



## **MRS Diploma in Market & Social Research Practice**

### **Full Syllabus & Assessment Guidelines**

Effective from June 2012 Assessment

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MRS Diploma – Full Syllabus & Assessment Guidelines  
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## Introduction

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

### 1. The structure & aims of the MRS Diploma

#### Overview of the aims of the qualification as a whole

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

The MRS Diploma is designed for experienced research practitioners working in the areas of commercial market and/or social research, either within research agencies or client-side research departments. The overall aim of the qualification is to enable candidates to examine thoroughly the principles underlying a wide range of research practice, and to design and evaluate research practice based on a firm understanding of those principles. As such, it takes candidates beyond the stage of simply using research tools and requires them to make clearly justified and appropriate choices in a wide variety of contexts across the research process.

#### Entry requirements

Candidates entering for the MRS Diploma are normally expected to hold a first degree (or equivalent) and an initial qualification in market research (or equivalent). Candidates who do not meet standard qualifications requirements may enter for the MRS Diploma, providing that they can demonstrate an appropriate level of relevant professional experience. Full details of entry requirements are contained in the MRS Diploma Administration Handbook.

#### Research skills being developed

The qualification seeks to enable candidates to develop high level research skills. These include the abilities to:

- understand, define and evaluate research objectives, based on a thorough understanding of the context and the business objectives
- design creative and appropriate research solutions to identified problems, based on a thorough understanding of approaches and techniques, and taking into account existing and predicted constraints and limitations
- select appropriate techniques for the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data necessary to inform effective decision-making
- provide and justify recommendations to support the decision-making process, based on a thorough understanding of the information gathered during the research process
- manage the research process from inception to reporting and follow-up
- evaluate choices made at each stage in the process, identify any limitations and devise appropriate strategies for overcoming those limitations

### Links to National Occupational Standards

The learning outcomes of the qualification link closely with a range of the UK's National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Marketing and standards from the Management & Leadership sector. The NOS to which the MRS Diploma link most directly include:

MRS Diploma Unit	Marketing NOS	Management and Leadership NOS
Unit 1: The Principles of Market & Social Research	1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4, 1.2.5, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 4.4.1, 3.2.1, 5.3.1	A1, A2, B2
Unit 2: The Practice & Context of Market & Social Research	1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.5, 1.3.1, 1.3.3, 4.2.6	A1, A2, B8
Unit 3: Analysing & Interpreting Quantitative Market & Social Research Data	1.2.5, 1.3.1	A1, A2
Unit 4: Collecting, Analysing & Interpreting Qualitative Market & Social Research Data	1.2.5, 1.3.1	A1, A2
Unit 5: Case Studies in Market & Social Research	1.2.1, 1.2.3, 1.3.2	A1, A2, B8

### Key skills being developed

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

- Problem solving
- Communication
- Application of number
- Information and communication technology
- Working with others
- Professional skills

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

## Overview of the structure of the qualification

The MRS Diploma comprises 5 units, each of which is individually assessed. In order to be awarded the qualification, all candidates must complete successfully:

- units 1,2 & 5
- either unit 3 or unit 4

It is recommended that candidates follow the units in sequence as each builds on knowledge and skills developed in the previous.

Candidates are not awarded an overall grade for the qualification. Grades are reported individually for each unit.

The following sections provide:

- **Table 1:** an overview of the titles, length and mode of assessment of each of the units within the qualification, and the level of demand of each unit. This table also outlines the inter-relation between units.
- **Table 2:** a summary of assessment across all units and grades awarded across units

Table 1: Syllabus outline

Unit Name	Unit Outline	Guided learning hours	Mode of assessment
<b>Unit 1:</b> The Principles of Market & Social Research	This unit seeks to enable candidates to develop the knowledge and skills required to plan, undertake and present results from market and social research, and to understand and use other information sources within this process. The role of the unit is to provide the platform upon which later units build.  <b>All candidates must complete this unit.</b>	45	Examination (externally assessed)
<b>Unit 2:</b> The Practice & Context of Market & Social Research	This unit seeks to ensure that candidates develop an understanding of the theoretical and scientific principles which underpin market and social research, and how these impact on research in practice. Central to this unit is the concept of 'fitness for purpose'. Therefore the unit also focuses on the practical limitations of the application of theory in the real world.  <b>All candidates must complete this unit.</b>	90	Coursework assignments (Externally assessed)
<b>Unit 3:</b> Analysing and Interpreting Quantitative Market & Social Research Data	This unit provides participants with both the detailed knowledge and the skills to interpret and report on quantitative market research data. It therefore builds on the exploration of quantitative data gathering techniques in Unit 1, and the deeper consideration of attitudes, behaviours and measurement in Unit 2.  <b>Candidates must complete either Unit 3 or Unit 4.</b>	90	Coursework assignment (Externally assessed)
<b>Unit 4:</b> Collecting, Analysing and Interpreting Qualitative Market & Social Research Data	This unit provides participants with both the detailed knowledge and the skills to interpret and report on qualitative market research data. It therefore builds on the exploration of qualitative data gathering techniques in Unit 1, and the deeper consideration of attitudes, behaviours in Unit 2.  <b>Candidates must complete either Unit 3 or Unit 4.</b>	90	Coursework assignment (Externally assessed)
<b>Unit 5:</b> Case Studies in Market & Social Research	This unit aims to enable candidates to develop a holistic approach to problem solving using research-based intelligence. It encompasses the research process, from research brief through to the research proposal focusing on the management of the research process and analysis of the choices and decisions. It builds on the understanding of approaches and techniques covered in Units 1, 3 and 4 and develops further the criticality which is central to Unit 2.  <b>All candidates must complete this unit.</b>	75	Examination (externally assessed)

## Table 2: Assessment summary

The following grid summarises the mode of assessment for each unit and the grading.

In order to be awarded the qualification, all candidates must complete successfully:

- units 1,2 & 5
- either unit 3 or unit 4

It is recommended that candidates follow the units in sequence as each builds on knowledge and skills developed in the previous.

Unit title	Mode of assessment	Assessment periods	Internal/external	Grading
<b>Unit 1:</b> The Principles of Market & Social Research	Examination (3 hour paper)	June & December	Externally assessed	Fail, Pass, Distinction
<b>Unit 2:</b> The Practice & Context of Market & Social Research	4 Coursework assignments (5000 – 7000 words in total)	June & December	Externally assessed	Fail, Pass, Distinction
<b>Unit 3:</b> Analysing & Interpreting Quantitative Market & Social Research Data	Coursework assignment (5000 - 6750 words)	June & December	Externally assessed	Fail, Pass, Distinction
<b>Unit 4:</b> Collecting, Analysing & Interpreting Qualitative Market & Social Research Data	Coursework assignment (5000 - 6750 words)	June & December	Externally assessed	Fail, Pass, Distinction
<b>Unit 5:</b> Case Studies in Market & Social Research	Examination (up to 90 minutes prep & 3 hour paper)	June & December	Externally assessed	Fail, Pass, Distinction

## **UNIT 1: THE PRINCIPLES OF MARKET & SOCIAL RESEARCH**

### **Syllabus Outline**

#### **1. Aims**

The aim of this unit is to enable participants to develop the knowledge and skills required to plan, undertake and present results from market and social research, and to understand and use other information sources within this process.

The role of the unit within the MRS Diploma in Market & Social Research Practice is to provide the platform upon which later units build. By the end of this unit, participants will have developed a sufficient level of understanding of research principles, processes and techniques to inform their study of the more specific and specialised areas represented in the following three units. In addition, they will have developed a clear understanding of the role of the research process in relation to the development of broader market intelligence and information gathering. These aims will be achieved through a focus on the 5 following topic areas:

- Information and research for decision-making
- Research ethics and legislation
- Marketing and social research in context
- Research methodologies
- Presenting and evaluating information

#### **2. Learning outcomes**

The focus of this unit is on the development of the skills required by the market and social researcher across the spectrum of the research process, including ethical and legal considerations, from problem definition to the presentation of research results. In addition, the unit is designed to enhance the researcher's understanding of the role of information and data within the broader marketing context.

The learning outcomes for the unit cover the 5 topic areas outlined above.



## **2.1 Information and research for decision-making (15%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. demonstrate a broad appreciation of the need for information in marketing management and its role in the overall marketing process
2. explain the concept of knowledge management and its importance in a knowledge-based economy
3. explain how other data sources and information can be used in conjunction with research results

## **2.2 Research Ethics and Legislation (15%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. understand and explain ethical considerations as they relate to market and social research
2. discuss the concept of professionalism as it relates to market and social research
3. critically evaluate the professionalism and ethics of a variety of market and research practices
4. apply ethical principles when managing market or social research

## **2.3 Market and social research in context (25%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. describe the nature and structure of the market and social research industry
2. explain the stages of the market and social research process
3. describe the procedures for selecting a market and social research supplier
4. identify information requirements to support a specific business decision in an organisation and develop a research brief to meet the requirements
5. develop a research proposal to fulfil a given brief

## **2.4 Research methodologies (30%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. explain the uses, benefits and limitations of secondary data
2. recognise the key sources of primary and secondary data
3. describe and compare the various procedures for observing behaviour
4. describe and compare the various methods for collecting qualitative and quantitative data
5. design a questionnaire and discussion guide to meet a project's research objectives
6. explain the theory and processes involved in sampling

## **2.5 Presenting and evaluating information (15%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. demonstrate an ability to use techniques for analysing qualitative and quantitative data
2. write a research report aimed at supporting decisions
3. plan and design an oral presentation of market and social research results
4. use research and data to produce actionable recommendations for a marketing plan or to support a business decision

### 3. Syllabus content

This unit aims to provide participants with both the knowledge and skills to manage information and the more specialist knowledge and skills required to plan, undertake and present results from market and social research.

The balance of weighting allocated to each of the five elements of the syllabus reflect the importance of the area to the achievement of learning and performance outcomes, and the depth and breadth of material to be covered. Although each area may be regarded as a discrete element there are clear progressions and overlaps in the knowledge and skills base considered which has important implications for the delivery of the unit.

The unit addresses all of the activities involved in conducting either a market or social research project, from the initial brief through to the completion of the final written report, and integrate research outputs into broader information strategies and sources.

The relevance of each syllabus element to the unit as a whole is as follows:

#### **Element 1: Information and research for decision-making (15%)**

This element focuses on the importance of information to business planning and management decisions. It is important that participants understand how research and information integrate with the overall marketing process.

#### **Element 2: Research Ethics and Legislation (15%)**

As the code-holding body within a self-regulated industry, the MRS takes very seriously its role in ensuring that practitioners are fully cognisant of the ethical structures and guidelines which govern market and social research. This element seeks to ensure that participants fully understand the responsibilities of all those involved in the research process in relation to ethics, professionalism and legislation. Participants are also required to demonstrate that they can evaluate research processes from an ethical standpoint.

#### **Element 3: Market and social research in context (25%)**

This element provides an overview of the market research industry and how it operates as well as its ethical and social responsibilities. It also introduces the various stages of the marketing research process. The material places particular focus on the initial planning of the research and the agency selection process. As such, emphasis should be placed on developing practical skills in writing research briefs and research proposals

#### **Element 4: Research methodologies (30%)**

This element focuses on the methods used in secondary and primary (qualitative and quantitative) data collection. Participants should be able to compare different approaches as well as design a questionnaire and discussion guide. Probability and non-probability sampling theory and processes should also be fully understood

### **Element 5: Presenting and evaluating information (15%)**

This element focuses on the evaluation of information (qualitative and quantitative) as well as the communication of information (both verbally and in writing) to assist decision-making. Although participants will not be tested on their ability to undertake statistical analysis, they are expected to show an understanding of various statistical techniques and their outputs. Knowledge and understanding of the communication of results is important in this element and there is also a large amount of skill development required.

### **4. Approach to delivery**

Although it is expected that learning outcomes should be achieved as discrete goals of attainment, it is also expected that tutors recognise and impart an understanding of the integrated nature of the syllabus content. Practical exercises, such as the development of research briefs, proposals, questionnaires, topic guides and sampling plans, are critical to the development of skills required within this unit. It is important that projects or case studies illustrate the integration of research and information with the marketing process as a whole.

## 5. Recommended support materials

### Core Reading

Wilson, A	2018	Marketing research: an integrated approach 4 <sup>th</sup> edition	London; FT/Prentice Hall
Bradley, N	2013	Marketing research: Tools & Techniques 2nd edition	Oxford University Press

### Recommended Reading

Birn, R.J.	2002	Handbook of international market research techniques	London; Kogan Page
Brace, I	2018	Questionnaire Design: How to Plan, Structure and Write Survey Material for Effective Market Research	London; Kogan Page
Bryman, A.	2012	Social Research Methods 4th Edition	Oxford; Oxford University Press
Callingham, M	2004	Market Intelligence: How and Why Organisations Use Market Research	London; Kogan Page
Cooke, M. and Buckley, N.	2008	Web 2.0, social networks and the future of market research	IJMR 50(2) pp267-292
ESOMAR	2007	Market Research Best Practice: 30 Visions for the Future	ESOMAR
Goudge, P	2006	Employee Research: How to Increase Employee Involvement through Consultation	London; Kogan Page
Keegan, S.		Qualitative Research: Good Decision Making through Understanding People, Cultures and Markets	London; Kogan Page
McNeil, R.	2005	Business to Business Research: Understanding and Measuring Business Markets	London; Kogan Page
Maklan, S., Knox, S. And Ryalis, L.	2008	New Trends in Innovation and Customer Relationship Management: a Challenge for Market Researchers	IJMR 50(2) pp221-240
Poynter, R.	2010	Handbook of Online and Social Media Research	ESOMAR
Smith, D.V.L. and Fletcher, J.H.	2004	The Art and Science of Interpreting Market Research Evidence	Chichester; John Wiley & Sons
Szwarc, P.	2005	Researching Customer Satisfaction & Loyalty: How to Find Out what People Really Think	London; Kogan Page.
von Hamersveld M. And Bont, C.	2007	Market Research Handbook 5th Edition	Chichester; John Wiley
Evidence Network		<a href="http://137.73.2.2/schools/sspp/interdisciplinary/evidence/aboutebpp.html">http://137.73.2.2/schools/sspp/interdisciplinary/evidence/aboutebpp.html</a>	
Policy Hub		<a href="http://www.nationalschool.gov.uk/policyhub/">http://www.nationalschool.gov.uk/policyhub/</a>	
Government Social Research		<a href="http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/my-civil-service/networks/professional/gsr/index.aspx">http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/my-civil-service/networks/professional/gsr/index.aspx</a>	

## Supplementary materials

### Codes, guidelines & legislation

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

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

The Market Research Society [www.mrs.org.uk](http://www.mrs.org.uk) Access to guidelines covering a wide range of research practice

ESOMAR [www.esomar.org](http://www.esomar.org) Access to ESOMAR guidelines covering a wide range of ethical issues

Social Research Association [www.the-sra.org.uk](http://www.the-sra.org.uk) Access to guidance covering social research issues

Mystery Shopping Providers Association [www.mysteryshopping.org](http://www.mysteryshopping.org) Access to guidance on mystery shopping

[Government Social Research Code](#) Access to the GSR Code

## **UNIT 1: ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATIONS & GUIDELINES**

### **6. Introduction**

The assessment for this unit requires candidates to be able to examine, critique and evaluate decisions made at all stages within the research process, from the initial brief to the recommendations made as a result of research findings.

