Advanced Certificate in Market and Social Research Practice

EXAM ANSWER GUIDE

30th June 2010
10.00am –12.30pm

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 less questions than the requirement may result in the paper being marked as non-compliant. Recommended times 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

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 Examination Answer Guide
30th June 2010

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<u>Section 1</u>: Compulsory question (Recommended time: 50 minutes)

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

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

Across the UK, local councils are required to deliver a wide variety of services in the area they operate. Services include refuse collection, road maintenance, street lighting, and providing a wide range of sports and leisure facilities for residents within the area.

Every year, the UK Government funds a national conference which brings together employees from all local councils around the UK. The aim of the conference is to promote innovative ways in which councils deliver some of their services, and to share good practice. The organisers hope that this will help employees take new ideas back to their own councils and therefore help to improve the services provided by councils across the country. To support this aim, the organisers provide a year-round conference website which allows access to information and presentations from the past five conferences. In addition, each conference includes an exhibition of companies and organisations which provide goods and services to local councils.

This year's conference is scheduled to take place in three months' time. However, the organisers have been informed that there may not be UK Government funding beyond this year unless they can provide evidence that the event achieves its aim of helping to improve services. Therefore, they have decided to commission your agency to research the effectiveness of the conference in helping local councils to improve the way they deliver their services. The results will be needed before the conference takes place.

You are a research executive and you have been asked to prepare a proposal for the conference research project. You are about to meet your manager to discuss your ideas for a suitable proposal.

Question A
Using the internet, what secondary research would you undertake to find out whether recommendations from previous conferences have been implemented by the local councils? Outline briefly how you would approach this task, giving reasons for your suggestions.

(Weighting: one-quarter of total)

This question asks the candidate to identify a range of internet-based sources and how they might be used to gather secondary data. Candidates at Pass level should identify at least 3 possible steps they could take, along with some rationale for each, or 2 steps with detailed and convincing rationale. Credit should be given for demonstrating an understanding of the benefits/limitations of a secondary data approach

Possible steps include:

- *Look at the conference website for evidence of use: e.g. is there a forum where people can post feedback/ideas? Is there evidence of increasing numbers attending the conference (which may give an indication of level of interest)*
- *Search for press coverage of this and similar events- newspaper, magazine and journal websites*
- *Search exhibitors' sites to see if there is reference to the conference and its impact (e.g. do sites indicate increasing use of their services by local authorities?)*
- *Search local authority sites for coverage of the conference and reference to any changes which have resulted*

Question B
Devise an outline plan for a programme of primary research to address the organisers' need to understand how effective the conference is in helping local authorities to improve their services. In your plan include the research design, the sampling plan and the method(s) of data collection. Give reasons for each of the choices you make.

(Weighting: one-half of total)

There are 3 key areas which candidates need to address in this question:

- *research design*
- *sampling plan*
- *data collection*

They should include a rationale for the points they make.

Examiners should note that this part of the question accounts for one-half of the total weighting for Section 1.

Research design:
Candidates are expected to suggest a cross-sectional research design - an ad hoc research programme. Any suggested design should be supported by an explanation of its suitability. If candidates mention the background/exploratory options they must also mention a main quant option - the client's research objectives are unlikely to be achieved with exploratory research only.

- *Background/exploratory research - to help clarify and understand the key issues, the language used, the wider context - qualitative in-depth interviews with conference organisers, contributors to previous conferences, journalists specialising in local authority features, perhaps influencers such as strategic level managers; representatives from the department which funds the conference*

- *Main research - a quantitative survey is recommended in order to provide conclusive evidence about the effectiveness of the conference. Three populations may be surveyed:*

Sampling: Population
Candidates may identify three key populations, outlined below. Stronger candidates are likely to identify subgroups within each group (as suggested below). Weaker answers may fail to identify the full range of groups, or fail to demonstrate that they understand why the group should be included in the sample. Groups which could be included are:

- *(1) local authority representatives who have attended the conference, including:*
  - *those who have contributed to conferences, to find out if they can identify any link between their attendance at the event and changes in the way services are run – e.g. do they know of others who have taken up their ideas?*
  - *those who have not contributed – to find out if new ideas from conferences have been adopted or have influenced changes in their areas*
- *(2) local authority representatives who have not attended the conference: are they aware of the conference? Can they see evidence of ideas being brought back into the workplace?*
- *(3) exhibitors, including:*
  - *organisations which exhibit at the conferences – to find out if they can identify any link between the conferences and the volume of work they do with local authorities*
  - *organisations who work with local authorities but who don't exhibit: do they attend? Can they see any links between their business and the conference?*

Candidates may identify the conference attendance database as a possible sample frame for researching attendees. They should also identify the need to work with organisers to identify a source of a possible sample of non-attendees.

Sampling: Approach
Candidates should identify how they would select the sample from each of the populations. They may opt for random sampling (using the database as a frame) or quota, and may vary the approach depending on the group being sampled. Whichever approach(es) chosen, clear and convincing rationale should be given for their selection. Stronger candidates may also identify sample size as a key factor. Additional credit should be given for appropriate justification of any sample size suggested.

Data collection methods:
If candidates mention the qual option they must also mention a quant option - the client's research objectives are unlikely to be achieved with a qual approach only. Each suggestion should be supported by a rationale:

- *Qualitative in depth interviews - to gain greater understanding of the issues involved and to help with questionnaire design*

- *Telephone survey - may be the most appropriate way of contacting the target population - busy local authorities and possibly geographically diverse. Ability to reach widely dispersed target population. Contact details likely to be easily available - from the database and from the organisation's website. Response rates likely to be reasonable. Good quality control possible - face to face briefings at central telephone research unit, monitoring of interviews etc*

- *Email survey/web-based may also be feasible - good for reaching widely dispersed sample, contact details available as above but response rates tend to be lower than for telephone survey. No control over who fills it in etc.*

Additional marks may be given if candidates consider how using DIFFERENT data collection methods (for different respondent categories) may have benefits/drawbacks. Also, additional marks may be given if candidates mention budget or time constraints.

Question C
How could the conference itself be used to provide additional research? Identify at least one suitable approach which could be used to gather data at the event. Discuss the benefits and limitations of your chosen approach.

(Weighting: one-quarter of total)

Candidates should identify at least one way in which the conference could be used to gather data, and provide an evaluation of the usefulness of each approach. Stronger answers are likely to provide a balanced evaluation of the gathering of data at the event, whilst weaker answers may fail to provide considerations of limitations.

Approaches and limitations may include some/all of the following:

***General Advantage:** would allow opportunity to gather early and fresh feedback on the event itself.*

***Key limitation overall:** Attendees at the conference are likely to be biased towards those who are aware of its possibilities and are likely to be positively disposed to it, so the sample may not be representative of the wider target population for the event.*

- *Conference provides a captive audience, many of whose members fall into the target population for the research and who might otherwise be difficult (and expensive) to contact but who may be prepared to give up some time to take part in research. If data collection not feasible could take names and ask if they mind being contacted for interview at later date.*

- *Qualitative mini depth interviews (about 20-30 minutes) with key respondents/opinion formers – senior managers; journalists; contributors.*
  Limitation: May be difficult to encourage respondents to take part. Interviews may need to be pre-arranged. Suitable on-site venues/locations for interviews would be required.

- *Short (5-10 minutes) face to face quantitative interviews in the exhibition hall.*
  Ability to reach a reasonably large sample in a short space of time and cost effective.
  *Limitation**:** Some attendees may not be well disposed to being interviewed. Interviews may need to be pre-arranged in order to fit in with the schedule for the conference, bearing in mind that it contains workshop activities. Not all those present will belong to the target population. Sample achieved may not be representative of target population.*

