



Advanced Certificate in Market & Social Research Practice

Full Syllabus & Assessment Guidelines

Effective From June 2007 Assessment

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 Advanced Certificate Full Syllabus
January 2009
© The Market Research Society 2009



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

Company Limited by guarantee. Registered in England No 518686. Registered office as above.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MRS ADVANCED CERTIFICATE	4
1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. THE STRUCTURE & AIMS OF THE MRS ADVANCED CERTIFICATE	4
2.1 Overview of the aims of the qualification as a whole	4
2.2 Entry requirements.....	4
2.3 Pass requirements	4
2.4 Research skills being developed	5
2.5 Links to National Occupational Standards.....	6
2.6 Key skills being developed	6
2.7 Overview of the structure of the qualification	7
Table 1: Syllabus outline	8
Table 2: Links to National Occupational Standards	9
Table 3: Links to key skills	10
SYLLABUS OUTLINE	12
3. LEARNING OUTCOMES	12
Element 1 - Introduction to Market & Social Research (10%)	12
Element 2 - Designing a research project (10%)	12
Element 3 - Selecting an appropriate sample (15%)	12
Element 4 - Planning and conducting qualitative research (15%)	13
Element 5 - Planning and conducting quantitative research (15%)	13
Element 6 - Designing instruments for gathering data (15%)	13
Element 7 - Analysing data (15%).....	14
Element 8 - Reporting research findings (5%)	14
4. APPROACH TO DELIVERY	14
5. SYLLABUS & INDICATIVE CONTENT	15
ELEMENT 1: INTRODUCTION TO MARKET & SOCIAL RESEARCH (10%)	15
ELEMENT 2: DESIGNING A RESEARCH PROJECT (10%)	16
ELEMENT 3: SELECTING AN APPROPRIATE SAMPLE (15%).....	17
ELEMENT 4: PLANNING & CONDUCTING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH (15%)	18
ELEMENT 5: PLANNING & CONDUCTING QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH (15%).....	19
ELEMENT 6: DESIGNING INSTRUMENTS FOR GATHERING DATA (15%)	20
ELEMENT 7: ANALYSING RESEARCH DATA (15%).....	21
ELEMENT 8: REPORTING RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	22
6. RECOMMENDED SUPPORT MATERIALS.....	23
ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATIONS & GUIDELINES	26
7. INTRODUCTION	26
8. INTEGRATED ASSIGNMENT SPECIFICATIONS & GUIDELINES	26
8.1 Format.....	26
8.2 Assignment length, layout & language	27
8.3 Assessment Criteria for the Brief & Proposal format	29
8.4 Assessment Criteria for the Critical Evaluation format.....	30
8.5 Integrated Assignment: Level Descriptors.....	31
9. EXAMINATION SPECIFICATIONS & GUIDELINES	32
9.1 Mode of assessment	32
9.2 Format of the examination.....	32
9.3 Section 1: Compulsory Question	32
9.4 Section 2: Option Questions	33
9.5 Assessment weighting.....	33
9.6 Assessment grading.....	33
9.7 Examination: Level Descriptors.....	34

INTRODUCTION TO THE MRS ADVANCED CERTIFICATE

1. Introduction

This document contains full details of the syllabus and assessment specifications for the MRS Advanced Certificate in Market & Social Research Practice (MRS Advanced Certificate). In addition to this document, The Market Research Society (MRS) has produced an *MRS Advanced Certificate Admin Handbook*, which is intended to provide support for centres and tutors which provide training towards the qualification.

2. The structure & aims of the MRS Advanced Certificate

2.1 Overview of the aims of the qualification as a whole

The role of market and social research is vital in informing and driving effective decision making within both the business and public sectors.

The MRS Advanced Certificate is designed for those who have just entered or are seeking to enter the research profession, working in the areas of commercial market and/or social research, either within research agencies or client-side research departments. The overall aim of the qualification is to enable candidates to develop a clear practical understanding of the principles underpinning all stages in the research process, and to develop the skills required to enable them to design and carry out key research tasks. As such, it enables candidates to select appropriate approaches and tools based on a clear understanding of the research problem and the objectives of any associated programme of research.

2.2 Entry requirements

The MRS Advanced Certificate is designed for those taking on the role of Research Executive. In line with the general industry requirements in the UK for people taking on this role, candidates entering for the MRS Advanced Certificate are normally expected to be studying for or to hold a first degree (or equivalent). Candidates who do not meet standard qualifications requirements may enter for the MRS Advanced Certificate, providing that they can demonstrate an appropriate level of general education and/or professional experience. Full details of entry requirements are contained in the *MRS Advanced Certificate Admin Handbook*.

2.3 Pass requirements

Examination

Candidates are given an overall band grade (Distinction, Merit, Pass, Fail). The overall grade is an aggregate of grades allocated over the three questions attempted in the exam. In order to achieve a Pass overall candidates will normally need to achieve a minimum of a Pass in each question. If one answer is awarded a Fail grade, candidates will normally be expected to achieve a Merit band or above in one of the remaining two questions in order to pass.

Integrated Assignment (IA)

Candidates are given a band grade (Distinction, Merit, Pass, Fail) for the IA.

Overall Result

No overall grade is awarded for the MRS Advanced Certificate. The Results Notification and Certificate give the level of achievement in each component.

Fail/Referred Candidates

A candidate who has failed to meet the pass criteria for both components of assessment is described as Fail.

Candidates who fail to achieve the **Pass** criteria in one component only will have their grade for that component **Referred**. They will retain the grade achieved for the remaining component. In these circumstances, candidates need only re-sit/re-submit the component in which they were referred.

- In order to be considered for the award, Referred candidates must retake the component in which they were not successful.
- In order to be considered for the award, Fail candidates must retake both components of assessment.
- Candidates may take each of the two components of assessment (Examination and Integrated Assignment) three times within a three-year registration period. Candidates who are unsuccessful on the third attempt must wait until the end of their initial three-year registration period before re-registering for assessment.
- Candidates who have been successful in one component but who have been unsuccessful three times in the second component are required to retake both components of assessment in any subsequent registration period.

