Advanced Certificate in Market & Social Research Practice

EXAMINATION ANSWER GUIDE

29th June 2016
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.

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MRS Advanced Certificate Examination Answer Guide
29th June 2016

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

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

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

The Glow Place is a small chain of beauty & wellbeing salons. The first *Glow Place* salon was opened 10 years ago by husband and wife team Bill and Barbara Young. They now own 5 salons, one of which is also a training academy for beauty therapists. All of the salons offer a wide range of services, from standard beauty treatments to alternative therapies such as massage and aromatherapy. Business is good, and Bill and Barbara are keen to expand further.

As Managing Director, Barbara Young would like to diversify the way the business offers its services. She has noted an increase in 'deliver to your door' services, where businesses take services to clients, and she feels that this greater flexibility is the key to expansion. Her idea is to establish a number of *Glow Mobiles.* These are mobile salons which can take beauty & wellbeing treatments directly to clients. She is keen to offer this service to local businesses for their employees, and to exhibition organisers for events. She also feels that *Glow Mobiles* could be sited at railway stations during busy periods to offer services for commuters. Bill, however, thinks that *Glow Mobiles* are a high risk business option. He is not sure that there would be enough demand from businesses and event organisers for mobile services and believes that commuters would be unlikely to drop in to mobile salons. He also worries that their existing clients would not react positively to *Glow Mobiles* and that this would harm the brand's reputation for quality. His preference would be to go with their tried and tested approach of opening new salons.

Until this point, Bill and Barbara have found it easy to agree on business decisions and have never felt the need to commission market research to test their business ideas. Now, however, they cannot agree on a way forward. You are an independent market research consultant. Bill and Barbara have contacted you for advice.

Question A

As the research expert, you have been given the task of advising Bill and Barbara Young on how market research could help their company. Discuss the possible benefits and limitations of using market research to help identify if the *Glow Mobiles* approach or the new shop approach is the best option for expanding the business. Illustrate your answer with examples.

(Weighting: one-quarter of total)

This section requires candidates to identify and discuss the usefulness of market research to the business problem described. In order to pass, candidates should identify at least two potential benefits and one possible limitation, each with convincing illustration. Stronger answers may identify a wider range of benefits and limitations relevant to this particular scenario. Also, stronger answers may include specific types of research that would be useful for this particular scenario. Weaker answers are likely to identify more generic benefits and limitations of research and may fail to make clear connections with the scenario under discussion.

Possible benefits may include some or all of the following:

- *The use of research to reduce the risk in the decision making involved*
- *The use of research to provide insight into the market, the competition, the services available, the options facing the company, and insight into how existing and potential customers think and behave*
- *The use of research to define/focus their business objectives*
- *The use of research to define their market research objectives*
- *Examples/suggestions for type of research might include:*
  - *Secondary research to find out about the market and the competition and the services currently available*
  - *Qualitative research to explore potential reactions to Glow Mobiles – among some current clients, some businesses, event's organisers*
  - *Quantitative research to identify the possible take up of Glow Mobile services – again among current and new clients, businesses, event organisers and also with commuters.*
  - *Primary research with experts in the field such as journalists on beauty magazines, or others who have experimented with mobile salons in other parts of the country.*

Possible limitations include:

- *Relying on market research to provide the solution.*
- *Using research to investigate the wrong business problem, e.g. should the business expand?*
- *Can the business afford to expand?*
- *Will research help at this stage? (see below)*
- *Insufficient up-to-date information on the market, the competition etc.*
- *The size/scope of the project and the time and other resources available to address it*
- *The end use of the information. How will the information be used? e.g. As both have very firm ideas about how they want to proceed, they might not respond well to negative views on their idea.*
- *Is there enough context/contextual information with which to interpret any data collected?*
- *Incorrect interpretation of the information.*
- *Failure to use the information.*
- *For a small company such as this, is market research cost effective?*

Question B

Bill and Barbara have decided that they would like to commission research into the *Glow Mobiles* option. They have asked you to devise a brief for this research which they will send out to three research agencies. Outline the information which should be included in the brief to ensure that the research agencies understand what is required in the project. Give reasons for the suggestions you make.