The material used in examination questions draws on real-life scenarios in order to allow candidates to demonstrate their skills in identifying, analysing and evaluating research choices in practice.

### **7. Mode of assessment**

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

Full administrative requirements governing the conduct of the examination can be found in the MRS Diploma Centre Handbook.

### **8. Format of the examination**

The examination is provided twice a year, in June and December. Candidates must answer all questions set within the examination.

The examination will be of 3 hours duration and will comprise three compulsory questions. The questions will require the candidate to address a variety of issues and tasks across the research process, covering elements from across the Unit 1 syllabus.

Q1 (worth 50% of the total marks). The preparation of parts of a proposal in response to a short brief. Candidates are provided with a scenario which presents a research problem in context. This question is designed to assess the candidates' understanding of the business objectives, their ability to identify appropriate research objectives and their ability to identify appropriate research solutions.

Q2 and Q3 (each worth 25% of the total marks). These questions may include tasks such as the preparation of short essays or briefing papers on issues relating to areas of the syllabus such as research design, methodological approaches, sampling, data presentation, research reporting and ethical issues or may require candidates to develop elements of a discussion guide or questionnaire.

#### **Question specifications**

Each of the 5 elements included in the syllabus for this Unit will be assessed in the examination questions, i.e.:

- Information and research for decision making
- Research ethics and legislation
- Market and social research in context
- Research methodologies
- Presenting and evaluating information

The aim of all questions included in the examination is to demonstrate knowledge and application of the skills required by the market and social researcher across the spectrum of the research process. However, the questions are likely to follow the broad specifications given below. The specifications included below are intended to provide examples of the types of topics and issues

the exam will cover, and the sorts of tasks that might be included in each question, and should not be seen as a comprehensive typology.

### **Possible Question Types:**

#### **Information and research for decision making**

Questions focusing on this section of the syllabus would be designed to assess the candidate's ability to understand the importance of information to business planning and management decisions.

#### ***Some examples of the types of tasks which may form this question include:***

- Explain the types of information needed for different types of marketing decision making.
- Report on the types of information needed for various types of social research.
- Explain the concept of knowledge management and its importance in a knowledge-based economy.
- Explain the key roles and application of marketing information.
- Report on the wide variety of information sources now available to marketing decision makers.

#### **Research ethics and legislation**

Questions focusing on this section of the syllabus would be designed to assess the candidate's ability to understand the responsibilities of all those involved in the research process in relation to ethics, professionalism and legislation.

#### ***Some examples of the types of tasks which may form this question include:***

- Explain the principles that govern the conduct of behaviour in the marketing research industry and the reasons why an ethical approach is necessary for the industry.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the data protection legislation and its application.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the MRS code of conduct.
- Discuss the concept of professionalism as it relates to market and social research.
- Critically evaluate the professionalism and ethics of a variety of market and research practices.

### **Market and social research in context**

Questions focusing on this section of the syllabus would be designed to assess the candidate's ability to understand and apply the activities involved in the marketing research process and in particular, the initial design of the research and the agency selection process.

#### ***Some examples of the types of tasks which may form this question include:***

- Describe the nature and structure of the market and social research industry.
- Explain the stages of the market and social research process.
- Describe the procedures for selecting a market and social research supplier.
- Identify information requirements to support a specific business decision in an organisation and develop a research brief to meet the requirements.
- Develop a research proposal to fulfil a given brief.

### **Research methodologies**

Questions focusing on this section of the syllabus would be designed to assess the candidate's ability to understand the methods used in secondary and primary (qualitative and quantitative) data collection.

#### ***Some examples of the types of tasks which may form this question include:***

- Explain the uses, benefits and limitations of secondary data.
- For a particular situation identify the key sources of primary or secondary data.
- Describe and compare the various procedures for observing behaviour.
- Describe and compare the various methods for collecting qualitative and quantitative data.
- Design a questionnaire or discussion guide to meet a project's research objectives.
- Explain the theory and processes involved in sampling.

### **Presenting and evaluating information**

Questions focusing on this section of the syllabus would be designed to assess the candidate's ability to understand approaches involved in the evaluation of information (qualitative and quantitative) as well as the communication of information (both verbally and in writing) to assist decision making.

#### ***Some examples of the types of tasks which may form this question include:***

- Demonstrate an ability to use techniques for analysing qualitative and quantitative data.
- Explain the key principles of writing a research report aimed at supporting decisions.
- Explain the key principles of planning and designing an oral presentation of market and social research results.



## **9. Assessment weighting**

Question 1 is worth 50% of the final mark and Questions 2 and 3 are each worth 25%. Where questions are subdivided into 2 or 3 tasks, the weighting for each task within the question will be clearly indicated.

## **10. Assessment grading**

Answers will be awarded a band grade (Distinction, Pass or Fail). In order to pass the examination, candidates will normally be required to achieve a minimum of a Pass grade in all three questions.

All candidates must pass Question 1. Candidates who are awarded a Fail grade in either question 2 or 3 will normally be expected to achieve a strong Pass grade in the other question. Guidance on the general assessment criteria for each grade can be found in the following table.

## Assessment Level Descriptors

The following table provides guidance on the levels of attainment for all Units.

The document should be read alongside the Assessment Specifications and Criteria for this unit. The Specifications & Criteria provide guidance on the core information required by each question.

	<b>Fail</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>Distinction</b>
	<b><i>The candidate's work</i></b>	<b><i>The candidate's work</i></b>	<b><i>The candidate's work</i></b>
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates limited understanding of principles, key concepts, issues and theoretical approaches relevant to the subject</li> <li>demonstrates limited awareness of the of the subject in both breadth and depth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an awareness of the underlying principles, key concepts, issues and theoretical approaches relevant to the subject.</li> <li>demonstrates an adequate understanding of both the range and depth of the subject.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of principles, key concepts, issues and theoretical approaches relevant to the subject.</li> <li>demonstrates a thorough understanding of the subject in both breadth and depth.</li> </ul>
<b>Skills (Intellectual/Subject)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates limited judgement in analysing routine issues for presenting ideas.</li> <li>may offer a personal and unsubstantiated point of view, with limited reference to sources and limited use of examples.</li> <li>may demonstrate little or no connection between subject knowledge and the candidate's professional practice when required to do so.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an ability to critically analyse the relationships between differing arguments and evidence</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to examine and evaluate a range of sources, research methods and strategies and assess the appropriateness of their use</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to advocate a point of view and exercise critical judgement with good use of examples</li> <li>demonstrates evidence of familiarity with primary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates evidence of clear and original thought, and of critical thinking</li> <li>draws on and uses a wide range of knowledge to address questions</li> <li>analyses concepts and theories and applies them to issues of practice in a systematic way</li> <li>draws appropriately on a range of sources.</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate the significance and limitations of theory and practice</li> <li>demonstrates an appreciation of alternative and competing</li> </ul>

		<p>and secondary sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate, demonstrates evidence of the candidate's ability to make connections between aspects of subject knowledge and their professional practice</li> </ul>	<p>methodological choices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate, shows evidence of advanced professional competence</li> </ul>
<b>Values &amp; attitudes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates little or no evidence of critical awareness of the wider social, political and/or economic implications, relevant to market and/or social research practices when required to do so</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• demonstrates some evidence of critical awareness of the wider social, political and/or economic implications, relevant to market and/or social research practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• demonstrates a high level of critical awareness of the wider social, political and/or economic implications, relevant to market and/or social research practices</li> </ul>

## UNIT 2: THE PRACTICE AND CONTEXT OF MARKET & SOCIAL RESEARCH

### Syllabus Outline

#### 1. Aims

The aims and objectives of the unit are to equip candidates with an understanding of the theory behind and scientific underpinnings of market and social research so that market research design and interpretation decisions can be made on the basis of informed knowledge. This unit seeks to ensure that participants develop an understanding of the theoretical and scientific underpinnings of social and market research and how these impact on practice in the real world.

While other units seek to impart a more practical understanding of how to apply theory in practice, this unit focuses on fundamental principles which underpin market research practice. Central to the unit is the concept of 'fitness for purpose' and the unit therefore also focuses on the practical limitations of the application of theory in the real world.

The unit will equip market researchers with the concepts and principles they need in order to critically review research processes and advise management of all levels on information interpretation and action. This will be achieved through a focus on the 4 following areas:

- Introduction to the fundamental theories underpinning market and social research
- Critical thinking & decision making
- Understanding attitudes & behaviour
- Approaches to measurement

#### 2. Learning Outcomes

The focus of this unit is on research as a dynamic 'real world' process, and on the theoretical underpinnings which enable this process. The unit recognises that, although objective evidence is a cornerstone of rational decision making, many decisions are based on a mix of evidence of different strengths and on assumptions which may be difficult to justify. Having followed this unit, participants will be able to discuss the extent to which information and research is 'fit for purpose' and how well it stands up to scrutiny.

The learning outcomes for the unit cover the 4 topic areas outlined above.

## **2.1 Introduction to the Fundamental Theories Underpinning Market & Social Research (25%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. identify and discuss the key types of problem which are posed within market & social research
2. discuss the fitness for purpose of research solutions in relation to the key problems identified
3. understand and discuss the nature and limitations of deductive and inductive research in relation to market & social research
4. understand and discuss the nature and limitations of scientific enquiry in relation to market & social research
5. understand the principles of grounded theory and their implications in practice
6. relate their understanding of both scientific enquiry and fitness for purposes to a range of research designs

## **2.2 Critical Thinking & Decision Making (25%)**

Participants will be able to demonstrate their practical understanding of:

1. the principles of effective critical thinking
2. the role of critical thinking in effective problem formulation within the context of market & social research
3. the general principles of effective decision making within the context of market & social research
4. the decision-making processes which exist within organisations
5. the principles of chain of reasoning and exploration which underpins effective interpretation of information within the context of market & social research

## **2.3 Understanding Attitudes & Behaviour (25%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. identify and evaluate a range of approaches to the gathering of data
2. understand and explain the relationships between attitudes & behaviours
3. understand and explain the key principles in exploring attitudes
4. understand and explain the key principles in measuring attitudes
5. understand and identify the relationship between question structure and answers received

## **2.4 Approaches to Measurement (25%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. understand and discuss the principles of sampling and evaluate those principles in context
2. apply those principles appropriately in evaluating if quantitative surveys are fit for purpose
3. discuss the relevance of statistical significance to market & social research
4. explain the factors affecting statistical significance and evaluate in context the tests commonly used in social and market research
5. explain the role and value of segmentation research in understanding and classifying customers
6. explain how approaches to measurement influence researchers' understanding of the behaviour of the target audience

### 3. Syllabus content

The syllabus for this unit provides the underpinning theory for key elements within the research process and is designed to enable participants to develop a critically evaluative approach to market and social research practice, based on a sound understanding of these theoretical principles.

This is the second unit within the qualification. Participants entering this unit are therefore expected to have a good working knowledge of a range of market and social research processes and techniques. This syllabus builds on that knowledge, requiring participants to analyse and evaluate those practices based on their growing understanding of theoretical issues.

The balance of weighting allocated to each of the 4 elements of the syllabus reflects the depth and breadth of the material to be covered and the contribution of each area to the achievement of the learning outcomes. Although each element may be regarded as representative of a discrete area, there are clear links and overlaps between the knowledge and skills addressed. In delivering this unit, centres are expected to demonstrate their awareness of the interdependence of these areas.

The relevance of each syllabus element to the unit as a whole is as follows:

#### **Element 1: Introduction to the Fundamental Theories Underpinning Market & Social Research (25%)**

This element focuses on the principles which govern effective research, and the constraints put on scientific enquiry by the need for research to be fit for purpose in a marketing or social context. It also discusses the dichotomous relationship of deductive and inductive approaches and introduces the principles of grounded theory as they apply to market and social research. Via this unit, participants are expected to develop the skills required to analyse research practice from both the scientific and 'fit for purpose' perspectives, and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of inductive and deductive approaches in practice.

#### **Element 2: Critical Thinking & Decision Making (25%)**

The abilities to identify, discuss and solve problems and make decisions based on evidence are key to effective research. This element introduces participants to the main concepts of critical thinking and encourages a critical approach to the definition and analysis of research problems. The element also focuses on the principles which underpin effective decision making and on the analysis of the decision-making processes which exist within research organisations. Participants are expected to use their understanding of decision-making principles in interpreting and reporting on research findings.