2.4 Research skills being developed

The qualification seeks to enable candidates to develop a wide range of research skills. These include the abilities to:

- understand, define and evaluate research objectives for given research problems
- design appropriate research solutions to identified problems, based on a clear understanding of a range of research approaches and techniques
- select appropriate techniques for the collection and analysis of the data necessary to inform effective decision-making
- provide recommendations to support the decision-making process, based on a clear understanding of the information gathered during the research process
- analyse and evaluate choices made at each stage in the process

2.5 Links to National Occupational Standards

The MRS Advanced Certificate is specifically designed to develop the skills needed to enable people to commission, design and/or implement market and/or commercial social research projects. The learning outcomes of the qualification link closely with a range of the UK's National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Marketing. The NOS to which the MRS Advanced Certificate link most directly include:

- 1.2.1 Define the need for market research
- 1.2.2 Design market research projects
- 1.2.3 Implement programmes to collect market research data
- 1.2.4 Collect market research data
- 1.2.5 Analyse market research data
- 1.3.1 Evaluate and interpret findings and identify connections in complex data
- 4.1.1 Develop an understanding of the client
- 6.1.8 Fulfill the legal, regulatory and ethical requirements impacting upon your marketing activity
- 7.2.1 Create a brief that captures the marketing proposition

Of the remaining NOS, those which link across a number of outcomes include:

- 1.1.1 Map organisations within their current and future marketing environment
- 1.1.2 Obtain feedback from existing customers, suppliers and others
- 1.3.3 Establish and understand potential market segments
- 5.3.2 Use technology to achieve marketing aims
- 6.1.5 Lead and manage marketing projects
- 7.2.2 Decide whether to buy in marketing/marketing communications services from an external supplier
- 7.2.4 Brief and work with third-party suppliers of marketing/marketing communications services
- 8.1.3 Allocate and monitor work within marketing

2.6 Key skills being developed

In addition to the specific research skills outlined above, the MRS Advanced Certificate provides the opportunity for candidates to develop key skills at a high level. This syllabus document highlights the skills which participants on courses or programmes of learning are expected to use and to develop whilst completing the qualification. These skills are identified within the following categories:

- Problem solving (Level 4)
- Communication (Level 4)
- Application of number (Level 4)
- Information and communication technology (Level 4)
- Working with others (Level 4)
- Professional skills (Level 5)

The definitions of key skills used within this syllabus are drawn from definitions of national key skills. Detailed information on these skills can be downloaded from the QCA website (<http://www.qca.org.uk/qualifications/types/6507.html>).

Although the components of assessment do not include a specific focus on individual key skills, candidates will be expected to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and competence in key skills through their completion of those assessed components.

2.7 Overview of the structure of the qualification

The MRS Advanced Certificate is a single-unit qualification, comprising 8 elements which follow the research process from problem definition to reporting on research results.

In order to reflect the inter-dependence of the various stages in the research process, the assessment of the qualification follows an integrated approach. All candidates must complete 2 components of assessment:

- *A coursework element (the Integrated Assignment, or IA):* This requires candidates *either* to prepare a brief & proposal for a research project, *or* a critical review of a research project with which they have been involved. Both formats require candidates to integrate knowledge from across the syllabus
- *A written examination:* All questions in the examination draw on at least two elements of the syllabus, and, in order to be successful, candidates must demonstrate that they can integrate knowledge from different elements. In each examination round, a minimum of 80% of syllabus areas will be assessed through the range of questions.

The following sections provide:

- **Table 1:** an overview of the title, relevance and weighting of each element within the qualification. 'Weighting' indicates the approximate recommendations of division of study time between the various elements. These weightings are not reflected in the overall assessment.
- **Table 2:** the links between the various elements of the qualification and NOS.
- **Table 3:** the key skills which are developed within each unit

Table 1: Syllabus outline

Element Name	Outline	Weighting
1. Introduction to Market & Social Research	Element 1 introduces candidates to the role of commercial market and social research in effective decision making within business and public sector organisations and seeks to ensure that candidates have a clear understanding of the key ethical and legal underpinnings of effective research. It provides a framework for identifying information needs and for developing a research brief. It also helps candidates understand the structure of the research profession and the roles within it.	10%
2. Designing a research project	Element 2 seeks to enable candidates to begin to develop effective research proposals in response to the briefs introduced in Element 1. It provides guidance on the selection and use of secondary data, and on the range of research designs relevant to primary research. The overall aim of this unit is to enable candidates to select appropriate research designs for given research problems. Other areas required for effective proposals are introduced in subsequent elements.	10%
3. Selecting a sample	Element 3 is designed to help candidates understand and apply key principles in sampling, within both quantitative and qualitative phases of research. The overall aim is to enable candidates to develop appropriate and justified sampling plans for given research problems.	15%
4. Planning and conducting qualitative research	Element 4 introduces key approaches to qualitative research and a range of techniques for gathering qualitative data. The aim of this element is to enable candidates to select and/or evaluate the appropriateness of techniques for given research contexts, and to plan for the collection of qualitative data, It does not, however, look in detail at the type of qualitative data being collected (see Element 6) nor at the analysis of qualitative data (see Element 9)	15%
5. Planning and conducting quantitative research	Element 5 looks at key approaches to quantitative research and a range of techniques for gathering quantitative data. Like Element 4, the aim of this elements is to enable candidates to select and/or evaluate approaches and techniques in relation to given research contexts, and to plan for the collection of – in this element – quantitative data. Like Element 4, this element links closely with Element s 6 and 7.	15%
6. Designing data collection instruments	Element 6 looks specifically at key issues related to the nature of the data being collected, e.g. at attitudes, motivation and behaviour, and how these might be researched. The aim is to ensure that candidates recognise clearly the information needs of a given research context, and to enable them to prepare appropriate data collection tools – e.g. topic guide or structured questions and response formats – to allow the information to be collected.	15%
7. Analysing data	Element 7 looks at approaches and techniques for the analysis of secondary and primary data (qualitative and quantitative). The aim of the element is to enable candidates to make clear links between research objectives and data analysis choices, and to select and/or evaluate approaches and techniques for the analysis of data in given research contexts.	15%
8. Reporting research findings	Element 8 is designed to encourage candidates to review research projects from the end user’s perspective, and to identify reporting priorities accordingly, It aims to enable candidates to make clear links between the original business problem (Element 1), research objectives (Element 2) and findings (Element 9). It also aims to enable candidates to select and/or evaluate approaches to the reporting and/or presentation of research findings so that those findings can be made actionable.	5%

Table 2: Links to National Occupational Standards

The following grid outlines the where the various elements of the syllabus link to the NOS. The centre column identifies NOS which are linked strongly to the element (i.e. half or more of the outcomes of effective performance and/or knowledge and understanding requirements are fulfilled within the element). The third column identifies those NOS which have less-strong links to the element (i.e. some, but fewer than half, of the outcomes and/or knowledge & understanding requirements can be mapped to the learning outcomes of the element).