- *Self-completion questionnaires on chairs in workshops and seminars/CAPI/CAWI Stations.*
  Allows large numbers to be consulted and give a view if they wish to. Can be filled in later using respondent's own time and allowing for more considered opinion, and returned rather on the day of the exhibition itself.
  *Limitation**:** Questionnaires need to be short, well laid out etc to encourage audience to fill them in and return them. Response rate may be low. Not all members of the audience will belong to the target population. Sample achieved may not be representative of target population. No control over who fills them in. Many distractions - setting not conducive to data collection.*

- *Use of handheld devices to provide 'instant' feedback to questions posed after each paper.*
  Limitation: no ability to probe responses given or to capture information about the respondent)

- *Use of new technology to monitor and analyse 'blogs' and feedback reported via 'Twitter' (or other online social networking sites) by delegates.*
  Limitation: not necessarily representative of target population.

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.

Question1

A retailer of children's toys wants to learn what customers think of the range of products they offer in its mail-order catalogue. The retailer has decided to carry out a self-completion survey of its adult customers on its catalogue mailing list but they are unsure whether the survey should be conducted by post or online.

a) Outline the benefits and limitations of each approach which the retailer is considering for this research. Illustrate your answer with examples.

(Weighting: two-thirds of total)

Candidates are expected to outline a minimum of two benefits and two limitations to each approach for this project. Stronger answers are likely to provide a wider range of ideas, and provide clear examples related to the context. Weaker answers may simply list generic advantages and disadvantages of each, with little or no reference to the context and limited exemplification.

	Benefits	***Limitations***
Postal	• *already has a mailing list, so clear sample frame to work from* • *know that the customers expect mail from them so may be more willing to respond* • *easy to administer – no complex setting up beyond the design of the questionnaire, and could be inserted in a brochure or normal mailing*	• *postal surveys are notorious for low response rates – perhaps incentives are needed* • *how up-to-date is mailing list? customers may have moved away etc* • *as with all postal surveys, can take time. Problematic if information is needed about current range of products* • *costs could increase if pictures/photos are required* • *costs may be higher than first expected when printing/envelope stuffing/ costs of return envelope are taken into account* • *do not know who completed the questionnaire (same limitation applies to online. If answer identifies this as limitation of both, an additional limitation of either post or online is required to pass)*
Online	• *if there is an email newsletter for customers, a link could be included in that* • *quick return and analysis of results – can get info on current product range almost immediately* • *customers may want to contribute because it's easy* • *pictures/photos of products can be shown* • *routeing through questionnaire is easy* • *can monitor fieldwork progress instantaneously*	• *may not have email contact for all customers – those contacted by mail may find it too much bother to go online to respond* • *depending on the customer profile, there may be limited numbers who have access to internet* • *more difficult to control sample – those who are contacted may forward the weblink to the survey to others. Very difficult to control who is responding.*

b) The retailer has decided to use a postal survey. Outline the steps which they could take to maximise response rates. Give reasons for the suggestions you make.

(Weighting: one-third of total)

In order to pass, candidates are expected to identify a minimum of two steps which the researcher can take to maximise response to the survey and to provide a clear and relevant rationale. Credit should be given for a wider range of suggestions, particularly where these are related clearly to the context. Weaker answers may provide only generic suggestions with little or no justification for their inclusion.

Possible steps include:

- *advance warning to customers of survey, contained in one of the company's regular mailings*
- *return envelope / postage*
- *incentives for completion – prize draw?*
- *bright and attractive layout (with graphics?) to attract respondents*
- *easy-to-follow instructions and clear time frame for completion*
- *reminders in advance of the closing date*

Question 2

Following a prolonged period of marketing activity, a chain of private health clinics has recently opened a number of clinics in towns across a part of the country it had not previously operated in. The organisation now 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 the survey conducted face-to-face but does not want to use any form of street intercept for the survey as this is not permitted within some of the towns where they have opened their new clinics.

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)

Candidates should identify at least two sampling methods, each with at least one advantage and one disadvantage, or three methods, with more limited analysis, in order to pass. 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, though, should be clearly applicable to the given situation.