#### **Element 3: Understanding Attitudes & Behaviour (25%)**

This element is designed to deepen participants' understanding of the relationships between attitudes and behaviours, and their awareness of the ways in which data on both attitudes and behaviours might be gathered and analysed. In particular, the element focuses on the key principles involved in the exploration and measurement of attitudes, and on the ways in which the formulation of research questions may help to determine the answers received.

#### **Element 4: Approaches to Measurement (25%)**

Building on work begun in Unit 1, this element aims to deepen participants' understanding of the cornerstones of measurement within the research process. Participants are required to consider a range of approaches to sampling and evaluate their appropriateness within given market and social research contexts. They are introduced to the main principles and tests

involved in the assessment of statistical significance and are expected to evaluate these tests in context. The third strand included in this element focuses on measurement and branding, requiring participants to demonstrate understanding of the key concepts of segmentation research and high/low involvement and how these relate to the measurement of consumer attitudes and behaviour.

#### **4. Approach to delivery**

The learning outcomes contained within the syllabus for this unit are achievable as discrete elements. However, tutors who deliver this syllabus are expected to recognise and to impart the integrated nature of the research process and, by extension, these learning outcomes. To achieve this, tutors are encouraged to integrate – into their programme of tuition the analysis of research documents – e.g. research proposals and reports of research projects – from the range of perspectives covered within the syllabus. This type of practical task is essential in helping participants to develop the insight and evaluation skills which will enable them to become more effective practitioners.

The following table provides guidance for suggested content for courses and programmes leading to the completion of Unit 2. This is not an exhaustive list of the items to be included in any programme of learning, but indicates items which can be considered as core within this unit.

## Guidance on realising the syllabus

	Learning outcomes	Indicative content
<p><b>Element 1</b></p> <p>Introduction to the Fundamental Theories Underpinning Market &amp; Social Research</p> <p>(25%)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify and discuss the key types of problem which are posed within market &amp; social research</li> <li>2. discuss the fitness for purpose of research solutions in relation to the key problems identified</li> <li>3. understand and discuss the nature and limitations of deductive and inductive research in relation to market &amp; social research</li> <li>4. understand and discuss the nature and limitations of scientific enquiry in relation to market &amp; social research</li> <li>5. understand the principles of grounded theory and their implications in practice</li> <li>6. relate their understanding of both scientific enquiry and fitness for purposes to a range of research designs</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• problem types and problem definition</li> <li>• identifying information needs and relating this to research design</li> <li>• the principles of deductive and inductive research</li> <li>• scientific principles which underpin research, including principles of grounded theory</li> </ul>
<p><b>Element 2</b></p> <p>Critical Thinking &amp; Decision Making</p> <p>(25%)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the principles of effective critical thinking</li> <li>2. the role of critical thinking in effective problem formulation within the context of market &amp; social research</li> <li>3. the general principles of effective decision making within the context of market &amp; social research</li> <li>4. the decision-making processes which exist within organisations</li> <li>5. the principles of chain of reasoning and exploration which underpins effective interpretation of information within the context of market &amp; social research</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• problem types and problem definition</li> <li>• identifying information needs and relating this to research design</li> <li>• the principles of deductive and inductive research</li> <li>• scientific principles which underpin research, including principles of grounded theory</li> <li>• interpretation of research results and communication of research findings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Element 3</b></p> <p>Understanding Attitudes &amp; Behaviour</p> <p>(25%)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify and evaluate a range of approaches to the gathering of data</li> <li>2. understand and explain the relationships between attitudes &amp; behaviours</li> <li>3. understand and explain the key principles in exploring attitudes</li> <li>4. understand and explain the key principles in measuring attitudes</li> <li>5. understand and identify the relationship between question structure and answers received</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• definitions of attitudes and behaviours</li> <li>• approaches and techniques for exploring and measuring attitudes &amp; behaviours</li> <li>• different types of questions and response formats: objectives, strengths and limitations</li> </ul>



	Learning outcomes	Indicative content
<b>Element 4</b> Approaches to Measurement  (25%)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. understand and discuss the principles of sampling and evaluate those principles in context</li> <li>2. apply those principles appropriately in evaluating if quantitative surveys are fit for purpose</li> <li>3. discuss the relevance of statistical significance to market &amp; social research</li> <li>4. explain the factors affecting statistical significance and evaluate in context the tests commonly used in social and market research</li> <li>5. explain the role and value of segmentation research in understanding and classifying customers</li> <li>6. explain how approaches to measurement influence researchers' understanding of the behaviour of the target audience</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• principles, strengths and limitations of a range of approaches to sampling</li> <li>• principles for effective sample plans</li> <li>• tests for evaluating statistical significance of research findings</li> <li>• principles of segmentation</li> <li>• approaches to interpreting findings</li> </ul>

## 5. Recommended Support Materials

### Core Reading

Birn, RJ	2002	The international handbook of market research techniques	London; Kogan Page
Brace, I	2004	Questionnaire design	London; Kogan Page
Smith, DVL & Fletcher, JH The Market Research Society	2004	The arts & science of interpreting market research evidence Code of conduct	Chichester, Wiley <a href="http://www.mrs.org.uk">www.mrs.org.uk</a>

### Recommended Reading

Brown, MN	2003	Asking the right questions: a guide to critical thinking	Prentice Hall
Goulding, C	2002	Grounded theory: a practical guide for management, business & market researchers	London; Sage

## Supplementary materials

### Codes, guidelines & legislation

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

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

The Market Research Society ( <a href="http://www.mrs.org.uk">www.mrs.org.uk</a> )	Access to guidelines covering a wide range of research practice
ESOMAR ( <a href="http://www.esomar.org">www.esomar.org</a> )	Access to ESOMAR guidelines covering a wide range of ethical issues
Social Research Association ( <a href="http://www.the-sra.org.uk">www.the-sra.org.uk</a> )	Access to guidance covering social research issues
Mystery Shopping Providers Association ( <a href="http://www.mysteryshopping.org">www.mysteryshopping.org</a> )	Access to guidance on mystery shopping
World Association for Opinion Research ( <a href="http://www.unl.edu/WAPOR">www.unl.edu/WAPOR</a> )	Access to guidance on opinion research
Research Buyer's Guide ( <a href="http://www.rbg.org.uk/">http://www.rbg.org.uk/</a> )	For links to global research bodies
Research-live ( <a href="http://www.research-live.com">www.research-live.com</a> )	For articles about industry news

### Journals and Publications

#### **The International Journal of Market Research (WARC)**

Bi-monthly journal providing reports on a wide range of current and developing practice.

#### **Impact Magazine (MRS)**

Quarterly magazine - Gain from insight and strategy studies to global trends, and with sections on technology, science and the law.

## **UNIT 2: ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATIONS & GUIDELINES**

### **6. Introduction**

The components of assessment for this unit require candidates to examine and evaluate social or market research practices from relevant theoretical perspectives, and to assess the fitness for purpose. Specifically, candidates must demonstrate that they can:

- analyse and evaluate a proposed project of research, contained in a research proposal
- either prepare a set of questions for a questionnaire and/or a topic guide for a series of discussion groups/individual depth interviews within the context of a given research project or critique a set of questions and/or topic guide materials and assess their suitability for addressing a research problem
- analyse and evaluate the fitness for purpose of a sample, within the context of a given research project
- contextualise research findings via the preparation of a research presentation suitable for client purposes

The material and tasks used for this assessment has been developed specifically to allow candidates to demonstrate their skills in identifying, analysing and evaluating research choices in practice.

### **7. Mode of assessment**

Candidates are required to complete four assignments which are externally assessed and externally moderated.

### **8. Format of assignments**

Two sets of assessment materials and corresponding tasks are set annually by MRS Qualifications, one in April (for submission in June) and one in October (for submission in December). Candidates are given 6 weeks to complete the assessment.

All materials and tasks for these written assignments relate directly to the learning outcomes from the syllabus document and specified in these guidelines.

### **9. Assignment specifications**

The specifications and assessment criteria for each assignment are described below.

Word limits for individual assignments are provided for general guidance. The total amount of assessed written work (i.e. assignments 1 – 4) should fall between 5000 words - 7000words.

## 10. Assessment weighting

The assignments are weighted in accordance with the weighting ascribed to each area within the syllabus description and also with the level of analysis required within each assignment.

Assignment 1	25% of total
Assignment 2	25% of total
Assignment 3	25% of total
Assignment 4	25% of total
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Assignment 1: Project Analysis

### Focus

This assignment is designed to assess the candidate's ability to analyse and evaluate decisions made in relation to a research problem. It focuses on the learning outcomes included in Elements 1 and 2 of the unit syllabus (Introduction to Key Principles of Market Research; Critical Thinking & Decision Making).

### Format

Candidates are required to evaluate the fitness for purpose of a proposed programme of research, contained in a proposal document provided in advance of the assessment period by MRS Qualifications.

Recommended word count: 1250 –1750 words

Content Specifications	Relevant Learning Outcomes
Candidates should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>evaluate the definition of the research problem being investigated</li></ul>	2.1.1 2.2.1 2.2.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>evaluate the fitness for purpose of the programme of research which has been proposed or implemented, with reference to the problem being investigated</li></ul>	2.1.2 2.1.3 2.1.4 2.1.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>evaluate the usefulness to the 'client' of the programme of research which has been proposed or implemented, with reference to the research objectives and the decisions to be taken.</li></ul>	2.1.5 2.2.3 2.2.4 2.2.5

## Assessment Criteria for Assignment 1

At PASS level, the candidate can	At DISTINCTION level
<p>Present an assignment which is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) written in a style which is accurate, clearly ordered and does not impose a strain on the reader</li> <li>b) uses appropriate terminology accurately</li> <li>c) makes appropriate references to sources in the text</li> <li>d) contains a reference bibliography</li> </ul>	<p>The candidate meets the criteria specified opposite AND can provide evidence of being outstanding in a minimum of two of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) depth of analysis and understanding of the research problem</li> <li>b) depth of insight into the appropriateness of the proposed research</li> <li>c) depth of analysis and understanding of the client's needs of the research</li> </ul>
<p>Demonstrate their understanding of the research problem by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) identifying the strengths and any weaknesses in the definition of the research problem</li> <li>b) identifying the strengths and any weaknesses in the methodology proposed to research the problem</li> <li>c) providing a clear rationale for the judgements they make in relation to the proposed research</li> </ul>	
<p>Demonstrate their understanding of the client's needs by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) identifying the extent to which the proposed research is likely to meet the client's objectives</li> <li>b) identifying any aspects of the proposed research which might limit its usefulness to the client</li> <li>c) providing a clear rationale for the judgements which they make in relation to the client's needs</li> </ul>	

## Assignment 2: Analysis of a Research Sample

### Focus

This assignment is designed to assess the candidate's ability to analyse and evaluate the sampling undertaken for a specified research project. It focuses on the learning outcomes contained in Element 4 of the unit syllabus.

### Format

MRS Qualifications will provide candidates with a sampling plan as part of the proposal prepared for Assignment 1. Candidates are required to evaluate this sampling plan.

Recommended word count: 1250 – 1750 words

Content Specifications	Relevant Learning Outcomes
Candidates should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>identify the approach(es) to sampling recommended in the proposal, and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this approach in relation to the given research objectives, with reference to relevant theory</li></ul>	2.4.1 2.4.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>evaluate the appropriateness of the size and composition of the proposed sample(s), with reference to the given research objectives and analysis plan</li></ul>	2.4.2 2.4.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>identify a (series of) statistics and/or statistical tests which could be applied in analysing quantitative data provided by this sample, with justification for their use</li></ul>	2.4.3 2.4.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>evaluate the fitness for purpose of the sampling proposed for the specified research project</li></ul>	2.4.2



## Assessment Criteria for Assignment 2

At PASS level, the candidate can	At DISTINCTION level
<p>Present an assignment which is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) written in a style which is accurate, clearly ordered and does not impose a strain on the reader</li> <li>b) uses appropriate terminology accurately</li> <li>c) makes appropriate references to sources in the text</li> <li>d) contains a reference bibliography</li> </ul>	<p>The candidate meets the criteria specified opposite AND can provide evidence of being outstanding in a minimum of two of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) depth of analysis and understanding of sampling approach taken in the project</li> <li>b) depth of analysis and understanding of the links between the sampling approach and the findings</li> <li>c) depth of insight into the fitness for purpose of the sampling approach</li> </ul>
<p>Demonstrate their understanding of the approach taken to sampling by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) identifying the method(s) of sampling used in the project</li> <li>b) discussing the potential strengths and weaknesses of the chosen approach(es) in relation to the research objectives with reference to relevant theory</li> </ul>	
<p>Demonstrate their understanding of the links between sampling method and findings by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) discussing the impact of sample size and composition on the quality of the research findings</li> <li>b) evaluating the appropriateness of the size and composition of the given sample for the proposed research project</li> <li>c) identifying relevant statistics/statistical tests to be used/which could be used to analyse data resulting from the given sample</li> <li>d) identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed statistics/tests in providing the data required by the research project</li> </ul>	
<p>Demonstrate their understanding of the fitness for purpose of the sampling approach taken by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) evaluating the fitness for purpose of the sample</li> </ul>	

## Assignment 3: Developing & Evaluating Data Collection Tools

### Focus

This assignment is designed to assess the candidate’s ability to design a data collection tool or tools for qualitative and/or quantitative research, and to provide a detailed rationale for the design/s they have chosen to use. Candidates may be asked to prepare a topic/discussion/interview guide for qualitative research, to specify a format for qualitative observation or a design for an ethnographic study, and/or to design a section or a whole questionnaire for a quantitative project. This assignment focuses on the learning outcomes contained in Element 3 of the unit syllabus.

### Format

Candidates are required to develop and to provide a rationale for a quantitative and/or qualitative data collection tool as specified above to uncover respondents’ opinions, attitudes and behaviours in relation to the research objectives contained in the research proposal document prepared for Assignment 1.