Advanced Cert Syllabus Element	NOS (Strong link)	NOS (Weak link)
1. Introduction to market & social research	1.2.1 4.1.1 7.2.1	7.2.2
2. Designing a research project	1.2.1 1.2.2	1.1.1 6.1.5 7.2.4 1.1.2 6.1.7 8.1.3
3. Selecting a sample	1.3.3 6.1.8	1.2.2
4. Planning & conducting qualitative research	1.2.2 6.1.8 1.2.3 1.2.4	8.1.3
5. Planning & conducting quantitative research	1.2.2 6.1.8 1.2.3 1.2.4	5.3.2 8.1.3
6. Designing data collection instruments	1.2.3	1.3.2 1.3.3
7. Analysing data	1.2.5 1.3.1	1.3.2
8. Reporting research findings	1.3.1 6.1.8	1.1.2 7.2.4

Table 3: Links to key skills

The following grid outlines the type and level of key skills which candidates are expected to develop during programmes of learning and completion of the assessment of the MRS Advanced Certificate. Although assessment is integrated, the mapping against key skills identifies the elements which contain learning outcomes most likely to lead to achievement of key skills outcomes.

Element	Key skill				
	Problem solving (Level 4)	Communication (Level 4)	Working with others (Level 4)	Application of number (Level 4)	ICT (Level 4)
Element 1: Introduction to market & social research	4.1.1 4.1.2 4.1.3				
Element 2: Designing a research project	4.1.1 4.3.1 4.1.2 4.3.3 4.2.3		4.1.2 4.1.3		4.1.3 4.2.1 4.2.2
Element 3: Selecting a sample				4.1.1 4.3.1 4.1.2 4.3.2 4.1.3 4.3.3 4.2.2	
Element 4: Planning & conducting qualitative research					
Element 5: Planning & conducting quantitative research					
Element 6: Designing data collection instruments		4.1.1 4.2.2 4.1.2 4.2.3 4.1.3 4.3.1 4.2.1 4.3.3			
Element 7: Analysing data				4.2.1 4.3.1 4.2.2 4.3.2 4.2.3 4.3.3	
Element 8: Reporting research findings			4.1.2 4.1.3 4.3.1 4.3.3		

This page has been left blank deliberately.

SYLLABUS OUTLINE

3. Learning Outcomes

The focus of the MRS Advanced Certificate is on the development of understanding of both key principles and 'real world' research practice, and on the application of this understanding to research problems. Underpinning the qualification is the understanding that the elements of the research process are interdependent and that, although each element of the syllabus identifies a distinct area or stage within that process, 'real world' tasks will invariably require candidates to combine understanding drawn from two or more of these elements.

The learning outcomes for the qualification cover the 8 elements outlined below.

Element 1 - Introduction to Market & Social Research (10%)

Successful candidates will be able to:

1. discuss the use of research in business, marketing and/or social contexts
2. evaluate the usefulness of research to a given setting
3. define the problem or issue to be researched within a given context
4. identify the type of information required to address the research problem
5. define research aims and objectives for a given research problem
6. design and/or evaluate a research brief for a given research problem
7. apply the principles of relevant legislation and ethical codes, including the MRS Code of Conduct, to a given research problem or setting

Element 2 - Designing a research project (10%)

Successful candidates will be able to:

1. evaluate the usefulness of secondary data to given research problems
2. design a plan for the collection of secondary data for a given research problem
3. discuss the concept of validity in the context of research design
4. evaluate the research design options available for a given research context
5. select a research design appropriate for a given research context
6. design and/or evaluate a research proposal for a given research brief
7. demonstrate an understanding of the link between the proposed research and research constraints (i.e. time, budget and human resource)

Element 3 - Selecting an appropriate sample (15%)

Successful candidates will be able to:

1. identify and discuss suitable sample sources or sample frames for a given population
2. evaluate the suitability of a sample source or sample frame for a given project
3. discuss the principles underpinning the sampling techniques used in given research projects
4. select appropriate sampling approaches and techniques for given research problems
5. identify potential sources of error in given research projects
6. devise and/or evaluate a sampling plan for a given research projects
7. demonstrate an understanding of the link between sample approach, sample size and research constraints (i.e. time and budget)

Element 4 - Planning and conducting qualitative research (15%)

Successful candidates will be able to:

1. evaluate the suitability of a range of qualitative methods for given research problems
2. select an appropriate qualitative method(s) for a given research problem
3. evaluate the suitability of a range of approaches to qualitative data collection for given research problems
4. select an appropriate approach(es) to qualitative data collection for a given research problem
5. design and/or evaluate plans for qualitative research projects to meet given research objectives
6. apply understanding of the MRS Code of Conduct and/or data protection legislation to a given qualitative research project

Element 5 - Planning and conducting quantitative research (15%)

Successful candidates will be able to:

1. evaluate the suitability of a range of quantitative methods for given research problems
2. select an appropriate quantitative method(s) for a given research problem
3. evaluate the suitability of a range of quantitative data collection methods for given research problems
4. select an appropriate approach(es) to the collection of quantitative data for a given research problem
5. design and/or evaluate plans for quantitative research projects to meet given research objectives
6. evaluate plans for the collection of quantitative data
7. apply understanding of the MRS Code of Conduct and/or data protection legislation to a given quantitative research project

Element 6 - Designing instruments for gathering data (15%)