Potential sampling methods include:

Method	***Advantages***	***Disadvantages***
Random	• *Provides a sample across all households in the area which is being targeted – perhaps provides a more representative cross section?* • *Will reach people who may not have seen marketing – help to identify if awareness has penetrated beyond the marketing drive?*	• *Potential non-response: how interested will people be in participating? Could be time consuming & expensive* • *May report lower awareness as it may have a large sample of people who were not targeted by marketing*
Stratified random	• *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 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 cheaper option than other two* • *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?*

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

(Weighting: one-third of total)

The approach to this answer will depend on the answer given to Part a. Candidates should provide a clear recommendation, with convincing justification, in order to pass. 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 3

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 *the purpose of individual interviews in both qualitative and quantitative research projects*.

a) Describe the purpose of individual interviews undertaken for qualitative research studies and those undertaken for quantitative research studies, highlighting the key differences. Illustrate your answer with examples.

(Weighting: one-half of total)

Candidates should make at least 3 clear comparisons between the two types of interview. They may choose to organise their ideas either by 'differences' or by focusing on first one type of interview then the other. In both cases, the focus should be on the comparison of the two types of interview. Credit should be given for the range of points identified and clear and convincing examples that clearly illustrate the points made.

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* *The interviewer:* • *Must listen and respond to subtle clues* • *Must be skilled at reading non-verbal info* • *Recorded on video/audio, may be transcribed*	• *Good for directional, conclusive and robust data gathering* • *Standard questions (no interviewer freedom)* • *Wide range of settings possible* • *Generally one-to-one* • *Can ask remotely, e.g. by phone. May not involve an interviewer – e.g. web-based surveys 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 question efficiently and effectively* • *Listening skills important but less than qual* • *Many ways to record (CAPI, CATI, CAWI)*

b) Following the training session you will be leading a team of qualitative researchers on a project exploring the attitudes of staff on behalf of one of your clients. The staff being researched will be from the client's offices located in Europe and Asia Pacific. Describe the steps you would take to ensure consistency in the approach across the team of researchers.

(Weighting: one-half of total)

Candidates are expected to identify a minimum of two steps, with detailed rationale, to meet pass level. Candidates with more steps may provide more limited rationale. Stronger candidates may identify sequential steps which can be taken and will provide clear justification for their suggestions. In order to pass, candidates should discuss the fine balance of permitting difference between teams whilst also ensuring the research objectives are met.

- *Review the research objectives: Ensure that there is shared understanding of the aims 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 respondents 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.*
- *Confirm that the work will be undertaken according to same code of conduct in both Europe and Asia Pacific in relation to researching employees (i.e. if client is a UK organisation, then working to the MRS Code, if European, to the ESOMAR code, etc.).*

Question 4

The research company you work for has won a contract to undertake research into the attitudes of staff members of a national retail organisation towards staff welfare and happiness.

a) What are the key issues which you will need to consider when planning research into attitudes? Illustrate your answer with examples.

(Weighting: one-third of total)

Candidates may begin by giving a definition of 'attitude' before beginning to discuss potential difficulties. Even without a definition of terms, the answer to this section should demonstrate that the candidate understands what is meant by 'attitude' and how this might differ from 'opinion' and 'behaviour'.

At pass level, candidates are expected to identify and discuss a minimum of two potential issues or problems.

Potential issues or problems which need to be taken account of include:

- *Differentiating between attitude and behaviour – the same behaviour in two people may not be the result of their similar attitudes.*
- *In quant research: complexity of an attitude means that a number of questions are required to get to uncover the true attitude:*
  - *Too few questions and the study may lack reliability/validity*
  - *Poorly worded questions and responses may not get to the heart of the attitude being investigated*
  - *Respondents may be very sensitive to the wording of questions and not respond honestly*
  - *Ordering of questions and/or responses may bias the respondent's responses – the questionnaire needs to balance positive and negative*
  - *Items need to be closely analysed to identify how they correlate with each other*
  - *Response scales may not accurately record the respondent's responses*
- *Respondents may be unwilling to disclose attitudes which are sensitive or not seen as socially acceptable*
- *Respondents may not be able to articulate the attitudes they hold*
- *Qual. research interviews into attitude are seen by some to lack reliability*
- *Suitability of scales for the survey method*
- *Consideration of whether the attitude scale addresses socially desirable responding; willingness/ability of candidate to respond; non/ambivalent/neutral attitudes.*
- *The research methodology itself may be a potential problem as the survey is among employees on a topic (welfare & happiness) where the approach may influence responses (e.g. group discussions versus individual personal interviews, web-based surveys and telephone approaches also have specific issues to be considered when interviewing staff)*

