



Advanced Certificate in Market and Social Research Practice

EXAM PAPER

**30th June 2010
10.00am – 12.30pm**

Instructions for 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.

This Exam Paper must not be removed from the exam room. At the end of the exam please hand this paper back to the Invigilator.

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 Exam Paper
30th June 2010
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Section 1: Compulsory question (Recommended time: 50 minutes)

This section tests problem identification and problem solving using a number of skills. 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)

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)

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)

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

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

Question 1

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)

- 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)

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)

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

(Weighting: one-third of total)

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)

- 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)

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.

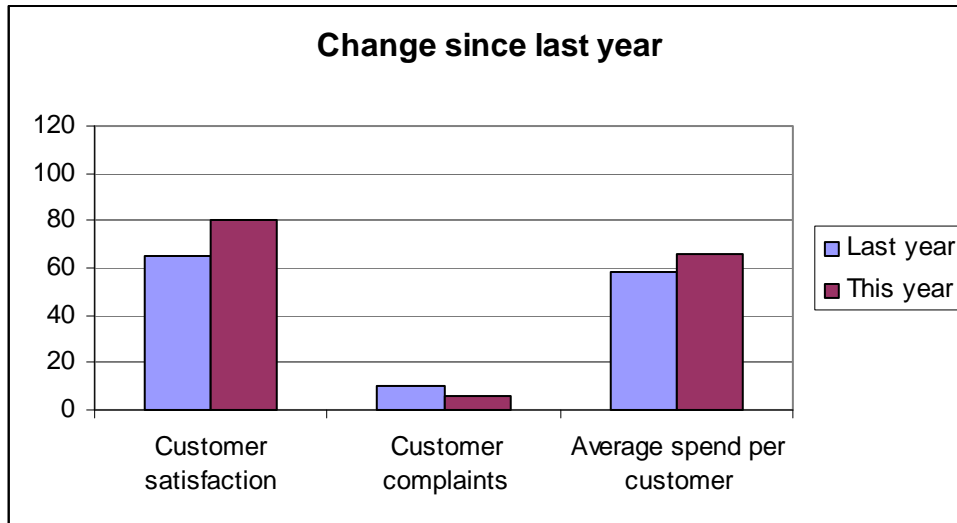
(Weighting: one-third of total)

- 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)

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)

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)

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)

- 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)



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