Successful candidates will be able to:

1. identify a range of key issues involved in gathering and recording data
2. discuss the strengths and limitations of a range of projection and/or elicitation techniques in gathering data on opinions, attitudes and behaviour
3. select and/or evaluate the suitability of projective/elicitation techniques for researching a given problem
4. design a topic/interview guide to meet given information needs or research objectives
5. discuss the strengths and limitations of questionnaires in gathering data on opinions, attitudes and behaviour
6. discuss the key principles and stages involved in effective questionnaire design
7. design and/or evaluate the suitability of a series of questions (with response formats) to researching a given problem

Element 7 - Analysing data (15%)

Successful candidates will be able to:

1. discuss the links between research objectives, data gathering and analysis
2. select and/or evaluate the suitability of an approach to the analysis of secondary data in a given research context
3. discuss the links between research objectives, data gathering and analysis in qualitative research
4. select and/or evaluate an approach to the analysis of qualitative data in a given research context
5. develop an analysis plan and/or analysis framework for the analysis of qualitative data for a given research project
6. discuss the links between research objectives, data gathering and analysis in quantitative research
7. describe the process of preparing quantitative data for analysis
8. develop a data analysis specification for the analysis of quantitative data in a given research context
9. select and/or evaluate the suitability of a range of statistics and/or statistical tests for a given research project

Element 8 - Reporting research findings (5%)

Successful candidates will be able to:

1. discuss the links between research findings and the problem being researched within a given research context
2. develop a plan for evaluating the usefulness of research data to the client or end user
3. select and/or evaluate an approach to the development of a written research report for a given research context
4. select and/or evaluate an approach to the presentation of findings for a given research context
5. apply practical understanding of the MRS Code of Conduct and relevant legislation to the reporting and/or presentation of research findings

4. Approach to delivery

Some of the learning outcomes contained within the syllabus for this unit are achievable as discrete elements. However, for the most part, they depend on the candidate being able to analyse research problems from a variety of perspectives and to make links between different elements within the syllabus. As a result, tutors who deliver this syllabus are expected to recognise and to impart the integrated nature of the research process and, by extension, these learning outcomes.

To achieve this integrated approach, tutors are encouraged to include in their programme of tuition the analysis of research problems and the development of possible approaches to addressing those problems. Candidates should, at all times, be encouraged to provide clear rationale for their suggestions and to evaluate the strengths and limitations of the approaches they choose. This type of task is essential in helping participants to develop the analytical and practical skills which will enable them to become more effective practitioners.

The following table provides guidance for suggested content for courses and programmes leading to the completion of the MRS Advanced Certificate. This is not an exhaustive list of the items to be included in any programme of learning, but indicates items which can be considered as core topics.

5. Syllabus & Indicative content

Guidance on realising the syllabus. The following grid provides guidance on core elements which may be covered in order to enable candidates to achieve the learning outcomes. The figures shown next to the titles indicates how much time might be devoted to each element over a programme. These do NOT indicate weighting within the elements of assessment.

ELEMENT 1: INTRODUCTION TO MARKET & SOCIAL RESEARCH (10%)

Element 1	Learning outcomes	Indicative content
<p><i>Topic 1</i></p> <p>Introduction to Market Research</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss the use of research in marketing and/or social contexts 2. Evaluate the usefulness of research to a given setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How research is used to inform decision making • Contexts in which research is used • Overview of the research process • The roles of the research supplier and the research user (e.g. agency and client roles in the research process) • Who works in the research industry and what they do
<p><i>Topic 2</i></p> <p>Defining the research problem</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Define the problem or issue to be researched within a given context 4. Identify the type of information which is needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysing business and/or social contexts to identify problems to be researched • Defining and refining the research problem • Definitions of, and differences between, primary and secondary information • Definitions of, and differences between, qualitative and quantitative information
<p><i>Topic 3</i></p> <p>Starting a research project</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Define the research aims and objectives for a given research problem 6. Design and/or evaluate a research brief for a given research problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to identify and form research aims and objectives • The links between the research objectives and the business/social problem • The role of the brief in the research process • How to create an effective brief
<p><i>Topic 4</i></p> <p>Ethics and the practice of research</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Apply the principles relevant to legislation and ethical codes, including the MRS Code of Conduct, to a given research problem or setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical principles underpinning good research practice • Key principles of professional codes, including the MRS Code of Conduct • Key principles of data protection and freedom of information, as they relate to the practice of research • How to ensure ethical practice

ELEMENT 2: DESIGNING A RESEARCH PROJECT (10%)

Element 2	Learning outcomes	Indicative content
<p><i>Topic 1</i></p> <p>Selecting & using secondary data</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate the usefulness of secondary data to given research problems 2. Design a plan for the collection of secondary data for a given research problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The uses and limitations of secondary data • The sources of secondary data • The quality of secondary data • Planning to gather and use secondary data
<p><i>Topic 2</i></p> <p>Selecting an appropriate research design</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Discuss the concept of validity in the context of research design 4. Evaluate the research design options available for a given research context 5. Select an research design appropriate for a given research context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of a research design • Validity in the context of research design • Research designs available to researchers, including: cross-sectional; longitudinal; experimental & case-study approaches • The relationship between information needs and research design • The principles governing the selection of a research design for a given research problem • The options available for the given research problem
<p><i>Topic 3</i></p> <p>Preparing a research proposal</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Design and/or evaluate a research proposal for a given research brief 7. Demonstrate an understanding of the link between the proposed research and research constraints (i.e. time and budget; human resource) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the proposal in the research process • The relationship between the research proposal and the research brief • The contents of research proposal • Estimating cost and time requirements • The role of each of the research team within the project • The proposal writing process • How to evaluate the quality of a proposal

ELEMENT 3: SELECTING AN APPROPRIATE SAMPLE (15%)

Element 3	Learning outcomes	Indicative content
<p><i>Topic 1</i></p> <p>Introduction to sampling</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify suitable sample sources or sampling frames for a given population 2. Evaluate the suitability of a sample source or sampling frame for a given project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of sampling in qualitative and quantitative research • Defining the population of interest • When to use a census or a sample • The principles of generalizing from a sample to a population • Where to find your sample
<p><i>Topic 2</i></p> <p>Sampling approaches</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Discuss the principles underpinning the approach to sampling in given research projects 4. Select appropriate sampling approaches and techniques for given research problems 5. Identify potential sources of error in given research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Random (or probability) and non-random (or non-probability) sampling • The theory underpinning random or probability sampling • Random, semi-random and non-random sampling techniques and their uses and advantages and limitations • Sampling and non-sampling error
<p><i>Topic 3</i></p> <p>Devising a sampling plan</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Devise and/or evaluate a sampling plan for a given research problem 7. Demonstrate an understanding of the link between sample approach, sample size and research constraints (time and budget). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of an effective sampling plan, including definition of the population, choice of method, choice of sampling frame or sample source and recommended sample size • The implications of time and budget constraints on the choice of sampling plan • The implications of the choice of sampling plan on data/research quality.