b) You have been asked to prepare a questionnaire to collect data on these attitudes. Describe the steps you will take to ensure that the questionnaire measures the attitudes which you wish to explore. Give reasons for the steps you suggest.

(Weighting: two-thirds of total)

Examiners are reminded that this section of the question accounts for two-thirds of the marks awarded.

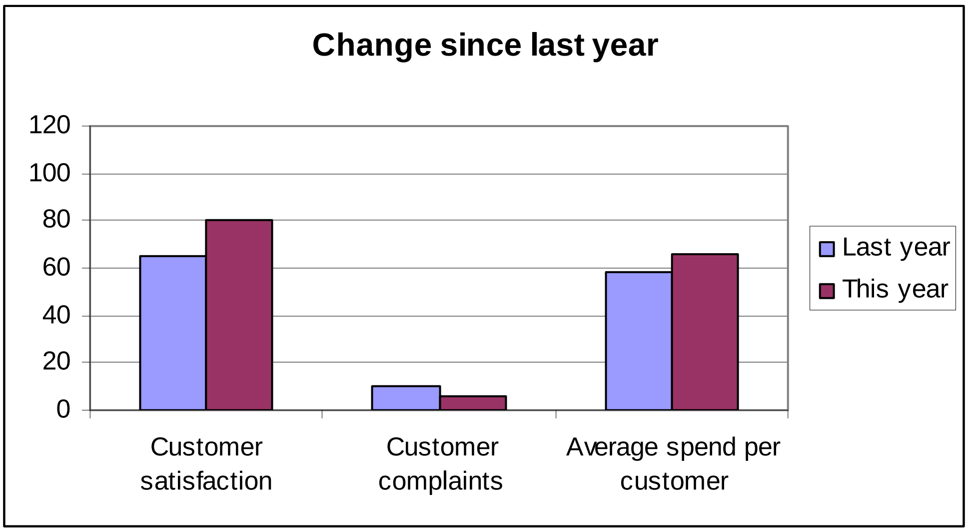
Candidates are expected to demonstrate a practical awareness of how to address the problems outlined in section (a). At pass level, a minimum of three steps should be mentioned and adequate rationale provided. Stronger answers will focus on the need to maximise both reliability and validity in the development of attitude statements, and will reflect on how the suggested steps can address these issues. Weaker answers are likely to provide generic steps rather than refer back to the context given in the question.

Possible steps include:

- *Generate possible attitude statements to form the basis of an item pool, possibly through an initial qualitative phase and/or literature review*
- *Ensure more than one statement per 'attitude' (with balance of positive and negative statements) for inclusion in a pool*
- *Item analysis – how well does each item correlate to the others in the pool?*
- *Develop an appropriate response format – does the response really allow measurement of the attitude? Does the scale allow for an appropriate range of response?*
- *Pilot the attitude questions on the target group and analyse and evaluate the findings*
- *Amend the final set of questions as appropriate*

Question 5

A supermarket regularly monitors a wide range of measures. Key data is presented to the Board 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)

Candidates are expected to evaluate the graph as a presentation of research findings. At pass level, candidates should identify a minimum of one strength and two weaknesses, with appropriate justification. Stronger answers are those which provide deeper analysis and/or a wider range of strengths or weaknesses.

