 2: Designing a research project: the tools of Market Research**
- Unit 3: Completing a research project**

Completion of the Certificate is expected to require 45 guided study hours, and assessment of all three units is integrated into one examination.

This document contains:

- a summary of the overall aims and general learning outcomes for each unit;
- a description of the specific learning outcomes for each unit, and the information which courses should cover to ensure that candidates meet those learning outcomes.
- interim guidance for recommended reading, in advance of the publication of a dedicated textbook

Recommended Texts

The recommended sources for reading include:

- Market & Social Research – *Planning and using research tools and techniques*; Kogan Page 2006 2006, , ISBN: 9780749443771
- MRS Website (www.mrs.org.uk): Key texts include A Newcomer's Guide to Market Research; Glossary; MRS Code of Conduct and associated guidelines for the conduct of research.
- AQR Website (www.aqr.org.uk): Key areas of the site include: Glossary
- RBG Website (www.rbg.org.uk): Encourage candidates to explore the different types of agencies and suppliers included in this site

A full version of the Certificate syllabus can be obtained from MRS

Unit Summaries

UNIT	AIMS	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Unit 1: Introduction to Market Research	To develop an understanding of the basics of market research, including learning about research objectives, research design and research methodologies.	After successful completion of this unit, candidates will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ describe the basics of market research ➤ outline research objectives ➤ describe research design ➤ understand different research methodologies
Unit 2: Designing a research project: the tools of Market Research	To develop an understanding of various tools of market research, including learning about qualitative and quantitative research, sampling, interviewing and questionnaire design.	After successful completion of this unit, candidates will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ describe qualitative research ➤ describe quantitative research ➤ describe sampling and interviewing ➤ examine questionnaire design
Unit 3: Completing a research project	To develop an understanding of the completion of the market research process, including learning how to turn data into findings and how to report and communicate findings. It also aims to develop an understanding of professional development in the market research profession.	After successful completion of this unit, candidates will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ turn data findings ➤ report and communicate findings ➤ understand the market research profession and professional development in that context

The following pages contain more detailed information about the content of each unit. The learning outcomes included within each unit are outlined, along with guidance on the topic areas which are core to the learning outcomes.

Unit 1: Introduction to Market Research	
<i>Outcome 1: Describe the basics of market research</i>	<i>Core topics include:</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. describe the role of market and social research within society and business 2. identify key ethical issues and constraints which govern effective research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition market research and reasons for its uses • Definitions of quantitative and qualitative research • The role and key principles of the MRS Code of Conduct • The key principles of the Data Protection Act as it relates to UK research
<i>Outcome 2: Outline research objectives</i>	<i>Core topics to include:</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify the links between a problem and a research objective 2. identify the key elements in a research brief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering background information to clarify a research problem • The importance of clear objectives to successful research • How to define a research objective • What to include in a research brief • Preparing yourself to do research
<i>Outcome 3: Describe research design</i>	<i>Core topics to include</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. describe the links between problem identification and appropriate research design 2. Identify a limited range of research designs 3. identify the key elements in a research proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions of different types of research: primary; secondary; quantitative; qualitative; exploratory; conclusive; ad-hoc; continuous • How to choose the right design • The structure of a research proposal
<i>Outcome 4: Understand different research methodologies</i>	<i>Core topics to include</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify key uses for both primary and secondary research 2. describe a range of major data collection methods 3. distinguish between the uses of a range of data collection methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources of secondary research: internet; journals; company records • Definitions of basic research methods & their uses: interviews & questionnaires; focus groups; mystery shopping & mystery customer • Definitions of a range of data collection methods: face-to-face; telephone; CATI; CAPI; postal; electronic measurement (EPOS/EFTPOS); Internet

Unit 2: Designing a research project: the tools of Market Research	
<i>Outcome 1: Describe qualitative research</i>	<i>Core topics to include:</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. describe the need for qualitative research within a given context 2. identify the potential limitations of major data collection methods within a given context 3. identify a range of basic qualitative techniques 4. explain the role of the moderator and the discussion guide in the collection of qualitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for using qualitative research • The structure and uses of the use of three main data collection methodologies for qualitative data collection: individual & pair interviews; group discussion; observation • Key methods of recording qualitative data: audio recording; video recording; written transcripts • Definition of the role of the moderator and the use of the discussion guide
<i>Outcome 2: Describe quantitative research</i>	<i>Core topics to include:</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify the need for quantitative research within a given context 2. identify a range of basic quantitative techniques 3. explain the role of the interviewer and the questionnaire in the data collection process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for using quantitative techniques • Review and expansion of quantitative data collection techniques: list at 1D expanded to include self-completion surveys; at-work surveys; in-home surveys; mall tests & mall tests
<i>Outcome 3: Describe sampling & interviewing</i>	<i>Core topics to include:</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. define/explain key terms in sampling 2. identify sampling needs within a given, restricted context 3. identify the key differences between major sampling methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of: sample & sampling; population; sampling frame; probability sampling; non-probability sampling; error • Probability-based methods: random sampling and cluster sampling • Non-probability based methods: quota sampling • Steps in creating a sampling plan: defining the population of interest; choosing a sample frame; ** defining sample size; putting the sample plan into action.

<i>Outcome 4: Examine questionnaire design</i>	<i>Core topics to include:</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify the key features of effective market research questionnaires 2. define key terms related to questionnaires 3. identify the strengths and weaknesses of questions set in a given context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key elements in questionnaire design: the data collection method; the people involved; the data required; the number and type of questions; the question order; the layout of the questionnaire. • Different question types: direct and indirect; open-ended and closed; prompted and unprompted. • Different response formats: dichotomous (yes/no); pre-coded; verbatim. • How to create a 'good' questionnaire: questionnaires from the perspectives of the interviewer and the respondent.

Unit 3: Completing the Market Research process	
<i>Outcome 1: Turn data into findings</i>	<i>Core topics to include:</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. describe the key principles involved in the recording and analysis of qualitative data 2. describe the stages required in data processing 3. describe basic processes for the analysis and interpretation of quantitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to basic methods for analysing qualitative data: identifying themes & frequencies • Preparing data for analysis: editing; coding; data entry • Stages in the analysis process: confirming; exploring; reducing and refining • Definitions of data types: categorical & numerical
<i>Outcome 2: Report and communicate findings</i>	<i>Core topics to include:</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify the links between findings and research objectives 2. identify basic techniques for reporting findings 3. select the most appropriate approach to communicating findings within a given context 4. identify the considerations governing effective presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The basic principles of rounding; using tables and graphs; selecting the most important findings • The structure of a written report • Communication skills for presentations • Elements of a successful presentation
<i>Outcome 3: Understand professional development and the market research industry</i>	<i>Core topics to include:</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. describe how the market research industry is structured within the UK, and the main roles within it 2. identify major suppliers of research and the types of research undertaken 3. identify sources of information on careers in market research, and how to access these sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the range of work undertaken by research suppliers • Introduction to the activities of a range of professional organisations (e.g. MRS; ESOMAR; AQR; AEMRI) • Reasons for commissioning research: to research customers, products, sales trends; to explore marketing platforms & communication • Introduction to the range of work roles in market research