ELEMENT 4: PLANNING & CONDUCTING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH (15%)

Element 4	Learning outcomes	Indicative content
<p><i>Topic 1</i></p> <p>Introduction to qualitative methods</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate the suitability of a range of qualitative methods for given research problems 2. Select an appropriate qualitative method(s) for a given research problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of qualitative research approaches including observation, interviewing, ethnography, semiotics and online approaches • Uses, strengths and limitations of qualitative approaches
<p><i>Topic 2</i></p> <p>Methods of data collection</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Evaluate the suitability of a range of approaches to qualitative data collection for given research problems 4. Select (an) appropriate approach(es) to data collection for given research problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key principles, features, uses and strengths and limitations of a range of methods for data collection including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In-depth interviews ○ Group discussions or focus groups ○ Collaborative and deliberative methods including workshops, panels and juries ○ Online interviewing and online discussions ○ Projective and elicitation techniques.
<p><i>Topic 3</i></p> <p>Setting up a qualitative project</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Design and/or evaluate plans for qualitative research projects to meet given research objectives 6. Apply understanding of the MRS Code of Conduct and/or data protection legislation to a given qualitative research project in relation to qualitative research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up a qualitative research project: the methodological side, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The role of the interviewer/moderator ○ Recruiting the sample ○ Designing an interview/discussion guide • Setting up a qualitative research project: the practical side, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Choosing a venue ○ Ethical and MRS Code of Conduct issues ○ Stimulus material ○ Recording the proceedings ○ Observing and observers • Use of incentive

ELEMENT 5: PLANNING & CONDUCTING QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH (15%)

Element 5	Learning outcomes	Indicative content
<p><i>Topic 1</i></p> <p>Introduction to quantitative methods</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate the suitability of a range of quantitative methods for given research problems 2. Select an appropriate quantitative method for a given research problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of quantitative research approaches including interviewing, observation, technology-enhanced methods of data collection, • Uses, strengths and limitations of quantitative methods
<p><i>Topic 2</i></p> <p>Methods of data collection</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Evaluate the suitability of a range of quantitative data collection methods for given research problems 4. Select an appropriate approach to data collection for a given research problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key principles, features, uses and strengths and limitations of a range of methods for data collection including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Observation methods (e.g. mystery customer research; electronic records etc) ○ Interviewing methods (e.g. face-to-face, telephone, & online) ○ Self-completion methods (e.g. postal and email)
<p><i>Topic 3</i></p> <p>Setting up a quantitative project</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Design and/or evaluate plans for quantitative research projects to meet given research objectives 6. Evaluate plans for the collection of data 7. Apply understanding of the MRS Code of Conduct and/or data protection legislation to a given quantitative research project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stages involved in setting up and running a quantitative project • The range of roles involved in setting up and running a quantitative project (e.g. researcher; fieldwork team; data processing team) • Planning the data collection process (e.g. selecting & briefing the fieldwork team etc) • Ethical and MRS Code of Conduct issues including responsibilities to the respondent or research participant

ELEMENT 6: DESIGNING INSTRUMENTS FOR GATHERING DATA (15%)

Element 6	Learning outcomes	Indicative content
<p><i>Topic 1</i></p> <p>Key principles in uncovering data</p>	<p>1. Identify a range of key principles involved in gathering and recording data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concepts of opinions, attitudes, and behaviour and the connections between them • Identifying and exploring the concepts to be researched in a given project
<p><i>Topic 2</i></p> <p>Designing instruments for gathering and recording qualitative data</p>	<p>2. Discuss the strengths and limitations of a range of projective and/or elicitation techniques in gathering data on opinions, attitudes and behaviour</p> <p>3. Select and/or evaluate the suitability of projective/elicitation techniques for researching a given problem</p> <p>4. Design an interview or a topic guide for a given research brief</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role, strengths and limitations of qualitative methods in gathering data on opinions, attitudes, and behaviour • Selecting the most appropriate qualitative research method for a given scenario • The uses, strengths and limitations of projective and elicitation techniques. • Issues relating to gathering and recording qualitative data
<p><i>Topic 3</i></p> <p>Designing instruments for gathering quantitative data</p>	<p>5. Discuss the strengths and limitations of questionnaires in gathering data on opinions, attitudes and behaviour</p> <p>6. Discuss the key principles and stages involved in effective questionnaire design</p> <p>7. Design and/or evaluate the suitability of a series of questions (with response formats) for researching a given problem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of a questionnaire in collecting quantitative data • The role, strengths and limitations of quantitative methods for gathering data on opinions, attitudes and behaviour • Validity and reliability in question and questionnaire design • Designing the questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Translating research objectives and information needs into questions ○ Selecting response formats (including the use, strengths and limitations of scales for researching attitudes) ○ Wording questions and responses ○ Checking validity of questions. • Putting it all together: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deciding on question order and layout ○ Ensuring suitability for method of data collection and mode of administration ○ Interviewer/respondent instructions ○ Pilot testing and revising ○ Checking the reliability of questions

ELEMENT 7: ANALYSING RESEARCH DATA (15%)