Recommended word count: 1250 – 1750 words

Content Specifications	Relevant Learning Outcomes
Candidates should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify and provide a rationale for the use of a qualitative and/or quantitative research tool or tools</li> </ul>	2.3.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>justify their choice of research tool/s, and provide a rationale for their detailed specification, in relation to the specified research objectives, in terms of question choice and/or overall research design</li> </ul>	2.3.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>prepare a suitable qualitative or quantitative data collection approach for exploring relevant issues, including attitudes &amp; behaviours, related to given research objectives</li> <li>evaluate the suitability of their quantitative and/or qualitative approach for obtaining and measuring the relevant data related to the given research objectives</li> </ul>	2.3.2 2.3.3 2.3.4 2.3.5

### Assessment Criteria for Assignment 3

At PASS level, the candidate can	At DISTINCTION level
<p>Present an assignment which is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) written in a style which is accurate, clearly ordered and does not impose a strain on the reader</li> <li>b) uses appropriate terminology accurately</li> <li>c) makes appropriate references to sources in the text</li> <li>d) contains a reference bibliography</li> </ul>	<p>The candidate meets the criteria specified opposite AND can provide evidence of being outstanding in a minimum of two of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) depth of analysis and understanding of the role of qualitative and quantitative methods in uncovering attitudes and behaviours</li> <li>b) depth of analysis and understanding of the role of qualitative and quantitative methods in measuring attitudes</li> <li>c) depth of insight into the appropriateness of the proposed data collection method</li> <li>d) depth of analysis and understanding of the client's needs of the research</li> </ul>
<p>Demonstrate their understanding of the qualitative/quantitative data collection methods by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) identifying an appropriate range of questions/response/observation formats to meet the given research objectives</li> <li>b) analysing the relationships between the question types/response/observation formats and the research objectives</li> </ul>	
<p>Demonstrate their understanding of the links between question types and attitudes and behaviours by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) preparing a series of questions and associated response formats, and/or a topic/interview guide, and/or an observation/ethnography approach suitable for uncovering the required data</li> <li>b) evaluating the usefulness of the questions/responses and/or topic guide, and/or observation information for measuring the identified attitudes and behaviours</li> <li>c) providing a clear rationale for the judgements which they make in relation to the research objectives</li> </ul>	

## Assignment 4: Reporting and Contextualising Research Findings

### Focus

This assignment is designed to assess the candidate's understanding of decision making and the contextualisation of research findings in the preparation of a research presentation to the client. This assignment focuses on the learning outcomes contained in Elements 1 and 2 of the Unit Syllabus.

### Format

Using the proposal document provided, candidates are required to specify the format and prepare an outline content of the final research presentation which will be provided to the client. They will be asked to specify the proposed audience for this final presentation, to discuss how the research findings reported in it should be used by the organisation, to outline any barriers to the implementation of associated recommendations, and to specify any further research or sources of information which could be consulted to aid managerial decision making.

Recommended word count: 1250 – 1750 words

Content Specifications	Relevant Learning Outcomes
Candidates should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specify the format and outline content, in the form of headings and subheadings, of the final research presentation</li> <li>• justify the format and content choices made in terms of managerial decision making</li> <li>• specify the proposed audience for the final presentation</li> <li>• discuss how possible research findings should be used by the client</li> <li>• outline any barriers to implementation of the research recommendations</li> <li>• specify any further research or specific sources of information which could be consulted to aid managerial decision making</li> </ul>	2.1.1 2.1.2 2.1.4 2.1.6 2.2.1 2.2.3 2.2.4

## Assessment Criteria for Assignment 4

At PASS level, the candidate can	At DISTINCTION level
<p>Present an assignment which is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) written in a style which is accurate, clearly ordered and does not impose a strain on the reader</li> <li>b) uses appropriate terminology accurately</li> <li>c) makes appropriate references to sources in the text</li> <li>d) contains a reference bibliography</li> </ul>	<p>The candidate meets the criteria specified opposite AND can provide evidence of being outstanding in a minimum of two of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) appropriateness of the suggested presentation format and outline plan</li> <li>b) depth of insight into the organisational decision making process</li> <li>c) depth of insight into limitations of the uses of the proposed research and its research outcomes</li> <li>d) range and appropriateness of the suggested further research or information plan</li> </ul>
<p>Demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of report preparation and organisational decision making principles by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) identifying an appropriate format and outline content plan for the final presentation</li> <li>b) providing an appropriate justification of their choices in terms of managerial decision making</li> <li>c) specifying a relevant audience for the final presentation</li> </ul>	
<p>Demonstrate their understanding of the limitations of research by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) outlining specific case study related barriers to implementation of research recommendations</li> <li>b) specifying further research or specific sources of information to aid managerial decision making</li> </ul>	

## APPENDIX 1: GUIDANCE FOR CENTRES ON ASSESSMENT

### Guidance for the assignments

The centre should provide guidance for candidates for all 4 assignments included in this unit. This document should provide guidance on the following areas:

- format
- length, layout & language
- assessment of assignments
- submission dates/deadlines

### Format

Each assignment is designed to be completed in essay format, and should address the issues detailed in the specifications table for that assignment.

The assignment should be printed on A4 white paper, with a one inch margin around the text. Text size should ideally be 11pt.

Candidates should ensure that each section within the assignment is easy to read by:

- using headings and bullet points effectively.
- avoiding over-brief note form. If you include notes, you should ensure they make your points clearly and overtly.
- ensuring that your use of English is clear, accurate and appropriate to a client audience.

The assignments should be secured together and submitted together. The assignment should be secured with a staple in the top left hand corner. Candidates must not bind their assignment by any other means.

Candidates are required to present 3 hard copies of the assignment in its final form for formal assessment to your centre co-ordinator by the centre's specified deadline. All copies must include an Assignment Cover Sheet. 1 copy of your assignment must be retained by the centre, the remaining 2 copies must be sent to the MRS for external assessment.

### Assignment length, layout & language

The centre's assignment guidelines should contain guidance on word limits and on layout.

The total word count for all four assignments should fall between 5000-7000 words (excluding appendices). Centres should ensure that candidates understand the importance of respecting the word limit. Appendices may be included if the candidate feels that it is necessary to illustrate points made in the assignment. However, appendices should not be used to extend the word limit by adding additional information not discussed in the body of the text.

Centres should provide appropriate guidance for the layout of the selected task. In particular, candidates should be made aware of the importance of signposting (i.e. the appropriate use of heading, bullet points etc.). Guidance should also be given to ensure any note form used makes clear the candidate's rationale for his/her choice of approaches. It should be noted that abbreviated note form can obscure the level of analysis which the candidate has undertaken to arrive at the points which s/he has made.

The language used in all assessed components of the MRS Diploma is English. The language of their assignment should be appropriate to both the task and the professional nature of the qualification.

### **Candidates whose first language is not English**

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

The English requirement for this course is Cambridge English: Advanced Proficiency 175 with no less than 162 in each component or equivalent. All candidates must have a good command of written and spoken English.

### **Material for assignments**

In advance of each assessment session, MRS Qualifications will provide centres with copies of the assignment material and tasks for that particular session.

Material for Assignments will be provided in the form of an original proposal for a research project, along with a series of associated tasks.

### **Support for candidates**

Centres are encouraged to arrange a system of support to enable candidates to complete the assignments. The type of support, offered may vary from centre to centre. However, examples of the types of support systems on offer might include:

- a system of individualised tutorials;
- the provision by tutors of written feedback on draft sections of individual assignments;
- group discussions of the approaches chosen.

Any feedback provided by the tutor team should be constructive in highlighting the strengths and weaknesses in initial drafts, but not so detailed that the final draft is a result of tutor, rather than candidate, effort. Each centre is encouraged to include in the assignment guidelines an indication of the amount and type of support which candidates will receive towards the completion of the assignments.

### **Assessment of assignments**

All assignments in Unit 2 are externally assessed and subject to external moderation. Full details of the administrative processes which centres should follow to submit coursework assignments for assessment are included in the MRS Diploma Admin Handbook.

The assessment criteria for each assignment are included in the assignment specifications. In addition, the following level descriptors provide guidance for the expected depth and range which are expected to be demonstrated at pass, distinction and fail grades in the following areas:

- knowledge & understanding
- intellectual & subject skills
- values & attitudes
- presentation & transferable skills

## Assessment Level Descriptors

The following table provides guidance on the levels of attainment for all Units.

The document should be read alongside the Assessment Specifications and Criteria for each assignment in this unit. The Specifications & Criteria provide guidance on the core information required by each assignment.

	<b>Fail</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>Distinction</b>
	<b><i>The candidate's work</i></b>	<b><i>The candidate's work</i></b>	<b><i>The candidate's work</i></b>
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates limited understanding of principles, key concepts, issues and theoretical approaches relevant to the subject</li> <li>demonstrates limited awareness of the of the subject in both breadth and depth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an awareness of the underlying principles, key concepts, issues and theoretical approaches relevant to the subject.</li> <li>demonstrates an adequate understanding of both the range and depth of the subject.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of principles, key concepts, issues and theoretical approaches relevant to the subject.</li> <li>demonstrates a thorough understanding of the subject in both breadth and depth.</li> </ul>
<b>Skills (Intellectual/Subject)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates limited judgement in analysing routine issues for presenting ideas.</li> <li>may offer a personal and unsubstantiated point of view, with limited reference to sources and limited use of examples.</li> <li>may demonstrate little or no connection between subject knowledge and the candidate's professional practice when required to do so.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an ability to critically analyse the relationships between differing arguments and evidence</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to examine and evaluate a range of sources, research methods and strategies and assess the appropriateness of their use</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to advocate a point of view and exercise critical judgement with good use of examples</li> <li>demonstrates evidence of familiarity with primary and secondary sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates evidence of clear and original thought, and of critical thinking</li> <li>draws on and uses a wide range of knowledge to address questions</li> <li>analyses concepts and theories and applies them to issues of practice in a systematic way</li> <li>draws appropriately on a range sources.</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate the significance and limitations of theory and practice</li> <li>demonstrates an appreciation of alternative and competing methodological choices</li> <li>where appropriate, shows evidence of advanced</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate, demonstrates evidence of the candidate's ability to make connections between aspects of subject knowledge and their professional practice</li> </ul>	professional competence
<b>Values &amp; attitudes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates little or no evidence of critical awareness of the wider social, political and/or economic implications, relevant to market and/or social research practices when required to do so</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• demonstrates some evidence of critical awareness of the wider social, political and/or economic implications, relevant to market and/or social research practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• demonstrates a high level of critical awareness of the wider social, political and/or economic implications, relevant to market and/or social research practices</li> </ul>

## **UNIT 3: ANALYSING & INTERPRETING QUANTITATIVE MARKET & SOCIAL RESEARCH DATA**

### **Syllabus Outline**

#### **1. Aims**

The aims and objectives of Unit 3 are to equip participants with an understanding of a range of approaches to the analysis and interpretation of quantitative market and/or social research data. The unit also seeks to enable participants to develop their skills in applying a range of appropriate techniques for the analysis and interpretation of data.

Designed to parallel Unit 4 (Collecting, Analysing & Interpreting Qualitative Market & Social Research Data) in the aim to extend participants' understanding of, and skill in the application of, a range of approaches to analysing and interpreting data. Unit 3 combines a focus on the principles which underpin effective analysis and interpretation of quantitative market and/or social research data with a practical element which requires participants to apply relevant techniques in practice.

This unit will enable experienced market and social researchers to analyse, evaluate and critique existing research practice and identify areas for their own professional development. This will be achieved through a focus on the 6 following areas:

- The principles of quantitative data analysis
- Sampling approaches
- Generalising a sample's findings to its population
- Testing for differences between two or more groups
- Determining and interpreting associations among variables
- Explaining and predicting behaviour

#### **2. Learning outcomes – general overview**

The learning outcomes included in this unit cover a wide range of approaches and techniques for the effective analysis and interpretation of quantitative market and/or social research data. Participants who complete Unit 3 can be expected to have a level of understanding of these approaches and techniques to enable them to make informed choices at the analysis and interpretation stages of research projects. However, this unit does not focus on the expert use of particular techniques or software packages. Data is provided to allow clear demonstration of a proposed analysis strategy.

The learning outcomes for Unit 3 cover the 6 topic areas outlined above.

## **2.1 The principles of quantitative data analysis (10%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. identify and discuss the stages involved in preparing data for analysis
2. identify and discuss a range of strategies for data analysis
3. evaluate the choice of statistical techniques within given projects with specific research objectives.
4. apply to practice the principles which underpin the development of empirical generalisations

## **2.2 Sampling approaches (10%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. evaluate the appropriateness of sample design within a given project
2. discuss the procedures involved in determining sample size
3. evaluate the effects of sample design on estimate precision
4. discuss the concepts of bias and precision
5. evaluate the application of weighting procedures

## **2.3 Generalising a sample's findings to its population (20%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. identify and discuss the importance of statistical inference
2. discuss the importance of sampling error and sampling distributions
3. estimate a population mean or percentage
4. test a hypothesis about a population mean or percentage

## **2.4 Testing differences between two or more groups (20%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. explain how differences are used for market segmentation decisions
2. test the differences between two percentages or means for two independent groups
3. identify the need for, and interpret the results of, a range of statistical tests
4. identify the need for, and interpret the results of, Chi-squared analysis

## **2.5 Determining and interpreting associations among variables (20%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. identify and justify the need for identified associations between variables within a given research context
2. identify and justify the need for the reduction of data through a variety of types of analysis
3. select appropriate approaches to data reduction within a range of given research contexts

## **2.6 Explaining and predicting behaviour (20%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. discuss the relevance of prediction and explanation within given research contexts
2. evaluate the approaches taken to prediction and analysis within given research contexts
3. discuss the relevance of different approaches to measuring importance within given research contexts
4. evaluate the approaches taken to identifying importance and drivers within given research contexts

### 3. Syllabus content

The syllabus for this unit provides both the theoretical framework through which participants can examine, evaluate and critique approaches to analysing and interpreting data and receive guidance in the use of approaches and techniques.

