



MRS Certificate in Market Research

Syllabus & Assessment Guidelines

October 2019

The Market Research Society (MRS) is the UK professional body for research, insight and analytics. We recognise 5,000 individual members and over 500 accredited Company Partners in over 50 countries who are committed to delivering outstanding insight. As the regulator, we promote the highest professional standards throughout the sector via the MRS Code of Conduct.

MRS Certificate Syllabus & Assessment Guidelines
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1. Introduction

This document contains details of the syllabus, learning programme and assessment specifications for the MRS Certificate in Market Research (MRS Certificate).

2. The Structure & Aims of the MRS Certificate

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 Certificate is designed for people working in a wide range of sectors who may need to understand and use research for their role. It is also suitable for students studying business-related subjects, helping them to understand the role of market research in business.

The overall aim of the qualification is to enable candidates to develop a basic understanding of the principles underpinning the research process, and the tools required to carry out key research tasks. As such, it enables candidates to describe and discuss the practice of market research based on an understanding of the research problem and the objectives of any associated programme of research.

a) Entry requirements

The MRS Certificate is open to all individuals who wish to participate.

It should be noted that the language used in the learning programme and in the assessment is English. It is estimated that the minimum level of English required to participate in and successfully complete the MRS Certificate is equivalent to Level B2 in the [Common European Framework for Languages](#). Candidates are recommended to consider if they have the appropriate level of English before undertaking the qualification.

b) Qualification requirements

Candidates must complete the following components in order to achieve the MRS Certificate.

- 1) an approved learning programme: **either**
 - the MRS Foundation Course in Market Research - Online learning **or**
 - an MRS approved in-house learning programme
- 2) the MRS Certificate online examination.

c) Approved learning programmes

The MRS Foundation Course in Market Research

The MRS Foundation Course in Market Research is an online learning programme developed by the MRS. It can be taken as a stand-alone course or as a study route for the MRS Certificate in Market Research. As it is delivered online, it allows individuals to study for the qualification wherever they are.

The Foundation Course reflects closely the structure of the MRS Certificate syllabus. However, candidates can expect to find information relating to the various learning outcomes in more than one section of the course.

The course provides core learning material and additional resources, including links to relevant external resources. Candidates are encouraged to explore all of the resources fully before registering for assessment. Although the online programme is designed to provide access to the information needed to complete the examination, candidates are also encouraged to read more

widely and a list of recommended and additional texts is given in the final section of this guide.

Completion of the MRS Foundation Course is estimated to require around 40 guided learning hours.

Full details about the online learning programme and the registration process can be found on the [MRS website](#).

Approved in-house learning programmes

Approved in-house learning programmes are programmes delivered by employer organisations or education institutions for their own staff or students. In order to gain approval, the organisation/institution must demonstrate that it has devised and is delivering a learning programme which matches the learning outcomes and content of the MRS Certificate.

Organisations/institutions wishing to gain approval to offer the MRS Certificate should contact MRS Qualifications for further details.

d) The Certificate examination

The examination is completed online under the guidance of the MRS.

The examination comprises 40 multiple-choice questions. Each question is worth one mark. In order to pass, candidates must achieve a minimum score of 21 marks.

Details of how to register for the examination are provided to candidates when they register for the online programme. Candidates taking the examination via an approved in-house learning programme will receive registration details from their organisation/institution.

Pass requirements

Candidates receive an overall grade (Distinction, Credit, Pass or Fail). The overall grade awarded is calculated on the total number of correct answers achieved by the candidate in the online multiple-choice examination:

Distinction:	32 – 40
Credit:	24 – 31
Pass:	23 – 21
Fail	20 – 0

Fail/Referred Candidates

A candidate who has failed to meet the pass criteria is described as Fail.

- In order to be considered for the award, Fail candidates must retake the examination
- In order to be considered for the award, Fail candidates can re-sit a maximum of two times

3. Syllabus

The focus of the MRS Certificate is on the development of understanding of key principles and 'real world' research practice, enabling candidates to discuss how data is collected and used to address business problems.

The MRS Certificate syllabus has two components:

- **Learning outcomes** define what candidates should be able to do by the end of the learning programme. They form the framework for assessment of candidates' progress and achievement.
- **Content** identifies some of the knowledge that candidates need in order to achieve the outcomes. NOTE: This list is not definitive; it *indicates* some of the key knowledge areas that candidates need.