Element 7	Learning outcomes	Indicative content
<p><i>Topic 1</i></p> <p>Analysing secondary data</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss the links between research objectives, data gathering and analysis in secondary research 2. Select and/or evaluate the suitability of an approach to the analysis of secondary data in a given research context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The links between research objectives, data gathering and analysis in secondary research • Storing and retrieving secondary and in-house data, including the use of databases • The principles and processes of data mining • The principles and processes of data fusion
<p><i>Topic 2</i></p> <p>Analysing qualitative data</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Discuss the links between research objectives, data gathering and analysis in qualitative research 4. Select and/or evaluate an approach to analysing qualitative data in a given research context 5. Develop an analysis plan and/or an analysis framework for a given research project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The links between research design, data gathering and analysis in qualitative research • The role of note taking, recording and transcribing • Deductive, inductive and iterative approaches to analysis • Developing an analysis plan and an analysis framework • Key stages in the analysis process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ getting to know the data ○ getting to grips with what is going on ○ making links, looking for relationships ○ pulling together the findings ○ verifying the findings • Technology in qualitative data analysis.

<p><i>Topic 3</i></p> <p>Analysing quantitative data</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Discuss the links between research objectives, data gathering and analysis in quantitative research 7. Describe the process of preparing quantitative data for analysis 8. Develop a data analysis specification for a given scenario 9. Select and/or evaluate the suitability of a range of statistics and/or statistical tests for a given research context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The link between data collection, data processing and analysis • Key stages in the quantitative data processing, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ editing, coding and data input ○ cleaning the dataset (including dealing with non-response and missing values) ○ specifying the output from a dataset • Doing univariate analysis (frequencies, proportions, percentages, summary and descriptive statistics – measures of central tendency: mean, mode, median; measures of dispersion: range, variance, standard deviation) • Doing bivariate analysis (cross tabulations, filtering, weighting the data) • Hypothesis testing and inferential statistics (including confidence intervals and significance testing). • The roles of technology in the data analysis process
--	--	---

ELEMENT 8: REPORTING RESEARCH FINDINGS

Element 8	Learning outcomes	Indicative content
<p><i>Topic 1</i></p> <p>Ensuring appropriate reporting on research findings</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss the links between research findings and the problem being researched within a given research context 2. Develop a plan for evaluating the usefulness of research findings to the client or end user 3. Select and/or evaluate an approach to the development of a written research report for a given research context 4. Select and/or evaluate an approach to the presentation of findings for a given research context 5. Apply practical understanding of the MRS Code of Conduct and relevant legislation to the reporting and/or presentation of research findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at research findings from the research user/client's perspective, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the links between the business problem, the research objectives and the research findings ○ identifying key findings in relation to the business problem and the research problem ○ identifying actionable recommendations • How to provide usable 'deliverables' at the end of a project, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ designing and delivering a presentation of key findings which adds value for the end user/client ○ planning and writing a research report which adds value for the end user/client • Ethical issues, including MRS Code of Conduct requirements, in reporting research findings

6. Recommended Support Materials

Core Text:

McGivern, Y 2008 The Practice of Market Research
An Introduction (3rd edition)

ISBN13: 9780273717072
ISBN10: 0273717073

Publisher's details: Pearson Education Ltd, Edinburgh Gate, Harlow CM20 2JE, UK
<http://www.pearsoned.co.uk/Bookshop/detail.asp?item=10000000270187>

Recommended texts:

Birn, R	2000	<i>The International Handbook of Market Research Techniques (2nd Edition)</i> ; London; Kogan Page
Wilson, A	2006	<i>Marketing Research: An Integrated Approach (2nd Edition)</i> ; Harlow; Pearson
Bradley, N	2006	<i>Marketing Research: Tools and Techniques (1st Edition)</i> Oxford University Press

Additional materials

Codes, guidelines & legislation

In order to support the focus on ethics and professionalism in this unit, candidates should familiarise themselves with codes, guidelines and legislation which affect research carried out internationally, as well as those which affect research practices in the candidate's own country.

The following websites provide useful information about guidelines and regulations governing research.

The Market Research Society	www.mrs.org.uk	Access to guidelines covering a wide range of research practice.
ESOMAR	www.esomar.nl	Access to ESOMAR guidelines covering a wide range of ethical issues.
Social Research Association	www.the-sra.org.uk	Access to guidance covering social research issues.
Research Buyer's Guide	www.rbg.org.uk	For links to global research bodies.

Journals

The International Journal of Market Research (WARC)

Quarterly journal providing reports on a wide range of current and developing practice.

Research Magazine (MRS)

Monthly magazine for the research industry, carrying a wide range of news items on developments in the fields of market and social research.

This page has been left blank deliberately,

ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATIONS & GUIDELINES

7. Introduction

Candidates are required to complete 2 assessed components. These are:

- an internally assessed integrated assignment. This component is externally moderated.
- an externally-marked written examination (2hours 30 minutes).

8. Integrated Assignment Specifications & Guidelines

The aim of the Integrated Assignment is to enable candidates to demonstrate the extent to which they have developed a range of market and/or social research skills. To this end, they must complete a practical project which integrates learning objectives from the various units of the Advanced Certificate syllabus.

The Advanced Certificate syllabus focuses on all stages of the research process, from problem identification to reporting research results. The Integrated Assignment requires candidates to demonstrate their ability to meet learning outcomes at all stages in the research process.

Integrated Assignment submissions are provided twice per year:

2009 – February & June
2010 onwards – January & June

8.1 Format

The Integrated Assignment can take the form of:

- a research brief and research proposal
- or*
- a written critical evaluation of a research project completed by the candidate(s)

All assignments should contain a copy of a client brief, indicating the client's requirements, to demonstrate the extent to which the research project being discussed meets those stated needs. The brief must be prepared by the candidate, although it can be based on a research problem provided by a client or centre. In all cases, it should provide clear indication of the proposed timing of and budget for the project being discussed.

The Brief must be included within the word count. It is recommended that the brief should be completed in no more than 500 words.

Since preparing and/or developing a brief is part of the assessed Assignment process we suggest that those Centres who set a brief encourage candidates to re-work it and/or to develop it further. To this end it may be helpful to refer to the set brief as a 'research scenario' rather than as a brief.