This is the third unit which candidates need to complete within the qualification. Participants entering this unit are therefore expected to have a good working knowledge of a range of market and social research processes and techniques, and an understanding of the relation between theory and practice in the planning, implementation and delivery of research projects. Unit 3 will allow participants to explore and critique in greater depth the theoretical approaches and practical techniques associated with the analysis and interpretation of quantitative market and/or social research data and will enable them to develop their own skills in these areas.

The balance of weighting allocated to each of the 6 elements of the syllabus reflects the relation of theory to practice which underpins this unit. Although each element is represented as a discrete area, it should be noted this is simply to aid description and that there exist overlaps and interdependencies between the elements as they are described. Therefore, guidance for centres delivering this unit is contained in Section 4.

The relevance of each syllabus element described above to the unit as a whole is as follows:

#### **Element 1: The principles of quantitative data analysis**

This element provides an overview of the data analysis process and an introduction to the range of activities involved in analysing and interpreting data effectively in the context of a defined research project. The overall aim of this element, therefore, is to provide a clear introduction to and foundation for the learning outcomes encompassed in the following elements.

#### **Element 2: Sampling approaches**

This element addresses the decisions involved in designing sampling plans and determining sample size. Typically, marketing research studies subsets of the population in order to learn about the entire population. The overall aim of this element is to develop the knowledge and skills of candidates in the selection of these subsets.

#### **Element 3: Generalising a sample's findings to its population**

This element addresses the application of information about a sample to the wider population that the sample represents. The element covers statistical inference, reliability of estimates and hypothesis testing.

#### **Element 4: Testing differences between two or more groups**

This element provides an overview of methods used for determining the differences between groups of respondents. Such analysis is used for segmentation of a market into its constituent parts. The overall aim of this element is to address the analysis of variance and covariance.

### **Element 5: Determining and interpreting associations among variables**

This element considers associations between variables in a data set to explain the impact of one variable on another (for example the relationship between advertising spend and levels of awareness). The focus is on correlation, chi square analysis, the reduction of data through a variety of approaches to analysis.

### **Element 6: Explaining and predicting behaviour**

Marketing research is frequently used to explain consumer behaviour and to predict the likely future behaviour of different groupings. This element addresses the concepts of explanation and prediction, through a variety of techniques. The overall aim of this element is to ensure that participants understand the manner in which these techniques are applied and interpreted in order to understand and predict a range of behaviour.

## **4. Approach to delivery**

The learning outcomes for Unit 3 are intended to enable the participants to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the analysis and interpretation of quantitative market and/or social research data. Whilst the unit is not intended to enable practitioners to become expert data analysts, training providers are encouraged to integrate the knowledge-based and skills-based aims in order to allow participants to put theory into practice and to be able to identify, recommend and critique different research approaches.

It is envisaged that courses designed to deliver this element should allow for discussion and practice through seminars and workshops, rather than be based on a lecture format. The formative element of skills workshops will help to prepare participants for the assessed component of this unit.

The following table provides guidance for suggested content for courses and programmes leading to the completion of Unit 3. This is not an exhaustive list of the items to be included in any programme of learning, but indicates items which can be considered as core within this unit.

## Guidance on realising the syllabus

	Learning outcomes	Indicative content
<b>Element 1</b> The principles of quantitative research design and data analysis (10%)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. discuss and critique research design</li> <li>2. identify and discuss the stages involved in preparing data for analysis</li> <li>3. identify and discuss a range of strategies for data analysis</li> <li>4. evaluate the choice of statistical techniques within given projects</li> <li>5. apply to practice the principles which underpin the development of empirical generalisations</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critiquing research design</li> <li>• Specification of significance tests on tabulations</li> <li>• Creation of derived variables</li> <li>• Identification of hypotheses to be tested within the data analysis</li> <li>• Creating a strategy for testing these hypotheses, detailing appropriate analysis techniques</li> </ul>
<b>Element 2</b> Sampling approaches (10%)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. evaluate the appropriateness of sample design within a given project</li> <li>2. discuss the procedures involved in determining sample size</li> <li>3. evaluate the effects of sample design on estimate precision</li> <li>4. discuss the concepts of bias and precision</li> <li>5. evaluate the application of weighting procedures</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approaches to sample design</li> <li>• Sampling PPS</li> <li>• Determining sample size</li> <li>• Strategies for minimizing bias</li> <li>• Approaches to weighting data</li> <li>• Cosmetic weighting</li> <li>• Correcting selection biases</li> <li>• Rim weighting</li> <li>• Matrix weighting</li> </ul>
<b>Element 3</b> Generalising survey results to the population (20%)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify and discuss the importance of statistical inference</li> <li>2. discuss the importance of sampling error and sampling distributions</li> <li>3. estimate a population mean or percentage</li> <li>4. test a hypothesis about a population mean or percentage</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimating the precision of survey estimates</li> <li>• standard errors and confidence intervals</li> <li>• Undertaking significance tests</li> <li>• Understand how to use and interpret Analysis of Variance to identify survey differences</li> </ul>

	Learning outcomes	Indicative content
<b>Element 4</b> Testing differences between two or more groups (20%)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. discuss the use of 'differences' in market segmentation decisions</li> <li>2. test the differences between two percentages or means for two independent groups</li> <li>3. identify the need for, and interpret the results of, a range of statistical tests</li> <li>4. identify the need for, and interpret the results of, Chi-squared analysis</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principles, benefits, uses and limitations of a range of analysis techniques, e.g.</li> <li>• Chi-square analysis</li> <li>• ANOVA</li> <li>• Z test</li> <li>• t test</li> </ul>
<b>Element 5</b> Determining and interpreting associations among variables (20%)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify and justify the need to identify associations between variables within a given research context</li> <li>2. identify and justify the need for the reduction of data through a variety of types of analysis</li> <li>3. select appropriate approaches to data reduction within a range of given research contexts</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principles, benefits, uses and limitations of a range of techniques for identifying relationships between variables, e.g.</li> <li>• Correlation &amp; regression analysis</li> <li>• Multivariate approaches, e.g.</li> <li>• Factor analysis</li> <li>• Cluster analysis</li> <li>• Correspondence analysis</li> <li>• Correlation analysis</li> <li>• Tradeoff / conjoint analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Element 6</b> Explaining and predicting behaviour (20%)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. discuss the relevance of prediction and explanation within given research contexts</li> <li>2. evaluate the approaches taken to prediction and explanation within given research contexts</li> <li>3. discuss the relevance of different approaches to measuring importance within given research contexts</li> <li>4. evaluate the approaches taken to identifying importance and drivers within given research contexts</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principles, benefits, uses and limitations of a range of approaches to explaining and predicting behaviour, e.g.</li> <li>• Correlation &amp; regression</li> <li>• CHAID / decision tree analysis</li> <li>• Discriminant analysis</li> <li>• Tradeoff/conjoint analysis</li> </ul>

## 5. Recommended support materials

Much of the recommended reading for this unit is drawn from the Sage Publications series: Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences. These texts provide guidance on specific texts.

### General Guidance

Chakrapani, C	2004 Statistics in market research	London; Arnold
Ehrenberg		
Hague, P,	2004 Market research in practice	London; Kogan
Hague N, &		Page
Morgan C		
Wright, D &	2002 First steps in statistics	London; Sage
Bryman, A		

### Texts on specific techniques

Blaikie, N	2003 Analysing quantitative data	London; Sage
Chen, P.Y	2002 Correlation	London; Sage
Clausen, S. E	Applied correspondence analysis	London; Sage
Hardy, M	2004 Handbook of data analysis	London; Sage
Barbara G.	2006 Using Multivariate Statistics International	US; Pearson
Tabachnick,	Edition	Education
Linda S. Fidell	5th Edition (Does not cover Cluster Analysis)	
Smithson, M. J	2003 Confidence intervals	London; Sage

### Data Sets

Centres are encouraged to provide access to a range of data sets to enable candidates to practise analysis techniques. Quantitative data sets are available for study purposes from a wide range of data archives, most notably:

UK Data Archive (UKDA) <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/find/archive-catalogue>  
Economic and Social Data Service <http://www.esds.ac.uk/search/searchStart.asp>

### Supplementary materials

#### Codes, guidelines & legislation

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

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

The Market Research Society ( <a href="http://www.mrs.org.uk">www.mrs.org.uk</a> )	Access to guidelines covering a wide range of research practice
ESOMAR ( <a href="http://www.esomar.org">www.esomar.org</a> )	Access to ESOMAR guidelines covering a wide range of ethical issues
Social Research Association ( <a href="http://www.the-sra.org.uk">www.the-sra.org.uk</a> )	Access to guidance covering social research issues
Mystery Shopping Providers Association ( <a href="http://www.mysteryshopping.org">www.mysteryshopping.org</a> )	Access to guidance on mystery shopping



World Association for Opinion Research  
([www.unl.edu/WAPOR](http://www.unl.edu/WAPOR))

Access to guidance on opinion  
research

Research Buyer's Guide  
(<http://www.rbg.org.uk/>)

For links to global research  
bodies

Research-live ([www.research-live.com](http://www.research-live.com))

For articles about industry news

## **Journals and Publications**

### **The International Journal of Market Research (WARC)**

Bi-monthly journal providing reports on a wide range of current and developing practice.

### **Impact Magazine (MRS)**

Quarterly magazine - Gain from insight and strategy studies to global trends, and with sections on technology, science and the law.

## UNIT 3: ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATIONS & GUIDELINES

### 6. Introduction

The assessment for this unit requires candidates to apply their understanding of theoretical principles to the practical tasks of

- evaluating the appropriateness of research design including sample to given research objectives; and
- selecting and/or evaluating approaches to the analysis, design and interpretation of the resulting quantitative data.

### 7. Mode of assessment

This unit is assessed by assignment and is externally assessed and externally moderated.

### 8. Format of assignment

The Unit 3 assignment requires candidates to complete a series of tasks, based on a quantitative dataset. Task requirements are supplied to centres in advance of the assessment session for which candidates are registered. The datasets on which the tasks are based are selected by MRS Qualifications and will normally be drawn from UK data archives.

The Dataset is normally provided in SPSS, TAB & STATA files.

Where the dataset has been drawn from a national archive, due to data protection requirements MRS is unable to reproduce the data for distribution to candidates. Centres/Candidates will be informed of the name/reference number of the data set and it will be the responsibility of candidates to access the data files via the UK Data Archive/ESDS. This will require centres to conform to data protection requirements governing the use of the material. It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that all data protection requirements are followed, both by the centre and the candidates. This will therefore require the centre to register with the UK Data Archive [www.data-archive.ac.uk](http://www.data-archive.ac.uk),

Two assignment titles (including tasks and accompanying dataset) are set annually, one in April (for submission in June) and one in October (for submission in December). Candidates are given 8 weeks to complete the assessment.

Further guidance for centres can be found in Appendix 1.

### 9. Assignment specifications

Each task is designed to be completed in essay format, and should address the issues detailed in the specifications table for that task. Copies of task specifications can be obtained from your centre.

The total word count for all four tasks should fall between 5000 – 6750 words (excluding appendices). Appendices of material used to illustrate points made within the assignment may be included if you feel these are necessary. However, appendices should not be used to extend the word limit. Analysis of the dataset to demonstrate a statistical technique can be given; however, this is not a requirement.

## 10. Assessment weighting

The tasks are weighted in accordance with the weighting ascribed to each area within the syllabus description and also with the level of analysis required within each assignment.

Task 1	30% of total
Task 2	30% of total
Task 3	20% of total
Task 4	20% of total
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Task Specifications

The specific tasks set vary in relation to the dataset selected, however, candidates are expected to demonstrate that they can:

- evaluate and critique the research design
- evaluate the sampling approach and sample size in relation to the stated research objectives;
- evaluate the approaches taken to the analysis of the given data; or
- make justified recommendations for the analysis of the data, using identified approaches
- evaluate the approaches taken to the interpretation of the given information; or
- make recommendations for the interpretation of the information in relation to the research objectives

Content Specifications	Relevant Learning Outcomes
Candidates should:	Tasks will draw on at least 80% of the learning outcomes for this unit. The table below provides an indication of the ways in which learning outcomes may link to tasks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe briefly the research objectives and evaluate the research design and rationale for the collection of quantitative data within this context</li> <li>• describe and evaluate the approach taken to sampling for the data collection stage</li> <li>• evaluate the appropriateness of the achieved sample in relation to the research objectives</li> </ul>	Learning outcomes in syllabus sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe and evaluate the approaches chosen for analysing the data. This evaluation should reflect the candidate's understanding of appropriate theoretical models.</li> </ul>	Learning outcomes in syllabus sections 2.1 and 2.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and evaluate the usefulness of the statistical tests applied to the data</li> <li>• and/or</li> <li>• identify statistical tests which might be applied to the data in order to address the research objectives, and provide a clear rationale for their selection</li> </ul>	Learning outcomes in syllabus section 2.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluate the usefulness of the approach taken to data reduction in proving associations between variables</li> <li>• and/or</li> <li>• identify a range of variables from within the data set and discuss the possible associations between them</li> </ul>	Learning outcomes in syllabus section 2.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluate the usefulness of the approach taken to the prediction or explanation of behaviour based on the data</li> </ul> and/or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and discuss an appropriate approach to the prediction or explanation of behaviour which might result from the analysis of the data</li> </ul>	Learning outcomes in syllabus section 2.6

## Assessment Criteria

At PASS level, the candidate can	At DISTINCTION level
<p>Present an assignment which is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) written in a style which is accurate, clearly ordered and does not impose a strain on the reader</li> <li>b) uses appropriate terminology accurately</li> <li>c) makes appropriate references to sources in the text</li> <li>d) contains a reference bibliography</li> </ul>	<p>The candidate meets the criteria specified opposite AND can provide evidence of being outstanding in a minimum of two of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) depth of insight into the effects of sampling approach and/or sample size on the data</li> <li>b) depth of insight into the strengths and potential weaknesses of the analysis in relation to the research objectives</li> <li>c) range and appropriateness of techniques recommended for the analysis of the data</li> <li>d) depth of insight into the range of information embedded in the data</li> <li>e) range and appropriateness of techniques used in the interpretation of the findings</li> </ul>
<p>Demonstrate their understanding of the links between sampling and the robustness of data by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) identifying accurately the need for quantitative data in the given context</li> <li>b) identifying clearly the strengths and weaknesses of the choice of approach taken to sampling in relation to the stated research objectives</li> <li>c) identifying and evaluating the impact of the achieved sample on the resulting data in relation to the stated research objectives</li> </ul>	
<p>Demonstrate their understanding of the effective analysis of quantitative data by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) identifying and providing an evaluation of the approach taken to the analysis of the data used in the analysis process</li> <li>b) identifying and explaining the usefulness to the research objectives of the statistical tests which have been applied to the data and/or</li> <li>c) identifying and providing a clear rationale for the choice of statistical tests which may be applied to the data in order to address research objectives</li> </ul>	
<p>Demonstrate their understanding of and ability to apply appropriate approaches to interpretation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) providing interpretation(s) of the findings which are supported by evidence in the data</li> <li>b) providing an informed assessment of the usefulness of the analysis and interpretation in relation to the needs of the research project</li> </ul>	

## APPENDIX 1: GUIDANCE FOR CENTRES ON ASSESSMENT

### Guidance for the assignment

The centre is encouraged to provide candidates with written guidance on the requirements of the assignment, including:

- format
- length, layout & language
- assessment of assignment
- access to materials (data set etc)
- submission dates/deadlines

In cases where the dataset to be examined is part of a national archive, centres should ensure that candidates have appropriate access to the dataset. This may include ensuring that candidates have guidance on how to register for individual use of the data in question.