(Weighting: one-quarter of total)

This section of the question requires candidates to demonstrate understanding of the importance and content of the brief in guiding the research project. Pass answers should demonstrate awareness of the information which a brief should contain and how it should be structured, along with some justification for suggestions. To pass, candidates should identify at least three items. Weaker answers are likely to provide a list of the information to be included, with little or limited rationale. Stronger answers are likely to provide greater depth of rationale.

The answer should touch on the following issues:

- *Background information: what does the agency need to know about the business and its context?*
- *Business problem: what does the agency need to know about the business problem which the Youngs need to address? What are the company's business objectives?*
- *Research problem: what are the objectives for the research? What do they want the research to help them with?*
- *Timing – how much time is available; are there any key dates to hit or avoid?*
- *Budget (budget at their discretion – many clients choose not to divulge it at this early stage).*
- *Any reporting requirements?*
- *Contact names.*
- *How they plan to use the information the research produces in their decision making process.*

Question C

Three agencies have submitted proposals for this research project. All have suggested a short phase of qualitative research to test possible reactions to *Glow Mobiles,* followed by a phase of quantitative research to gather data on the potential take up of these services. However, none of the proposals contains enough information about how the research agency will draw the sample for the quantitative phase.

Devise a sampling plan for the quantitative research into the likely take up of Glow Mobile services among ***either*** the business-to-business market ***or*** the consumer market identified by Barbara. You should include information about the population of interest, the sampling approach(es) you recommend and how you plan to get the target population to take part in the research. Give reasons for your choices. Ensure that your sampling plan takes account of any relevant ethical issues.

(Weighting: one half of total)

Examiners should note that this part of the question represents 50% of the total mark for Section 1.

The aim of this question is to allow candidates to demonstrate their understanding of how the principles of effective and appropriate sampling can be applied to this business problem. Pass answers must include at least one point with convincing rationale for each of the 3 areas of sampling mentioned – the population of interest; the sampling approach; and how to get the target to take part.

To pass candidates must describe ***at least one population*** *of interest – either the business to business market OR the consumer market - with a related sampling and selection approach and with a clear rationale as to why and how this would achieve the aims of the research, providing the necessary information to inform the client.*

Population of interest

Candidates must state clearly which population they have chosen. Stronger answers might also identify sub-groups within the chosen population. (Weaker answers may fail to identify any groups, or fail to demonstrate that they understand why a group should be included in the sample.) Credit should be given for highlighting any ethical issues involved in the chosen sampling strategy and for referencing the MRS Code of Conduct.

Sampling approach

Candidates should identify how they would select the sample for their chosen population. Options include random/probability methods (various); or quota sampling. This should be tied in with consideration of the population, and the method of data collection: face to face; telephone; web/email/mobile; even postal.

Depending on the number of businesses identified, they might opt for a census as numbers are likely to be small.

They may need to factor in geographic location: over what distance will the Glow Mobiles travel?

Whichever approach(es) are chosen, clear and convincing rationale should be given for their selection. Stronger candidates might also identify sample size as a key factor or refer to more precise criteria in sample selection. Additional credit should be given for appropriate justification of any sample size suggested.

Again, where applicable, reference should be made to ethical issues and the Code.

Selecting participants

Candidates should identify how elements within the population of interest are to be selected and approached/recruited. All suggestions should be appropriate to the sample under discussion, and be supported by a rationale. Stronger answers should identify that groups might be targeted in different ways in order to achieve the sample and may identify any ethical issues to be taken into consideration (e.g. using the company's database as a sampling source). Weaker answers may not differentiate between the groups in the sample, and suggest a blanket approach. They may make no reference to sample frames, ethical issues or how quotas might be achieved.