Candidates may undertake the research elements of the assignment as a group task. However, each candidate must submit an individual assignment which provides evidence of his/her ability to analyse, describe and evaluate the research process.

IAs that do not include a 'Brief' will be graded as 'non-compliant' as they do not comply with assessment criteria and cannot be assessed within the qualifications framework.

Centres may select the format which is the most suitable for their candidates. Centres are responsible for ensuring candidates receive written guidance on completing the assignment which both matches the chosen format and meet the detailed content specifications (below).

8.2 Assignment length, layout & language

- The assignment should be between **3000 – 3500 words** (excluding appendices). Materials included in the appendices should *illustrate* points made in the body of the assignment. Appendices should not be used to extend the word limit.
- All words within the main body of the text, including those within tables are included within the word count. Text within the title page or contents page is not included in the word count
- IAs that considerably exceed the 3500 word limit (by more than 10%) will be graded as 'non-compliant' as they do not comply with assessment criteria and cannot be assessed with the qualifications framework.
- Candidates must include a word count at the end of the assignment.
- Sections within the assignment should be clearly indicated with headings.
- The language used in all assessed components of the MRS Advanced Certificate is normally *English. The language of your assignment should be appropriate to both the task and the professional nature of the qualification.

***Candidates whose first language is Welsh or Irish (Gaelige)**

Candidates who are following courses/programmes of learning in Wales or Northern Ireland can elect to complete the assessed components in Welsh or Irish (Gaelige). Centres wishing to offer access to assessment in either Welsh or Irish (Gaelige) are required to inform the MRS Qualifications Manager of this requirement when submitting an application for centre approval or, subsequently, when submitting a course notification form.

***Candidates whose first language is not English, Welsh or Irish (Gaelige)**

It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that all candidates have an appropriate level of language competence in English to allow them to undertake and complete the assessed components of the qualification.

For candidates whose first language is not English, Welsh or Irish (Gaelige) a measure of English language competence can be provided through the following internationally-recognised English language certificates:

- Cambridge Proficiency in English (Grade C or above)
- Cambridge Advanced Certificate in English (Grade B or above)
- IELTS (6.0 or above)
- TOEIC (880 or above)

The following grid outlines the expected content of an integrated assignment, and how the specified content maps against the learning outcomes of the qualification.

Content Specifications	Relevant learning outcomes
Candidates should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design a programme of research to meet the needs of the brief <i>or</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critically evaluate a research project with which they were involved, in relation to the needs of the brief 	2.6 1.7
Within this task, candidates should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe a clearly-defined research problem and identify appropriate research objectives 	1.3 1.4 1.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline an appropriate research design, providing a rationale for their choice(s) 	2.1 2.5 2.7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select and describe a sampling plan which is appropriate to the research objectives and design, giving reasons for their choices 	3.1 3.4 3.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select and describe the data collection methods most appropriate to their stated objectives and chosen sample. 	4.2 and/or 5.2 and/or 5.4 and/or 5.5 4.6 and/or 5.7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design/select and describe the data collection tool(s) most appropriate to their stated collection methods 	6.1 6.3 and/or 6.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select a form of analysis appropriate to the data collected, the sample and the research objectives 	7.2 7.3 and 7.4 and/or 7.7 and 7.8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select an approach to the reporting and/or presentation of findings which is appropriate to the client needs, the data collected and the research objectives 	8.2 and/or 8.4 8.5

8.3 Assessment Criteria for the Brief & Proposal format

At PASS level, the candidate can	At DISTINCTION level
<p>1. present an assignment which is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. written in a style which is generally accurate, clearly ordered and does not impose unnecessary strain on the reader b. uses terminology appropriately 	<p>The candidate meets the criteria specified opposite AND can</p> <p>5. Provide evidence of being outstanding in a minimum of two of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. depth of understanding of the research problem b. depth of rationale for the choices made at the various stages in the research process c. understanding of any particular strengths and limitations of the chosen approach
<p>2. demonstrate their understanding of the research problem by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. providing a clear discussion and definition of the problem to be researched b. defining the research objectives for the project c. selecting a suitable research design for achieving the research objectives d. providing a clear rationale for the choices they make in relation to the proposed research 	
<p>3. demonstrate their practical understanding of research practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. providing an appropriate plan for identifying and drawing a sample for the project b. identifying appropriate techniques and resources for gathering the required data c. providing a clear plan for the analysis of the data d. providing a clear rationale for the choices they make in relation to the proposed research 	
<p>4. demonstrate their understanding of the client's needs by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. identifying the extent to which the proposed research is likely to meet the client's objectives b. describing how findings and recommendations will be reported back to the client c. demonstrating how the proposed research will meet the constraints of time and cost and be completed with available human resources 	

8.4 Assessment Criteria for the Critical Evaluation format

At PASS level, the candidate can	At DISTINCTION level
<p>1. present an assignment which is:</p> <p>a. written in a style which is generally accurate, clearly ordered and does not impose unnecessary strain on the reader</p> <p>b. uses terminology appropriately</p>	<p>The candidate meets the criteria specified opposite AND can</p> <p>5. Provide evidence of being outstanding in a minimum of two of the following areas:</p> <p>a. depth of understanding of the research problem</p> <p>b. depth of evaluation of the choices made at the various stages in the research process</p> <p>c. understanding of any particular strengths and limitations of the chosen approach</p>
<p>2. demonstrate their understanding of the research problem by:</p> <p>a. providing a clear discussion and definition of the problem to be researched</p> <p>b. evaluating the research objectives identified for the project</p> <p>c. evaluating the suitability of the research design selected for the project</p> <p>d. providing a clear rationale for their evaluation</p>	
<p>3. demonstrate their practical understanding of research practice:</p> <p>a. providing an evaluation of the sampling undertaken in the project</p> <p>b. providing an evaluation of the techniques and resources used for gathering data during the project</p> <p>c. providing an evaluation of the approach taken to the analysis of data in the project</p> <p>d. providing a clear rationale for their evaluation</p>	
<p>4. demonstrate their understanding of the client's needs by:</p> <p>a. identifying the extent to which the proposed research met or was likely to meet the client's objectives</p> <p>b. evaluating the approach taken to the reporting and/or presentation of findings</p> <p>c. evaluating the extent to which the research project was carried out within the constraints of time and cost and human resource</p> <p>d. providing a clear rationale for their evaluation</p>	

Guidance on the general assessment criteria for each grade can be found in the following Integrated Assignment Level Descriptors.