### Format

The assignment is designed to be completed in essay format, and should address the issues detailed in the specifications table for that assignment.

The assignment should be printed on A4 white paper, with a one inch margin around the text. Text size should ideally be 11pt.

Candidates should ensure that each section within the assignment is easy to read by:

- using headings and bullet points effectively.
- avoiding over-brief note form. If you include notes, you should ensure they make your points clearly and overtly.
- ensuring that your use of English is clear, accurate and appropriate to a client audience.

The assignment should be secured with a staple in the top left hand corner. Candidates must not bind their assignment by any other means.

Candidates are required to present 3 hard copies of the assignment in its final form for formal assessment to your centre co-ordinator by the centre's specified deadline. All copies must include an Assignment Cover Sheet. 1 copy of your assignment must be retained by the centre, the remaining 2 copies must be sent to the MRS for external assessment.

### Assignment length, layout & language

The centre's assignment guidelines should contain guidance on word limits and on layout.

The total word count for assignments in Unit 3 should fall between 5000 - 6750 words (excluding appendices). Centres should ensure that candidates understand the importance of respecting the word limit. Appendices may be included if the candidate feels that it is necessary to illustrate points made in the assignment. However, appendices should not be used to extend the word limit by adding additional information not discussed in the body of the text.

Centres should provide appropriate guidance for the layout of assignment. In particular, candidates should be made aware of the importance of signposting (i.e. the appropriate use of heading, bullet points etc.). Guidance should also be given to ensure any note form used makes clear the candidate's rationale for his/her choice of approaches. It should be noted that abbreviated note form can obscure the level of analysis which the candidate has undertaken to arrive at the points which s/he has made.

The language used in all assessed components of the MRS Diploma is English. The language of their assignment should be appropriate to both the task and the professional nature of the qualification.

### **Candidates whose first language is not English**

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

The English requirement for this course is Cambridge English: Advanced Proficiency 175 with no less than 162 in each component or equivalent. All candidates must have a good command of written and spoken English.

### **Material for Unit 3 assignments**

Material for this assignment includes a set of quantitative data collected in the context of a market or social research project. This material is selected by MRS Qualifications and will normally be drawn from UK data archives. This may require centres to conform to data protection requirements governing the use of the material. It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that all data protection requirements are followed, both by the centre and the candidates.

### **Support for candidates**

Centres are encouraged to arrange a system of support to enable candidates to complete the assignments. The type of support, offered may vary from centre to centre. However, examples of the types of support systems on offer might include:

- a system of individualised tutorials;
- the provision by tutors of written feedback on draft sections of individual assignments;
- group discussions of the approaches chosen.

Any feedback provided by the tutor team should be constructive in highlighting the strengths and weaknesses in initial drafts, but not so detailed that the final draft is a result of tutor, rather than candidate, effort. Each centre is encouraged to include in the assignment guidelines an indication of the amount and type of support which candidates will receive towards the completion of the assignments.

### **Assessment of assignments**

Assignments in Unit 3 are externally assessed and subject to external moderation. Full details of the administrative processes which centres should follow to submit coursework assignments for assessment are included in the MRS Diploma Admin Handbook.

The assessment criteria for each assignment are included in the assignment specifications. In addition, the following level descriptors provide guidance for the expected depth and range which are expected to be demonstrated at pass, distinction and fail grades in the following areas:

- knowledge & understanding
- intellectual & subject skills
- values & attitudes
- presentation & transferable skills

## Assessment Level Descriptors

The following table provides guidance on the levels of attainment for all Units.

The document should be read alongside the Assessment Specifications and Criteria for each assignment in this unit. The Specifications & Criteria provide guidance on the core information required by each assignment.

	<b>Fail</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>Distinction</b>
	<b><i>The candidate's work</i></b>	<b><i>The candidate's work</i></b>	<b><i>The candidate's work</i></b>
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates limited understanding of principles, key concepts, issues and theoretical approaches relevant to the subject</li> <li>demonstrates limited awareness of the of the subject in both breadth and depth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate s an awareness of the underlying principles, key concepts, issues and theoretical approaches relevant to the subject.</li> <li>demonstrate s an adequate understanding of both the range and depth of the subject.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of principles, key concepts, issues and theoretical approaches relevant to the subject.</li> <li>demonstrates a thorough understanding of the subject in both breadth and depth.</li> </ul>
<b>Skills (Intellectual/Subject)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates limited judgement in analysing routine issues for presenting ideas.</li> <li>may offer a personal and unsubstantiated point of view, with limited reference to sources and limited use of examples.</li> <li>may demonstrate little or no connection between subject knowledge and the candidate's professional practice when</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate s an ability to critically analyse the relationships between differing arguments and evidence</li> <li>demonstrate s the ability to examine and evaluate a range of sources, research methods and strategies and assess the appropriateness of their use</li> <li>demonstrate s the ability to advocate a point of view and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates evidence of clear and original thought, and of critical thinking</li> <li>draws on and uses a wide range of knowledge to address questions</li> <li>analyses concepts and theories and applies them to issues of practice in a systematic way</li> <li>draws appropriately on a range sources.</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate the significance and</li> </ul>



	required to do so.	<p>exercise critical judgement with good use of examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate s evidence of familiarity with primary and secondary sources.</li> <li>• where appropriate, demonstrate s evidence of the candidate's ability to make connections between aspects of subject knowledge and their professional practice</li> </ul>	<p>limitations of theory and practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates an appreciation of alternative and competing methodological choices</li> <li>• where appropriate, shows evidence of advanced professional competence</li> </ul>
<b>Values &amp; attitudes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates little or no evidence of critical awareness of the wider social, political and/or economic implications, relevant to market and/or social research practices when required to do so</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• demonstrate s some evidence of critical awareness of the wider social, political and/or economic implications, relevant to market and/or social research practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• demonstrates a high level of critical awareness of the wider social, political and/or economic implications, relevant to market and/or social research practices</li> </ul>

<p><b>Presentation &amp; transferable skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• makes inappropriate or very limited use of specialist terminology</li> <li>• demonstrates limited or no evidence of the ability to interpret and/or present data in a format which is appropriate to the task</li> <li>• presents information in a manner which does not reflect a coherent structure and which may impede the reader's understanding</li> <li>• is written in a style which is inappropriate to the task and which puts strain on the reader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• makes generally appropriate use of specialist terminology</li> <li>• demonstrates the ability to interpret and/or present data in a format which is appropriate to the task.</li> <li>• presents information within a generally coherent structure which does not impede the reader's understanding</li> <li>• provides generally clear, consistent and accurate referencing</li> <li>• is written in a style which is appropriate to the task and puts little or no strain on the reader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• makes effective and appropriate use of specialist terminology</li> <li>• demonstrates a well-developed ability to interpret and/or present data in a variety of forms and in a critical and constructive way.</li> <li>• presents arguments and information in a logical, coherent and creative in order to assist the reader's understanding</li> <li>• provides clear, consistent and accurate referencing</li> <li>• is written in a style which is appropriate to the task and puts no strain on the reader</li> </ul>
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## **UNIT 4: COLLECTING, ANALYSING & INTERPRETING QUALITATIVE MARKET & SOCIAL RESEARCH DATA**

### **Syllabus Outline**

#### **1. Aims**

The aims and objectives of Unit 4 are to equip participants with an understanding of the interconnection between the collection, analysis and interpretation of qualitative data and the impact of this interconnection on the analysis and interpretation process. The unit also seeks to enable participants to develop their skills in applying a range of appropriate techniques for the collection, analysis and interpretation of data.

Designed to parallel Unit 3 (Analysing & Interpreting Quantitative Market & Social Research Data) in its aim to extend participants' understanding of, and skill in the application of, a range of approaches to analysing and interpreting data, Unit 4 combines a focus on the principles which underpin effective collection, analysis and interpretation of qualitative data with a practical element which requires participants to apply relevant techniques in practice.

This unit will enable experienced market researchers to analyse and evaluate their practice and identify areas for their own professional development. This will be achieved through a focus on the 4 following areas:

- Process and content in qualitative data collection and analysis
- The qualitative researcher as the research instrument
- Techniques for maximising the quality of analysable qualitative data
- Techniques for managing qualitative data

#### **2. Learning Outcomes – General Overview**

The learning outcomes included in this unit cover a wide range of approaches and techniques for the effective collection, analysis and interpretation of qualitative data. Participants who complete this unit can be expected to have developed a wide range of both knowledge and skills to enable them to collect, analyse and interpret data in response to a set of given research objectives.

The learning outcomes for this unit cover the 4 topic areas outlined above.

## **2.1 Process and content in qualitative data collection & analysis (30%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. discuss the nature of analysable qualitative data
2. identify and discuss sources of qualitative knowledge
3. evaluate a range of theories which underpin the interpretation of qualitative data
4. discuss a range of theoretical models and their application to the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data
5. discuss the links between data collection and data analysis in qualitative research
6. discuss the influence of context on behaviour and attitude in relation to qualitative research

## **2.2 The Qualitative Researcher as the Research Instrument (10%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. discuss the roles of the researcher in eliciting analysable qualitative data
2. discuss the principles of hypothesis building in the data collection process
3. identify and discuss issues relating to potential bias in the collection and analysis of qualitative data
4. use effectively a range of techniques for collecting analysable data
5. ensure that data is collected in accordance with the MRS Code of Conduct

## **2.3 Techniques for maximising the quality of analysable qualitative data (30%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. discuss the roles of sample design and recruitment in producing analysable qualitative data
2. produce plans for effective qualitative data collection for specified projects
3. manage a group of respondents to minimise bias and unwanted influence of process
4. elicit and record appropriate qualitative data in relation to specified projects

## **2.4 Techniques for managing qualitative data (30%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. evaluate the quality of data collected in relation to specified projects
2. use a range of techniques for the analysis of a qualitative data set
3. apply a range of techniques for interpretation at micro and macro level
4. apply pre-existing underpinning theories to derive meaning from a qualitative data set
5. create emergent models to explain meaning
6. apply a range of tests to assess the quality of analysis of qualitative data

### 3. Syllabus Content

The syllabus for Unit 4 provides both the theoretical framework through which participants can examine and evaluate approaches to collecting, analysing and interpreting data and guidance in the use of approaches and techniques.

This is the third unit which participants will have completed within the qualification. Participants entering this unit are therefore expected to have a good working knowledge of a range of market and social research processes and techniques, and an understanding of the relation between theory and practice in the planning, implementation and delivery of research projects. Unit 4 will allow participants to explore in greater depth the theoretical approaches and practical techniques associated with the collection, analysis and interpretation of qualitative data and will enable them to develop their own practical skills in these three areas.

The balance of weighting allocated to each of the 4 elements of the syllabus reflects the relation of theory to practice which underpins units in this unit. In this unit, elements 2.1 and 2.2 can be seen as providing the theoretical principles upon which elements 2.3 and 2.4 are built. Although each element is represented as a discrete area, it should be noted this is simply to aid description and that there exist overlaps and interdependencies between the elements as they are described. Therefore, guidance for centres delivering this unit is contained in Section 4.

The relevance of each syllabus element described above to the unit as a whole is as follows:

#### **Element 1: Process and content in qualitative data collection and analysis (30%)**

This element provides an introduction to and definition of qualitative data. Although qualitative research has been examined in Units 1 and 2, this has been in comparison with quantitative research. The role of this element of the syllabus, therefore, is to focus participants on the nature of qualitative data and the potential range and sources of this data, and to introduce a range of approaches to the interpretation of qualitative data. It should be noted that the processes involved in the collection and analysis of qualitative data are interdependent, with the moderator/interviewer being able to adapt their questioning as discussions progress. Therefore, this element also requires participants to examine the interdependence of the collection and analysis processes, and, in particular, to consider the ways in which inter-personal relationships can shape both the data collection and data analysis processes.

#### **Element 2: The Qualitative Researcher as the Research Instrument (10%)**

This element examines the inter-relation of collection and analysis from the perspective of the researcher as the research instrument. Participants are encouraged to examine how the researcher's interpersonal skills and thought processes direct the data collection and analysis processes, and to identify how researcher bias might adversely affect these processes. This element also focuses on the use and evaluation of a range of practical techniques for the collection of analysable qualitative data.

#### **Element 3: Techniques for maximising the quality of analysable qualitative data (30%)**

The focus of this element is the development of practical skills in relation to the collection and analysis of qualitative data. Participants are expected to apply the understanding gained in the more theoretical elements of the syllabus to a range of practical tasks in order to extend their range of existing skills in these areas and develop a reflective approach to that skill development.