Approaches will vary depending on sample and method of data collection and might include:

- *Contact with database elements via email or text*
- *Use of leaflets/sign up form*
- *Contact via email or telephone to events organisations and relevant businesses*
- *Face-to-face approaches for commuters*
- *Link to survey on The Glow Place website*
- *Use of social media to recruit.*

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

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

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

Question 1

Three chemistry students have developed a new fabric. It has the potential to make thinner and more absorbent clothes for runners. They would like to go into business with a sportswear clothes manufacturer but they know very little about the market. You work as a researcher in the university's business development unit. They have asked you for help. They would like you to undertake **secondary (desk)** research that will help them understand the market for this type of fabric.

a) Outline the sorts of information that you will include in your report to the students including the source of that information.

(Weighting: one half of total)

Candidates should identify a range of information which could be gathered using secondary/desk research for this project. At pass level, candidates should identify a minimum of three sorts or areas of information and identify where they might source that information. Credit should be given for examples showing how this information might influence or might be used in the project.

Information might include:

- *The overall size of the market for this type of fabric*
- *The end uses of this type of fabric/the range of products made using this type of fabric*
- *The number of companies operating in this market*
- *The main brands in this market/The range of possible competitor fabrics*
- *The composition and production costs of the different fabrics*
- *Pricing of the products made using competitor fabrics*
- *Industry tests of the fabric – including endurance, comfort, value*
- *Consumer reviews of the products made using similar fabrics.*

Sources might include:

- *Market reports on the fabric, on the manufacturers and on the sportswear*
- *Journal articles/research reports about competitor fabrics – info about composition, testing*
- *Manufacturer websites – info about composition, testing, range of products*
- *Retailer websites – retail prices; reviews*
- *Specialist running websites and publications – consumer tests and reviews; opinion formers' views*
- *Social media, specialist magazines and websites – consumer opinions and reviews.*

b) You have sent your research report to the students. They have come back to you with questions about the quality of the information in the report. Outline the steps you took to ensure that the information you presented in your report is valid and reliable. Give reasons for the steps you outline.

(Weighting: one half of total)

This section of the question requires the candidate to demonstrate their understanding of how to ensure that secondary research provides valid and reliable results. Candidates are expected to identify at least three steps they would take to ensure that the information extracted from sources is robust. Stronger answers are likely to discuss the need to ensure the currency and validity of sources, and the importance of triangulating data where possible. Weaker answers may provide a series of generic steps, and fail to identify the steps needed to ensure that information is valid. Credit should be given to candidates who define what is meant by valid and reliable in this context.

Steps might include some or all of the following:

- *Use of a systematic method of recording all of the sources consulted, including publication information and dates webpages consulted.*
- *Use of categories or typology for documents consulted.*
- *Use of a plan for evaluating the validity, currency and reliability of documents. Candidates may list the criteria for reviewing the documents and deciding, for example, how up to date they are, finding the reason the data were collected in the first instance, how sound a methodology was used, what quality control measures were used for fieldwork, coding, analysis, reporting etc*
- *Identification of any areas of information which need to be verified from more than one source.*

Question 2

Get Going is a website offering support services for young people aged 14 to 19 in a major city. In order to access *Get Going* services, individuals must register their email address and create an account on the website.

Over the past six months, visits to all areas of the website have been falling. The organisation has commissioned research to identify how they might reverse this trend. The researchers have identified two main groups within the population of interest: *current users*, which includes all account holders; and *non-users,* who are young people who have never used *Get Going* services.

a) The researchers plan to conduct the first stage of the research online with current users. They will be using a quota sample. Describe the steps the researchers should take to select and recruit the required sample, giving reasons for the steps you suggest. You should highlight any ethical issues involved in drawing this sample, and how the researchers can ensure that the sample achieved is ethically robust.

(Weighting: one half of total)

This question requires candidates to demonstrate their understanding of the issues involved in drawing samples of young people who are contactable via a database. Answers may make reference to MRS Code of Conduct and Guidelines for conducting research with children and young people (specifically conducting online research).