The learning outcomes and content are grouped into 3 elements:

- Element 1: The basics of market research
- Element 2: The tools used in market research
- Element 3: Working with data

The syllabus is given in the table on the next page.

MRS Certificate Syllabus

Learning outcomes: By the end of the learning programme, the candidate should be able to describe

Content: In order to achieve these outcomes, the candidate should know about.....

Element 1: The basics of market research

1. the role of market research in business
2. the role of data protection legislation and the MRS Code of Conduct in the MR process
3. the links between the business problem and the research objectives
4. the role and key information requirements for a research brief and a research proposal
5. the key features of a limited range of research designs

- definitions and categories of market research
- why businesses use market research
- the structure of the market research industry
- the purpose and principles of the MRS Code of Conduct
- the purpose, principles and main areas covered by the Data Protection Act 2018
- how to develop appropriate research objectives
- the key features of a research brief
- the key features of a research proposal
- the main types of research designs and how they are used

Element 2: The tools used in market research

6. the key features, benefits and limitations of a the most commonly used types of data
7. the key features of a range of data collection techniques
8. the role and key features of sampling in quantitative and qualitative research
9. the principles and key features of questionnaire design

- the differences between primary and secondary data
- the differences between qualitative and quantitative data
- secondary data: uses, sources and techniques for collecting and recording
- qualitative data: principle uses; the main techniques for collecting and recording; the role and responsibility of the moderator and interviewer
- quantitative data: principle uses; the main techniques for collecting and recording; the role of the interviewer
- the role of sampling in quantitative data research
- the key features of standard sampling methods
- the key elements in a sampling plan
- error and sampling
- the key features of different question types
- the key steps in the questionnaire design process

Element 3: Working with data

10. the key steps in effective data analysis
11. the key features of effective reporting of market research findings

- the principles and ethical requirements underpinning data analysis in market research
- the elements in a data analysis plan
- the steps involved in analysing secondary data
- the steps involved in analysing qualitative data
- the steps involved in analysing quantitative data
- the ethical requirements governing the reporting of findings
- key considerations and good practice in the reporting of research findings

4. Reading

The MRS Foundation Course online programme and other approved in-house programmes should provide access to the information needed to complete the examination. However, candidates are also encouraged to read more widely and a list of recommended and additional texts is given below.

a) Recommended Text

Market Research in Practice
2nd Edition, Kogan Page
Paul Hague, Nick Hague and Carol-Ann Morgan
2013, Paperback
ISBN-13: 978-0749468644

This textbook complements closely the syllabus of the MRS Certificate. It also provides information about additional topics such as observation and ethnography, international market research and research trends.

b) Additional Texts

In addition to the recommended text, candidates may wish to deepen their understanding of different aspects of the research sector and its practices.

These various textbooks and resources are intended to give an indication of the great range of research information which is available, both via the Internet and in published form. Dipping into this reading list will help candidates gain the depth of insight which will support the development of their research skills.

The following provide useful additions to the recommended textbook:

Marketing Research - Delivering Customer Insight

4th Edition, Red Globe Press
Alan Wilson
2019, Paperback
ISBN: 978-1-352-00111

Marketing Research - Tools and Techniques

3rd Edition, Oxford University Press
Nigel Bradley
March 2013, Paperback
ISBN: 978-0-19-965509-0

The Handbook of Mobile Market Research - Tools and Techniques for Market Researchers

ESOMAR & Wiley
Ray Pointer and Navin Willams
2014 Hardback
ISBN: 978-1-118-93562-0

Social Research Methods

5th Edition, Oxford
Alan Bryman
2016 Paperback

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ISBN: 978-0-19-968945 -3

Research Buyer's Guide <https://www.mrs.org.uk/researchbuyersguide>

Impact Magazine (MRS)

Quarterly Magazine published by MRS.

Research Live

<https://www.research-live.com/>

c) Codes, guidelines & legislation

In order to support the focus on ethics and professionalism in the MRS Certificate, 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.

MRS

<https://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/code-of-conduct>

<https://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/guidance>

<https://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/legislation/tab/data-protection>

<https://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/mrs-policy>

ESOMAR

<https://www.esomar.org/what-we-do/code-guidelines>

efamro

<https://www.efamro.eu/>

Social Research Association

<http://the-sra.org.uk/research-ethics/ethics-guidelines/>

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