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)

Candidates are expected to demonstrate familiarity with the range of rules included in Section B, particular rules B49 – B61 of the MRS Code of Conduct. At pass level, candidates should identify at least three areas which they should make the client aware of, with some rationale for their selection. Answers which provide only two suggestions should provide more rationale to demonstrate that the candidate understands the key principles on which the guidance is based.

Key areas which should be identified include:

- *Results cannot be used to mislead the public*
- *Facts should be clearly differentiated from interpretation*
- *Research conclusions must be clearly and adequately supported by the research data*
- *Protecting the anonymity of respondents 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, we need to make sure that respondents 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 the questions asked*
  - *information on weighting*
- *Any marketing material being prepared should be checked by the researcher before publication to ensure that it is not using the results inappropriately.*

Question 6

StayHome is a major national charity which provides services for elderly people living alone. Cuts in funding have put the charity's future at risk. One possible option which would help StayHome continue to deliver its services is to merge with The Home Service, another national charity with a similar remit. The Board of StayHome is unsure if this option would provide the best outcome for the people who use their services and for the care-givers who work for the organisation. It has approached an insight provider to help the charity gain the insight needed to inform the decision.

a) Describe what you understand by the term 'insight' and how it differs from more traditional market research. Illustrate your answer with examples.

(Weighting: one-third of total)

Examiners should note that this section of the question is worth one-third of the overall total. Candidates should provide a minimum of two points of comparison with a definition of the term 'insight'.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate an understanding of 'insight' as a term which covers the development of an understanding of issues through information gathered from a wide variety of sources, i.e. that insightful research will generally result in more than the sum of the individual research outputs. Stronger answers might point out that there is no single definition. However, there are some general points which emerge.

At pass level, candidates should identify that insight attempts to create a 'fuller' understanding of issues, for example information which:

- *informs the client's actions*
- *relates to client strategy*
- *applies knowledge to help drive growth*
- *leads to operational improvement*
- *assists in client decision-making*

etc, rather than simply providing data. For example, candidates might also talk about having an extremely good understanding of the client, their business issues and the context in which they are operating – over and above what might be deemed necessary /acceptable for traditional research.

Stronger answers might also identify that some writers (e.g. DVL Smith) allow for the inclusion of 'intuition' – i.e. the researcher's own insight gathered from small 'nuggets' of information which may have been gathered from outside the main research activity.

Candidates are also expected to make some comparison with traditional views of market research. These might include:

- *the use of a single method (e.g. quantitative <u>or</u> qualitative project, rather than a combined approach), whereas insightful research might combine*
  - o *information from primary and secondary sources*
  - o *both qualitative and quantitative data*
- *the difficulty of accounting for 'additional' information (i.e. Smith's 'intuition')*
- *the expectation that researchers or research teams developing 'insight' will need to develop a perspective which is broader than looking purely at either qualitative or quantitative data.*

b) Describe the types of research information that the insight provider might use to help StayHome make their decision, and how that information could be gathered. Give reasons for the suggestions you make.

(Weighting: two-thirds of total)

Examiners should note that this section of the question is worth two-thirds of the overall total.

The success of an answer to this section is likely to depend on the breadth of definition included in section (a). At pass level, candidates are expected to identify at least three types of information which might include some/all of the following:

Secondary data: *Existing market research reports on the services provided by each organisation*
Existing research reports on the extent to which elderly people pay for home services
Reports from funding bodies on how funding for services is distributed and the possible changes in funding
Newspaper/magazine reviews of both StayHome and The Home Service and their services

Quantitative: *Survey of their clients, gauging reaction to The Home Service brand*

Qualitative: *Focus groups with employees, gauging their perceptions of the StayHome brand values and how these compare with The Home Service*
Focus groups with clients, again gauging their reactions/perceptions to both charities

Stronger answers are likely to provide a wider range of sources and/or types of information, or greater reflection on how the different types of data might work together to help produce greater insight. Weaker answers are likely to provide only a limited range of data sources and not relate this to how it would generate insight in this context. A candidate should be able to pass without mentioning all three general sources as long as there are at least three well developed points.

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