Key steps will include:

- *Checking with the client about information given to individuals about how their data will be used prior to contact – are there exclusions at this point?*
- *Providing the client with guidance on different groups within the sample – i.e. children (i.e. under 16), young people (i.e. 16-17) and adults (over 18) – and the need to get informed consent from responsible adults (for children) and for all prospective participants.*
- *Ensuring that the sample is split by age groups so all approaches can be tailored accordingly.*
- *Screening for people who may be using confidential services, and who may not wish to be involved in the research.*
- *Defining the population of interest.*
- *Deciding on the quota criteria.*
- *Deciding on the sampling and recruitment strategy.*
- *Selecting sample elements according to the quota criteria.*
- *Explaining the purpose of the research and what the research entails to those selected and ensuring informed consent from the appropriate person.*

In order to pass, candidates must list at least three steps. In addition, the candidate's answer must show an understanding of how data protection affects the researchers' use of client databases, and the need to gain informed consent from an appropriate adult for research with people under the age of 16. Stronger answers are likely to identify ethical considerations at each stage of drawing the sample, and show how these impact the sampling process. Weaker answers may identify the database as the sample frame, but may be unaware of the range of ethical issues, or may fail to describe how these affect how this sample is drawn.

b) To explore reasons why non-users haven't used *Get Going* the researchers plan to conduct qualitative research. Describe the steps the researchers should take to recruit the required sample of *non-users* for face-to-face group discussions, giving reasons for the steps you suggest. You should highlight any ethical issues involved in drawing this sample, and how the researchers can ensure that the resulting groups are ethically robust.

(Weighting: one half of total)

This part of the question asks the candidate to demonstrate their understanding of recruiting young people aged 14 to 19 for qualitative research when no sample frame exists. Answers may make reference to MRS Guidelines for conducting qualitative research with children and young people.

In order to pass, answers should identify at least two methods of accessing groups of 'non-users' in order to recruit participants. Suggestions may include some or all of the following (and should be appropriate to the age of the potential participant):

- *Advertising in local schools, community groups, youth groups etc*
- *Links on websites related to Get Going*
- *Via social media sites*
- *Snowball sampling.*

In order to pass, answers should refer to:

- *the need to ensure that information about the aim and content of the groups is made clear to individuals, and to responsible adults for all under 16s, prior to recruiting them;*
- *the need to gain informed consent from a responsible adult prior to obtaining informed consent from the individual for all under 16s; and*
- *the use of a strategy that is appropriate to the age of the potential participant.*

Stronger answers are likely to identify a wider range of sources for the sample, and to consider ethical issues relating to each one. They may also mention the need to ensure that arrangements have been made so that topics to be discussed, venues (along with transport to and from venues) and any incentives are appropriate for children. Weaker answers may fail to identify ethical issues, or may give no description of how these would be factored in to sampling and recruitment processes.

Question 3

For the past 25 years, a local government has operated a chain of 'one-stop shops' in the city's shopping centres. The shops allow local people to access a wide range of public services directly, from the renewal of parking permits to advice on how to deal with a range of community issues. The local government has now decided to close the one-stop shops and move all of its services online. This process is likely to take up to two years. To track how the changes affect local people over this period and to track their satisfaction with the local government services, research has been commissioned. The research agency which won the contract to carry out this work has suggested creating an online panel to collect the type of information needed.

a) Discuss the strengths and limitations of the online panel for gathering the type of evidence the local government wants to collect.

(Weighting: one half of total)

This question requires candidates to discuss the pros and cons of creating and using an online panel to gather information over a two-year period. To pass, the candidate should identify the type of research required, that is, longitudinal. However, if candidates describe a repeated cross-sectional design with a clear and suitable rationale, credit may be given. At pass level, candidates are expected to identify a minimum of two strengths and two limitations, and relate these clearly to the context given in the question. Some of the possible strengths/limitations are listed in the table on next page.

b) Taking into account the limitations you have identified, describe the steps that can be taken to ensure that the panel delivers valid and reliable evidence over a two-year period. Give reasons for the suggestions you make.