#### **Element 4: Techniques for managing qualitative data (30%)**

The focus of this element is on the approaches and techniques involved in the interpretation of qualitative data. As with 3.4, the aim of this element is to enable the participants to develop or

extend their range of practical skills. By completing this element of the syllabus, the participants should be able to undertake the effective interpretation of data in relation to specified projects.

#### **4. Approach to delivery**

The learning outcomes for this unit are intended to enable the participants to develop both knowledge and skills in relation to the collection, analysis and interpretation of qualitative data.

The learning outcomes incorporated into this unit are necessarily categorised according to the unit outline above. However, given the interdependent nature of the collection and analysis of qualitative data, providers of programmes of learning are recommended to take an integrative approach to the coverage of these outcomes, i.e. that individual sessions or blocks of learning should integrate learning outcomes from across the categories rather than deliver each group as distinct and separate from the others.

It is envisaged that courses designed to deliver this element should allow for discussion and practice through seminars and workshops, rather than be based on a lecture format. The formative element of skills workshops will help to prepare participants for the assessed component of this unit (see Section 5).

The following table provides guidance for suggested content for courses and programmes leading to the completion of Unit 4. This is not an exhaustive list of the items to be included in any programme of learning, but indicates items which can be considered as core within this unit.

## Guidance on realising the syllabus

	Learning outcomes	Indicative content
<p><b>Element 1</b></p> <p>Process and content in qualitative data collection &amp; analysis (30%)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. discuss the nature of analysable qualitative data</li> <li>2. identify and discuss sources of qualitative knowledge</li> <li>3. discuss a range of theories which underpin the interpretation of qualitative data</li> <li>4. discuss a range of theoretical models and their application to the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data</li> <li>5. discuss the links between data collection and data analysis in qualitative research</li> <li>6. understand and discuss the influence of context on behaviour and attitude in relation to qualitative research</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature of qualitative knowledge</li> <li>• Johari Window</li> <li>• Sources of qualitative knowledge: verbal &amp; non-verbal content; sequence; process</li> <li>• Research-based theories (e.g. link between behaviour, claimed behaviour &amp; attitude)</li> <li>• Psychology-based theories (e.g. cognitive dissonance; transactional analysis; Maslow)</li> <li>• Business/marketing based models (e.g. attribution theory; market segmentation; theories of consumerism &amp; consumption)</li> <li>• Theories of theory making and model creation: (grounded theory; top-down v. bottom-up approaches)</li> <li>• Data collection processes</li> <li>• Theories of 'how people are':</li> <li>• group think</li> <li>• context-dependent behaviour &amp; attitude</li> <li>• observational studies</li> </ul>
<p><b>Element 2</b></p> <p>The Qualitative Researcher as the Research Instrument (10%)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. discuss the roles of the researcher in eliciting analysable qualitative data</li> <li>2. discuss the principles of hypothesis building in the data collection process</li> <li>3. identify and discuss issues relating to potential bias in the collection and analysis of qualitative data</li> <li>4. use effectively a range of techniques for collecting analysable data</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The roles of the researcher in the process</li> <li>• The researcher as mediator between the client world and the respondent world</li> <li>• Hypothesis building (grounded theory; Hermeneutic circle)</li> <li>• Identifying interviewer-led bias in qualitative methods</li> <li>• Principles of non-directive questioning</li> </ul>

	Learning outcomes	Indicative content
<p><b>Element 3</b></p> <p>Techniques for maximising the quality of analysable qualitative data (30%)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. discuss the roles of sample design and recruitment in producing analysable qualitative data</li> <li>2. produce plans for effective qualitative data collection for specified projects</li> <li>3. manage a group of respondents to minimise bias and unwanted influence of process</li> <li>4. elicit and record appropriate qualitative data in relation to specified projects</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How sample design can enable effective analysis (e.g. to enable comparisons)</li> <li>• The role of good recruitment: selecting &amp; screening respondents</li> <li>• How to create an effective discussion guide and/or filed plan:</li> <li>• Process and content factors</li> <li>• Integrating client information needs and respondent capabilities</li> <li>• Managing group dynamics</li> <li>• Effective eliciting skills</li> </ul>
<p><b>Element 4</b></p> <p>Techniques for managing qualitative data (30%)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. evaluate the quality of data collected in relation to specified projects</li> <li>2. use a range of techniques for the analysis of a qualitative data set</li> <li>3. apply a range of techniques for interpretation at micro and macro level</li> <li>4. apply pre-existing underpinning theories to derive meaning from a qualitative data set</li> <li>5. create emergent models to explain meaning</li> <li>6. apply a range of tests to assess the quality of analysis of qualitative data</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis operations, e.g.:</li> <li>• revisiting tapes, transcripts etc</li> <li>• sorting/categorising/making displays</li> <li>• comparing and contrasting sub-groups</li> <li>• Interpretative activities</li> <li>• Techniques for micro- and macro-level interpretation</li> <li>• Applying pre-existing theories to derive meaning</li> <li>• Creating 'bespoke' or emergent models to explain meaning</li> <li>• Tests of quality in analysis of qualitative data</li> <li>• Working with hermeneutic circles</li> <li>• Internal &amp; external fits</li> <li>• Credibility, dependability &amp; transfer</li> </ul>



## 5. Recommended Support Materials

### Core Reading

Gordon, W	1999	Goodthinking - A guide to qualitative research	ADMAP
Keegan, S	2009	Qualitative Research - Good Decision Making Through Understanding People, Cultures and Markets	Kogan Page Ltd
Silverman, D	2001	Interpreting Qualitative Data	London; Sage
Smith, DVL & Fletcher, J	2001	Inside information - making sense of marketing data	Chichester; Wiley

### Recommended Reading

Brüggen, E & Willems, P	2009	A critical comparison of offline focus groups, online focus groups and e-Delphi	International Journal of Market Research, 51 (3): 363-381
Cassell, C & Symon, G	2004	Essential guide to qualitative methods in organisational research	London; Sage
Commons, M	2006	Innovative approaches designing the right way	Proceedings of ESOMAR Qualitative Conference: 64-73
Goulding, C	2002	Grounded theory: a practical guide for management, business and market researchers	London; Sage
Imms, M & Callingham, M	2002	Qualitative market research - principle & practice	London; Sage
Lewis, Jane	2003	Evaluating qualitative research	Report of National Centre for Social Research for the Cabinet Office. (www.number-10.gov.uk/su/quality/index.htm)
Lillis, G	2002	Delivering results in qualitative market research: Volume 7 of Ereaut	London; Sage
Luck, M, Pocock, R & Tricker, M	2000	Market research in health & social care	London, Routledge
Potter, J & Puchta, C	2004	Focus Group Practice	London; Sage

## Supplementary materials

### Codes, guidelines & legislation

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

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

The Market Research Society ( <a href="http://www.mrs.org.uk">www.mrs.org.uk</a> )	Access to guidelines covering a wide Range of research practice
Association for Qualitative Research ( <a href="http://www.aqr.org.uk">www.aqr.org.uk</a> )	Access to guidelines and general advice
ESOMAR ( <a href="http://www.esomar.org">www.esomar.org</a> )	Access to ESOMAR guidelines covering a wide range of ethical issues
Social Research Association ( <a href="http://www.the-sra.org.uk">www.the-sra.org.uk</a> )	Access to guidance covering social research issues
Mystery Shopping Providers Association ( <a href="http://www.mysteryshopping.org">www.mysteryshopping.org</a> )	Access to guidance on mystery shopping
World Association for Opinion Research ( <a href="http://www.unl.edu/WAPOR">www.unl.edu/WAPOR</a> )	Access to guidance on opinion research
Research Buyer's Guide ( <a href="http://www.rbg.org.uk/">http://www.rbg.org.uk/</a> )	For links to global research bodies.
Research-live ( <a href="http://www.research-live.com">www.research-live.com</a> )	For articles about industry news

## Journals and Publications

### The International Journal of Market Research (WARC)

Bi-monthly journal providing reports on a wide range of current and developing practice.

### Impact Magazine (MRS)

Quarterly magazine - Gain from insight and strategy studies to global trends, and with sections on technology, science and the law.

## UNIT 4: ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATIONS & GUIDELINES

### 6. Introduction

The assessment for this unit requires candidates to apply their understanding of theoretical principles to the practical tasks of collecting, analysing and interpreting qualitative data. Candidates are also expected to be able to evaluate and critique their choices for the practical tasks.

### 7. Mode of assessment

Candidates are required to complete one assignment which is externally assessed and externally moderated.

### 8. Format of assignment

Centres should provide or give approval for a research task around which the collection, analysis and interpretation of data should be based.

Candidates are expected to moderate a minimum of one focus group or conduct a minimum of four depth interviews for the purposes of this assignment. **Groups or depth interviews should be conducted face to face.**

Centres are responsible for designing assignment titles and guidance which relate directly to the learning outcomes from the syllabus document and specified in these guidelines.

Guidance for centres on the assignment titles and assessment can be found in Appendix 1. There are two submission dates annually to MRS - June and December. Assignment guidelines are distributed to registered candidates in April for the June assessment round and October for the December assessment round. Candidates have 8 weeks in which to complete and submit the assignment.

### 9. Assignment length

5,000 – 6,750 words.

Topic guides and transcribed data should be included in Appendices. Please note that MRS cannot accept digital, audio or video recordings of interviews or focus groups.

## Assignment Specifications

The candidate is expected to review, evaluate and critique a qualitative research process with which the candidate has been involved. The assignment should cover the following areas:

- the collection of qualitative data in relation to the stated research objectives;
- the analysis of the resultant data, using identified approaches;
- the interpretation of the information in relation to the research objectives.
- evaluation of the research, and critical assessment of the outcomes
- identification of alternative approaches to address any research failings

The candidate need not have been involved in the design or planning of the overall research project. However, the candidate must be fully appraised of the research objectives and the data needs of the project.

The assignments need not follow the ordering suggested in this grid. However, assessors should be able to map the assignment contents against the specifications detailed below.

Content Specifications	Relevant Learning Outcomes
Candidates should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe briefly the research objectives and justify and evaluate the rationale for the collection of qualitative detail within this context</li> <li>• describe, and evaluate the approach taken for the recruitment of respondents for the data collection stage</li> <li>• describe and evaluate the approach(es) used to conduct the data collection</li> <li>• identify and discuss any ethical issues arising from the decisions described above</li> <li>• provide evidence of having moderated at least one focus group or having conducted at least four depth interviews</li> </ul>	2.1.1; 2.1.2  2.3.1;  2.2.1; 2.2.2; 2.2.3; 2.2.4  2.3.2; 2.3.3; 2.3.4  2.2.5;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe and evaluate the approaches chosen for analysing the data following the data collection stage. This evaluation should reflect the candidate's understanding of appropriate theoretical models.</li> <li>• provide evidence of having analysed the data using the stated approaches</li> </ul>	2.1.4; 2.1.5; 2.1.6; 2.2.3; 2.5.4; 2.5.5  2.4.1; 2.4.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe and evaluate the approach(es) chosen for the interpretation of the data following analysis</li> <li>• demonstrate the application of the approaches identified above to the information gained in the analysis stages</li> <li>• describe and evaluate the approach(es) taken to test the analysis and interpretation in relation to the research objectives</li> <li>• illustrate the validity of the approach taken to interpretation by relating examples from the data collected to the research objectives</li> </ul>	2.1.3; 2.1.4  2.4.3; 2.4.4; 2.4.5  2.4.6  2.4.1

## Assignment Requirements

Candidates should submit the following as appendices to the assignment:

- a summary of the context, aims and objectives of the research project. (This may be in the form of brief which the centre has provided.)
- any data collection plans produced by the candidate
- any topic guide or questions used in the data collection. If substantial changes have been made to the topic guide/questions during the process of data collection, these should be indicated on the topic guide.
- transcriptions of the data referred to in the body of the assignment. (These transcriptions may be annotated to highlight areas which have been discussed in the assignment.)
- any analytical notes referred to in the body of the assignment (e.g. case/respondent summaries, analysis sheets, grids, maps, diagrams)
- a brief description of any stimulus materials used (N.B. Originals or copies of stimulus material should not be included in the submission to MRS).

## Assessment Criteria

At PASS level, the candidate can	At DISTINCTION level
<p>Present an assignment which is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) written in a style which is accurate, clearly ordered and does not impose a strain on the reader</li> <li>b) uses appropriate terminology accurately</li> <li>c) makes appropriate references to sources in the text</li> <li>d) contains a reference bibliography</li> </ul>	<p>The candidate meets the criteria specified opposite AND can provide evidence of being outstanding in a minimum of two of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) range and appropriateness of techniques used in the collection of the data</li> <li>b) range and appropriateness of techniques used in the analysis of the data</li> <li>c) depth of insight into the range of information embedded in the data</li> <li>d) range and appropriateness of techniques used in the interpretation of the findings</li> <li>e) depth of insight into the strengths and potential weaknesses of the</li> </ul>
<p>Demonstrate their understanding of the processes used in the collection of qualitative data by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) identifying accurately the need for qualitative data in the given context</li> <li>b) providing a clear rationale for the approach taken to the recruitment of respondents</li> <li>c) identifying and providing a clear rationale for the approaches they used in their role of moderator/ interviewer during the data collection stage</li> <li>d) providing evidence that the data was collected in accordance with the MRS Code of Conduct</li> </ul>	

<p>Demonstrate their understanding of the effective analysis of qualitative data by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) identifying and providing a clear rationale for the range of techniques used in the analysis process</li> <li>b) cross referencing clearly the data being discussed with the transcription in the appendix</li> <li>c) identifying the main results of the analysis process</li> </ul>	<p>analysis and interpretation in relation to the research objectives</p>
<p>Demonstrate their understanding of and ability to apply appropriate approaches to interpretation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) identifying and providing a clear rationale for their choice of approaches to interpretation</li> <li>b) providing interpretation(s) of the findings which are supported by evidence in the data</li> <li>c) providing an informed assessment of the usefulness of the analysis and interpretation in relation to the needs of the research project</li> </ul>	

## APPENDIX 1: GUIDANCE FOR CENTRES ON ASSESSMENT

### Setting the assignment

The centre should develop its own assignment guidelines for candidates, covering the following areas:

- format
- length, layout & language
- the material on which the assignment should be based
- assessment of assignments

Centres must submit the guidelines for assignments to MRS for approval before setting the assignments.