8.5 Integrated Assignment: Level Descriptors

	Pass	Merit	Distinction	Fail
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structure of the assignment is appropriate to the chosen task format The organisation of information is appropriate to the chosen task format The language of the assignment is appropriate to a task written for a professional context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assignment respects the word limit 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structure and organisation of information put strain on the reader The language of the assignment puts considerable strain on the reader The assignment is significantly in excess of the word limit
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assignment meets most of the relevant assessment criteria. The candidate demonstrates an adequate overall awareness of the links between the various research processes described. The candidate can provide an appropriate rationale for most of the choices which s/he makes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assignment meets all of the relevant assessment criteria. The candidate demonstrates a clear awareness of the links between various research processes described. The candidate can provide clear and appropriate justification for the choices they make. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assignment meets or exceeds all of the relevant assessment criteria. The candidate demonstrates a high level of awareness of the links between the various research processes described. The candidate provides clear and appropriate justification for the choices they make and, where appropriate, can evaluate those choices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assignment fails to meet a significant number of the relevant assessment criteria. The candidate fails to demonstrate an awareness of the links between the research processes described. The candidate cannot identify key areas of strength and weakness in their work.

9. Examination Specifications & Guidelines

The aim of the examination is to enable candidates to demonstrate the extent to which they can apply the knowledge and skills developed while studying for the qualification to a range of market and/or social research scenarios and tasks.

The Advanced Certificate syllabus focuses on all stages of the research process, from problem identification to reporting research results. The examination requires candidates to demonstrate their ability to meet learning outcomes at different stages in the research process. Within each examination paper, a minimum of 80% of the learning outcomes within the syllabus will be tested.

9.1 Mode of assessment

Candidates are required to complete one examination which is set and marked externally.

9.2 Format of the examination

The 2^{1/2}-hour (150 minutes) examination is currently provided three times per year, in February, June and October. From 2009 the examination will be provided two times per year. Dates are available from the MRS website.

The examination comprises two sections:

- Section 1: Compulsory Section (one question in three parts)
- Section 2: Option Section (candidates must complete two out of six questions)

9.3 Section 1: Compulsory Question

This section contains a short case study with 3 associated questions, all of which the candidate must answer. The aim of this type of question is to test the candidate's ability to apply their knowledge of market research to a concrete situation and to offer clear and convincing solutions.

Section 1 questions normally follow the following format.

- A short case study (around 150 – 200 words), usually containing the following types of information:
 - Background information & secondary data;
 - Specification of the client's needs or problem;
 - Definition of the task for the researcher.
- There are three questions associated with the case study. Candidates must answer all three. The normal format for the questions is as follows:
 - One question requiring candidates to demonstrate their understanding of research methodology, make informed methodological choices and justify those choices.
 - One question requiring candidates to analyse an aspect of the market research process.
 - One question requiring candidates to apply their knowledge to an aspect of the market research process to produce an MR 'item'.

9.4 Section 2: Option Questions

This section contains 6 essay titles. Candidates select **two** out of six.

The questions are 'traditional' essay titles and are drawn from across the syllabus. The questions normally ask candidates to demonstrate:

- their knowledge of the given topic (e.g. through a descriptive element in the question);
- their understanding of the given topic (e.g. through analysis or evaluation);
- their ability to relate their knowledge and understanding to the practical application of market research principles.

9.5 Assessment weighting

All three questions which candidates must answer questions are equally weighted in their contribution towards the final result. Where questions are subdivided into 2 or 3 tasks, the weighting for each task within the question will be clearly indicated.

9.6 Assessment grading

Answers will be awarded a band grade (Distinction, Merit, Pass or Fail). In order to pass the examination, candidates will normally be required to achieve a minimum of a Pass grade in all three questions. Candidates who are awarded a Fail grade in one question will normally be expected to achieve a Merit grade or above in one of the remaining two questions to pass.

The work of candidates who achieve a Pass grade in two questions but who fail the third will automatically be selected for additional scrutiny.

Guidance on the general assessment criteria for each grade can be found in the following Examination Level Descriptors.

9.7 Examination: Level Descriptors

The document should be read alongside the **Examiner Answer Guide** for each examination question. The answer guide provides guidance on the core information required by each question.

	<i>Fail</i>	<i>Pass</i>	<i>Merit</i>	<i>Distinction</i>
Task achievement	<p>The answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fails to recognise and/or address the key issues raised by the question demonstrates a significant lack of awareness or understanding of key issues 	<p>The answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognises and addresses the key issues raised by the question demonstrates a satisfactory level of awareness and understanding of the key issues 	<p>The answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognises and addresses the key issues raised by the question demonstrates a good level of awareness and understanding of the key issues 	<p>The answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognises and addresses the key issues raised by the question demonstrates an excellent level of awareness and understanding of the key issues
Content	<p>The answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fails to covers many of the core information points identified in the answer guide fails to provide adequate rationale, where appropriate, for the points made 	<p>The answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> covers many of the core information points identified in the answer guide provides adequate rationale, where appropriate, for the points made provides some appropriate examples to illustrate points made 	<p>The answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> covers most of the core information points identified in the answer guide provides convincing rationale, where appropriate, for the points made provides a range of appropriate examples to illustrate points made demonstrates a good level of knowledge and/or understanding in either the range or depth of the points made 	<p>The answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> covers the core information points identified in the answer guide and may exceed these points provides fully convincing rationale, where appropriate, for the points made makes good use of examples to illustrate points made demonstrates a high level of knowledge and/or understanding in the range and depth of the points made
Structure & language	<p>The answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is written in language which is inaccurate or inappropriate to the topic. puts inappropriate strain on the reader. 	<p>At PASS level and above, the answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is written in language that is generally accurate, easy to read and appropriate to the topic. is generally clearly structured. puts little or no strain on the reader. 		