(Weighting: one half of total)

The strength of answers to Part b is largely dependent on the strength of the answer to Part a. Candidates are expected to make clear links between the two parts. At pass level, candidates should provide solutions which would deal adequately with the limitations. Stronger answers are likely to address a wider range of issues and to provide clear and convincing rationale for the solutions suggested.

For potential solutions, see table on next page:

Strengths	Limitations	Solutions
Will provide data/information over time	*May exclude some sectors of the population because it is online*	*Take care to ensure that population of interest is defined appropriately.*
Will be able to see reaction to events (timetable changes, reliability)	*May be hard to recruit (and maintain) a representative sample*	*Make sure that facilities exist to allow all those in the target population/sample to access and participate in the panel*
Could be cost effective option for sort of info required	*It may be an expensive option – need to recruit and maintain and perhaps replace participants/panel members. May also need to provide significant incentives throughout the process to retain participants*	*Make clear to potential participants the value and end use of the data*
No need to go through full recruitment / explanation process each time do research	*Drop out/attrition*	*Aim to use techniques to build sense of community among panel members, e.g. a newsletter – to help build and maintain the panel*
	Response rate may be variable from data collection point to data collection point (implications for validity and reliability)	*Consider ways to recruit a pool for rotation of participants.* *Ensure that timing of data collection is appropriate to sample and issue*
Could be used to look at detail and bigger picture	*May need large sample to be able to analyse by different groups of local people*	*Get client to think about other applications of the data so that use and value of panel data re cost is maximised. If doing this, it must be made clear to potential members at time of recruiting how any personal data would be used.*
Build a relationship with participants over time	*Over time participants may become unrepresentative of total customer base as they become better informed about the client through repeat research participation* *Respondent fatigue*	
NB. Need to provide panel members with details of all attributable information held about them and to be able to 'correct' any info if requested by participant. This means there would need to be administrative staff to handle such enquiries. Also, way of handling any press queries in response to any 'data' the client may use in the media / press releases based on data emanating from the panel – e.g. the need to maintain full technical details relating to the panel and to be able to provide 'data sets' under the Freedom of Information Act if requested.		

Question 4

A national daily newspaper has experienced a major decline in sales over the past two years. The company feels that a daily publication is no longer sustainable but does not want to move all of its news products online. They are keen to retain their current readership, to regain former readers and to encourage new readers. One suggestion is to reformat the newspaper into a weekly magazine highlighting the most important news stories of the week, and showcasing the best in journalist writing. To explore if the proposed magazine will be a popular replacement for the daily newspaper the company has commissioned a qualitative study. You are leading the team of moderators who will be conducting a series of face-to-face group discussions with the target audience across the country.

a) Describe the steps you will take to ensure that valuable, consistent and ethically-robust insight is gathered from the study. Give reasons for the steps you suggest.

(**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. Steps may include some of the following:

- *Review the research objectives: Ensure that there is shared understanding of the aims and the type of information required.*
- *Ensure that requirements for recording participants' personal data are clear, including any sign-offs for recontact.*
- *Moderators to have early sight of/involvement in discussion guide development to ensure all are clear and comfortable with content and sequence.*
- *All moderators briefed at the same time to ensure all have sufficiently similar understanding.*
- *Review the discussion guide: Do all moderators agree on the aim and interpretation of the questions? Do all feel it can be covered in the time given for the interview?*
- *Discuss the approach and structure of tasks. How are participants going to be warmed up? What types of techniques are to be used (e.g. projective techniques)? What (if any) materials are to be used and how will they be used?*
- *Identify potential issues which may arise with such diverse participants (e.g. strong opposition to each other's views; very dominant participants).*
- *Give approximate times to be spent on each section of the discussion to ensure consistency across groups.*
- *Ensure agreement on how data will be recorded. Also what data will be recorded – e.g. are you going to record nonverbal behaviour?*
- *Review the make-up of the sample (i.e. geographical spread, gender mix, age mix, political mix etc.): What similarities and differences are there? Can possible impacts on the data collection be anticipated?*
- *Arrange meeting/communication following the first round of groups if possible to discuss and resolve any problematic issues, and to do a debrief of early findings and examine their impact.*

b) Devise an outline discussion guide for this series of qualitative group discussions, listing the topic areas you would cover and describe any stimulus material you might use. Give reasons for all of the elements you include.

(Weighting: one half of total)

To achieve Pass level, candidates should identify a minimum of three issues and at least one item of stimulus material with a rationale for choosing each. We are not expecting a full discussion guide, simply a framework or topic list.

The most obvious stimulus material would be copies of the current newspaper and mock-ups or pilot copies of the proposed magazine. Candidates may also be given credit for describing any projective techniques that are appropriate to the setting, topic and objectives.

Stronger answers are likely to be those that identify a range of issues/topics that relate to the research scenario and that present these in a clear and appropriate structure.

General areas in the guide may include some of the following:

Introduction:

- *Background to the project & informed consent for participation*
- *Participant introductions*
- *Newspaper's background and plans for the magazine*
- *Aim to explore the candidate's views of newspaper and magazine*

Discussion/main body:

- *Find out about participants' current reading habits/usage/attitudes – which 'media' do they use? How do they get most of their news?*
- *Views about current newspaper: what do they like/dislike? Reasons for reading/not reading? For those that don't read, why not?*
- *Views about proposed magazine: Use copies of magazine – what are their overall views about content/layout*
- *Look at contents – what would encourage you to buy/discourage you from buying?*
- *If you were in charge of the newspaper, what would you do?*
- *Gather suggestions*

Close:

- *Summary of feelings, opinions, ideas, areas that could be improved etc.*
- *One thing that you would tell the newspaper/main thing that they should learn from the group discussion*
- *Ensure participants understand how information will be used; ensure consent for recontact if needed*
- *Thanks and close.*

Question 5

An international company plans to construct a major leisure facility on the edge of a national park. They have commissioned your research agency to conduct research into public perceptions of the proposed development. They intend to use the results as part of their campaign to gain planning permission for the development.

a) What ethical and professional issues should you agree with the client when planning this project? Explain why the issues you identify are important, illustrating your answer with examples.

(Weighting: one half of total)

This question requires candidates to demonstrate a clear understanding of the principles involved in planning research and gathering and reporting on data with reference to how the information is going to be used. Candidates are expected to identify a minimum of two issues and provide clear explanation. Stronger answers are likely to identify a range of issues related to the MRS Code of Conduct, and provide clear rationale related to the context. Very strong answers may reflect an understanding of the updated MRS Code of Conduct. Weaker answers may fail to identify key areas, or may describe them in generic terms.

Possible key points include:

In planning: the researcher needs to agree with the client -

- *what the information requirements are: what does the company need to know?*
- *how this information will be gathered in a professional and objective way e.g. how questions will be phrased to avoid leading and loaded questions*

Recruiting and briefing participants – the researcher needs to agree with the client how to:

- *brief participants so that the purpose of research is clear*
- *ensure the participants give informed consent to participating in the research*
- *gain consent to be re-contacted (if required) at an appropriate point and for appropriate purposes*
- *participants can be reassured that data will be handled anonymously*
- *participants be reassured that any incentives are appropriate and do not affect the integrity of the research*
- *the age profile of participants – adults only?*

Using the data – as the client wants to use data for comms purposes, the researcher needs to agree with the client

- *how findings from surveys can be reported*
- *how negative findings/responses will be shown*
- *how the client will ensure the anonymity of participants*
- *how the client will avoid using participant info for marketing or any other non-research purposes.*

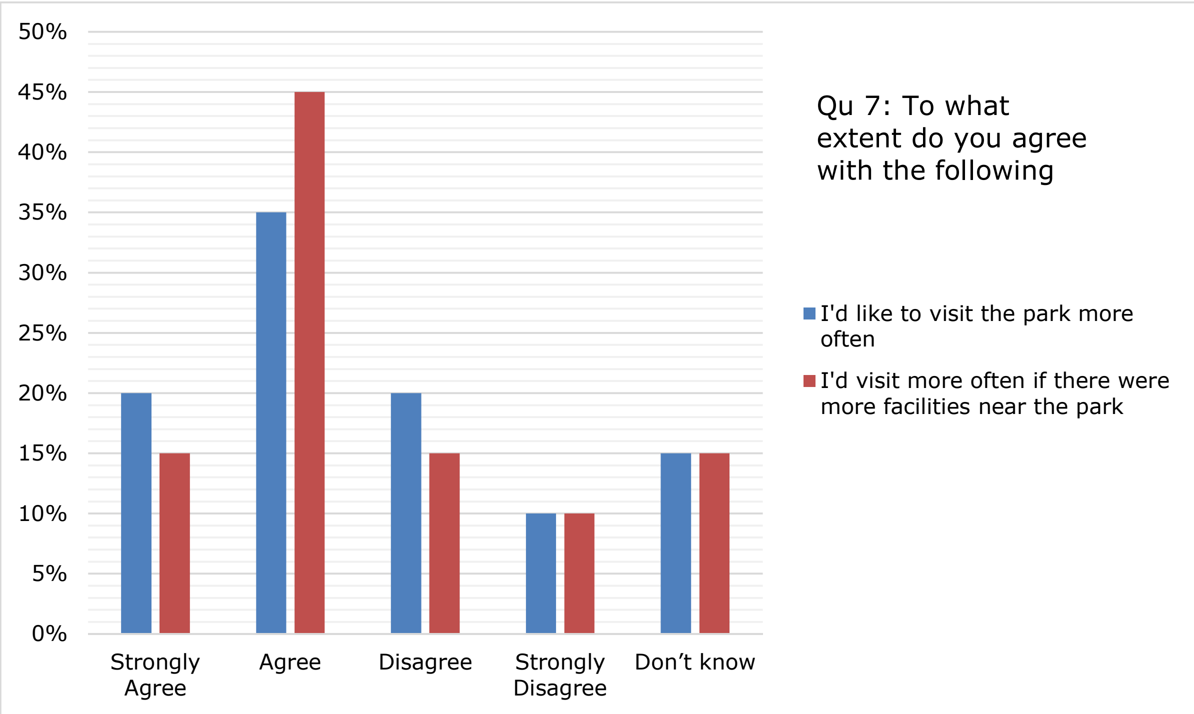
b) Following your report on the research findings, you discover that the client has taken some information from it and included it in their own report intended for the committee responsible for deciding on planning permission.

Look at the information in the extract below from your original report and at the extract from the client's report. What advice would you give to the client to ensure that the information is presented in an ethically robust way? Give reasons for the suggestions you make.

EXTRACT FROM YOUR REPORT
Sample size: 250

Question 6: Have you visited the Beachcraig National Park in the past two years?
Yes: 100 No: 150

(Routing: If yes, go to Question 7; If no, go to Question 8)



EXTRACT FROM THE CLIENT'S REPORT

Our proposed development will attract more visitors to the Beachcraig National Park. In our recent survey, almost half of those interviewed (45%) indicated they don't intend to visit the park. However, with the new facilities in place, more than 60% have said they will visit. Dr Stuart Smith, who lives at Beachcraig, said: '*The park has long needed new facilities to attract more visitors….*'

(Weighting: one half of total)

This section requires candidates to demonstrate a clear understanding of how to operate within the MRS Code and data protection requirements in relation to the presentation of information. In particular, there are issues with the representation of findings and with protecting the anonymity of participants.

In order to pass this section, candidates should provide a minimum of two suggestions for changes to the marketing slide, each with clear rationale. Stronger answers may make clear reference to the Code of Conduct, and provide strong rationale for the issues they identify. Weaker answers may provide generic statements relating to the use of data for marketing, without reference to this context.

Some of the key points which could be made include:

- *There is no reference to the sample size, or the number of people who actually answered question 6 (100 out of 250). As a result, there is not enough information to enable readers to make an assessment of the validity of the results.*
- *'don't know' answers have been included in the presentation of the two statements, rather than being discounted.*
- *The implications of the wording of the report differ from the questions.*
    - *the question asks if the participants want to visit the park more often, not if they intend to visit the park.*
    - *The question asks if more facilities would encourage people to visit, but does not specify what type of facilities these would be. The client has interpreted 'facilities' as meaning the new development when this is not supported in the question.*
- *It is unclear where the quote has come from. If it is from the research, checks should be made to find out if a) the client had the right to see un-anonymised verbatim remarks and b) if so, the participant has been re-contacted and that permission has been sought to use – and attribute – the remark and for it to be used in the client report.*
- *Stronger answers might highlight that the client should be informed that the researcher can withhold permission to make use of the data unless it is accurately reported.*

Question 6

A major bookseller has relaunched its online shopping website. The marketing department has created a pop-up online questionnaire for website users to complete. The aim of the questionnaire is to gather feedback on the new website. The pop-up questionnaire will appear at the end of the website visit regardless of whether or not the visitor has made a purchase.

a) Identify at least three types of information which the questionnaire needs to gather to provide useful insight into the users' experience of the website. Give reasons for the suggestions you make.

(Weighting: one half of total)

Candidates are required to identify a minimum of three categories of information required to help the book retailer understand if the new website is achieving its aim of an improved shopping experience. Stronger answers may provide a wider range of categories, and are likely to provide stronger justification for their inclusion. Weaker answers may identify more generic categories (e.g. demographic info) and may fail to identify the key information needed to address this specific business problem.

Categories may include some or all of the following:

- *Demographic info – to see if all website visitors have similar views*
- *Whether the visitor bought or did not buy at that visit*
- *Shopping history with the bookstore – are there differences between those who were regular users of last website and new users?*
- *Ease of use of website – helping to identify what does/doesn't work*
- *Likes/dislikes*
- *What further improvements they might like to see*
- *Likelihood of using the website again*
- *Can they be contacted for further research? If so, contact details.*

b) Two weeks after the launch of the questionnaire, the Marketing Director discovers that only 20% of the customers who start the questionnaire complete it. Identify at least three reasons why there might be such a high drop-out rate. What could have been done when designing the questionnaire to avoid this? Illustrate your answer with examples.

(Weighting: one half of total)

This question requires candidates to demonstrate their understanding of questionnaire design, and how poor design can impact on response rates. Stronger answers are likely to identify a wide range of potential barriers, with a clear understanding of why these might occur. Weaker answers are likely to provide a very narrow range of generic barriers to the completion of online questionnaires, with perhaps a focus on technological issues rather than questionnaire design issues.

Barriers might include some or all of the following:

- *Is it clear why the questionnaire is being used/why the individual is being asked to take part?*
- *Length of questionnaire – if website visitors are completing it after they visit, it needs to be an appropriate length, and the content needs to be sharp and focused.*
- *Question wording and wording of instructions – are they clear and easy to understand?*
- *Does the questionnaire make sense? Are the questions appearing in the right order? Do the questions make sense?*
- *Relevance of questions - are they all relevant to all respondents, is the filtering correct?*
- *Is there a filter/mechanism in place for recognising those who have already completed the questionnaire on another occasion?*
- *Is it set up in a way that makes it interesting/engaging to respondents?*
- *Does the questionnaire allow respondents to answer truthfully? Lack of don't know / not applicable options etc. may lead to them abandoning and/or inability to skip questions they are unable to answer.*
- *Do they need to answer all parts of all questions? Making questions compulsory may discourage completion.*
- *Is there the right balance of open and closed questions?*
- *Are all of the questions relevant to the stated aim? Visitors may be disinclined to answer questions which stray from what they expect*
- *Technical limitations – is the questionnaire working properly? Is it easy to read/navigate in all formats (e.g. mobile)?*

Additional point which may be included to help prevent drop out include:

- *Effective piloting of the questionnaire. .*