### Format

Assignments for Unit 4 should be presented in an appropriate report format, and should address the issues detailed in the specifications table for that assignment. The centre should provide guidance on the sections and type of information expected within each assignment.

The assignment should be printed on A4 white paper, with a one inch margin around the text. Text size should ideally be 11pt.

Candidates should ensure that each section within the assignment is easy to read by:

- using headings and bullet points effectively.
- avoiding over-brief note form. If you include notes, you should ensure they make your points clearly and overtly.
- ensuring that your use of English is clear, accurate and appropriate to a client

The assignment should be secured with a staple in the top left hand corner. Candidates must not bind their assignment by any other means.

Candidates are required to present 3 hard copies of the assignment in its final form for formal assessment to your centre co-ordinator by the centre's specified deadline. All copies must include an Assignment Cover Sheet. 1 copy of your assignment must be retained by the centre, the remaining 2 copies must be sent to the MRS for external assessment.

### Assignment length, layout & language

The centre's assignment guidelines should contain guidance on word limits and on layout.

The total word count for assignments in Unit 4 should fall between 5000-6750 words (excluding appendices). Centres should ensure that candidates understand the importance of respecting the word limit. Materials to be included in appendices are highlighted in the Requirements section of the specifications for each assignment. Appendices should not be used to extend the word limit.

The assignment should include a bibliography, organised using Harvard referencing. The bibliography should not be included in the word count.

Centres should provide appropriate guidance for the layout of the selected task. In particular, candidates should be made aware of the importance of signposting (i.e. the appropriate use of heading, bullet points etc.). Guidance should also be given to ensure any note form used makes clear the candidate's rationale for his/her choice of approaches. It should be noted that

abbreviated note form can obscure the level of analysis which the candidate has undertaken to arrive at the points which s/he has made.

The language used in all assessed components of the MRS Diploma is English. The language of their assignment should be appropriate to both the task and the professional nature of the qualification.

### **Candidates whose first language is not English**

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

The English requirement for this course is Cambridge English: Advanced Proficiency 175 with no less than 162 in each component or equivalent.

### **Material for assignments**

Material for this assignment is a set of qualitative data collected, analysed and interpreted by the individual candidate. The candidate must select a suitable research project for this purpose. MRS does not set a task for this unit. The data should be collected in response to clear research objectives. The research objectives which underpin the data collection may be derived from one of two sources:

- Candidates may elect to base their assignment on work undertaken for their employer as part of an ongoing or current research project.
- Centres may set research objectives based on issues which they themselves may wish to investigate.

In all cases, centres should ensure that all data is collected and processed in accordance with relevant requirements laid out in data protection legislation and the MRS Code of Conduct.

You are expected to moderate a minimum of one focus group or conduct a minimum of four depth interviews for the purposes of this assignment. **Groups or depth interviews should be conducted face to face.**

Please note that candidate transcripts are an important part of a submission and must be included as an appendices. MRS encourages candidates to do their own transcription/s, but it is not compulsory. It is evident in submissions that candidates who have done their own transcriptions tend to produce higher graded assignments. In particular, transcripts are critical for the candidate to review and critique their own moderating style.

Candidates must make it explicitly clear within their submission who did what within the research process and there must be evidence of use/reference of the transcripts within the submission. Candidates must delineate between analysis and interpretation.

### **Support for candidates**

Centres are encouraged to arrange a system of support to enable candidates to complete the assignments. The type of support, offered may vary from centre to centre. However, examples of the types of support systems on offer might include:

a system of individualised tutorials;  
the provision by tutors of written feedback on draft sections of individual assignments;  
group discussions of the approaches chosen.

Any feedback provided by the tutor team should be constructive in highlighting the strengths and weaknesses in initial drafts, but not so detailed that the final draft is a result of tutor, rather



than candidate, effort. Each centre is encouraged to include in the assignment guidelines an indication of the amount and type of support which candidates will receive towards the completion of the assignments.

### **Assessment of assignments**

Assignments in Unit 4 are externally assessed and subject to external moderation. Full details of the administrative processes which centres should follow to submit coursework assignments for assessment are included in the MRS Diploma Admin Handbook.

The assessment criteria for each assignment are included in the assignment specifications. In addition, the following level descriptors provide guidance for the expected depth and range which are expected to be demonstrated at pass, distinction and fail grades in the following areas:

- knowledge & understanding
- intellectual & subject skills
- values & attitudes
- presentation & transferable skills

## Assessment Level Descriptors

The following table provides guidance on the levels of attainment for all Units.

The document should be read alongside the Assessment Specifications and Criteria for each assignment in this unit. The Specifications & Criteria provide guidance on the core information required by each assignment.

	<b>Fail</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>Distinction</b>
	<b><i>The candidate's work</i></b>	<b><i>The candidate's work</i></b>	<b><i>The candidate's work</i></b>
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates limited understanding of principles, key concepts, issues and theoretical approaches relevant to the subject</li> <li>demonstrates limited awareness of the of the subject in both breadth and depth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an awareness of the underlying principles, key concepts, issues and theoretical approaches relevant to the subject.</li> <li>demonstrates an adequate understanding of both the range and depth of the subject.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of principles, key concepts, issues and theoretical approaches relevant to the subject.</li> <li>demonstrates a thorough understanding of the subject in both breadth and depth.</li> </ul>
<b>Skills (Intellectual/Subject)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates limited judgement in analysing routine issues for presenting ideas.</li> <li>may offer a personal and unsubstantiated point of view, with limited reference to sources and limited use of examples.</li> <li>may demonstrate little or no connection between subject knowledge and the candidate's professional practice when</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an ability to critically analyse the relationships between differing arguments and evidence</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to examine and evaluate a range of sources, research methods and strategies and assess the appropriateness of their use</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to advocate a point of view and exercise critical judgement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates evidence of clear and original thought, and of critical thinking</li> <li>draws on and uses a wide range of knowledge to address questions</li> <li>analyses concepts and theories and applies them to issues of practice in a systematic way</li> <li>draws appropriately on a range sources.</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate the</li> </ul>

	required to do so.	<p>with good use of examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates evidence of familiarity with primary and secondary sources.</li> <li>• where appropriate, demonstrates evidence of the candidate's ability to make connections between aspects of subject knowledge and their professional practice</li> </ul>	<p>significance and limitations of theory and practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates an appreciation of alternative and competing methodological choices</li> <li>• where appropriate, shows evidence of advanced professional competence</li> </ul>
<b>Values &amp; attitudes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates little or no evidence of critical awareness of the wider social, political and/or economic implications, relevant to market and/or social research practices when required to do so</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• demonstrates some evidence of critical awareness of the wider social, political and/or economic implications, relevant to market and/or social research practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• demonstrates a high level of critical awareness of the wider social, political and/or economic implications, relevant to market and/or social research practices</li> </ul>

<p><b>Presentation &amp; transferable skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• makes inappropriate or very limited use of specialist terminology</li> <li>• demonstrates limited or no evidence of the ability to interpret and/or present data in a format which is appropriate to the task</li> <li>• presents information in a manner which does not reflect a coherent structure and which may impede the reader's understanding</li> <li>• is written in a style which is inappropriate to the task and which puts strain on the reader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• makes generally appropriate use of specialist terminology</li> <li>• demonstrates the ability to interpret and/or present data in a format which is appropriate to the task.</li> <li>• presents information within a generally coherent structure which does not impede the reader's understanding</li> <li>• provides generally clear, consistent and accurate referencing</li> <li>• is written in a style which is appropriate to the task and puts little or no strain on the reader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• makes effective and appropriate use of specialist terminology</li> <li>• demonstrates a well-developed ability to interpret and/or present data in a variety of forms and in a critical and constructive way.</li> <li>• presents arguments and information in a logical, coherent and creative in order to assist the reader's understanding</li> <li>• provides clear, consistent and accurate referencing</li> <li>• is written in a style which is appropriate to the task and puts no strain on the reader</li> </ul>
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## UNIT 5: CASE STUDIES IN MARKET & SOCIAL RESEARCH

### Syllabus Outline

#### 1. Aims

The aim of this unit is to enable participants to develop a holistic understanding of how problems can be solved with the aid of research-based intelligence. As a synoptic unit drawing on the learning outcomes addressed in units 1 – 4, it focuses on the integration of the various stages involved in a research project, and further develops the participant's abilities to analyse and assess those stages and the success of the project overall. In addition, it is designed to allow participants to develop their understanding of the processes from a research management perspective, thus enabling them to assess from both a theoretical and a pragmatic standpoint the fitness for purpose of the approaches taken in the projects being reviewed.

In order to facilitate the development of the holistic understanding outlined above, this unit will build on themes introduced in units 1 – 4 and will introduce, as a new theme, the consideration of the research management issues involved in planning, conducting and reporting on the research project(s) under discussion.

The links with units 1-4, and the 'research management' strand, will combine as follows to enable participants to integrate knowledge and understanding drawn from different areas of study within the Diploma framework in order to create their own broad-based and informed understanding of the requirements of effective research:

- Identifying management issues in research
- Evaluating choices in context (building on Units 1, 2, 3 & 4)
- Ethical & legal issues in practice (building on Unit 1)
- Evaluating the 'added value' of the project to the client (building on Units 3 & 4, + Research Project Management)

#### 2. Learning Outcomes

The focus of this unit is on complete research projects, which provide a description of a client's problem and an explanation of how this problem was approached and reported on in practice. These examples provide the contexts through which the participants will be able to develop their skills of informed analytical reasoning in relation to the design and application of market or social research. Having followed this unit, participants will be able to demonstrate both depth and breadth in their understanding of the whole research process, theory and practice.

The learning outcomes for the unit cover the 4 topic areas outlined above:

### **2.1 Identifying management issues in research (20%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. identify and discuss the role or roles of research management at different stages within a given research project
2. identify and discuss the chain of management decisions taken within a given research project
3. evaluate the allocation and management of resources within a given research project
4. evaluate the management decisions made at each stage of the research process

### **2.2 Evaluating choices in context (45%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. identify and discuss the methodological choices made within the given research design, and in the analysis and interpretation of results
2. identify and discuss differences between theory/best practice and actual practice at different stages within a given research project
3. evaluate the choices made at each stage of a given research project, taking into account relevant theory/best practice and the existing practical limitations
4. suggest, where relevant, possible alternative approaches to dealing with the issues which have been identified
5. identify the strengths and weaknesses of any alternative approach suggested in relation to the given research project
6. evaluate the relevance and applicability of the findings of a given research project, taking into account relevant theory/best practice and the existing practical limitations

### **2.3 Ethical & legal issues in practice (15%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. identify and discuss a range of legal and ethical issues present within a given research project
2. evaluate the potential implications of the mishandling of the issues identified within the given research project
3. evaluate the decisions made in relation to the identified ethical and legal issues
4. suggest, where relevant, possible alternative approaches to dealing with the issues which have been identified

### **2.4 Evaluating the 'added value' of the project to the client (20%)**

Participants will be able to:

1. identify and discuss the importance of the given research problem to the client
2. evaluate the proposed research approach in relation to the given business problem and where suitable recommend alternatives with rationale for choices
3. assess the value of the proposed research approach including its Return on Investment
4. identify the potential implications, in terms of resources, research management and/or future research, of the suggested alternatives

### 3. Syllabus content

The syllabus for this unit draws on the learning outcomes of the previous four units, and is designed to provide clear contexts to help participants develop a coherent approach both to their analysis and evaluation of existing research. It also aims to enable candidates to develop applied skills by encouraging them to identify and evaluate potential alternatives to the decisions made within the research projects which form the basic material of the unit.

As all participants will have chosen either Unit 3 or Unit 4, the case studies chosen as the vehicles for tuition within Unit 5 should cover both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The balance of weighting allocated to each of the 5 elements in the syllabus reflects the depth and breadth of the material to be covered and the contribution of each area to the achievement of the overall learning outcomes incorporated into this unit. Although each element may be regarded as representative of a discrete area, there are clear links and overlaps between the knowledge and skills addressed. In delivering this unit, centres are expected to demonstrate their awareness of the interdependence of these areas.

The relevance of each syllabus element to the unit as a whole is as follows:

#### **Element 1: Identifying management issues in research (20%)**

This element focuses on the management decisions which underpin and place parameters on a research project. By this stage in their study towards the MRS Diploma, participants will have considered research from both theoretical and 'fit for purpose' perspectives, and will have discussed the general principles which underpin effective decision making (See Unit 2). The aim of this element is to encourage participants to discuss and evaluate the pragmatic decisions which must be made at different stages within a research project, particularly in relation to the allocation and use of available resources (human, material, time and financial).

#### **Element 2: Evaluating choices in context (45%)**

Element 2 examines the pragmatic decisions which must be made when research principles are applied in practice. This element encourages participants to explore the differences between theoretical or best practice models and 'real-world' research, and to identify why those differences occur. It is also designed to encourage participants to identify the links between decisions made at different stages within the research process and to evaluate the impact of those decisions on the research process as a whole. Participants are expected to evaluate the research practices described within the case studies and to identify where and why limitations occur on putting principles into practice. Working through this element should also enable participants to identify and evaluate alternatives to the choices made in the given project, in terms both of their appropriateness to the research objectives and of the impact which they might have on decisions made at other stages within the project.

### **Element 3: Ethical & legal issues in practice (15%)**

The MRS is the professional body responsible for assuring appropriate ethical standards within the research industry in the UK. This element is designed to promote further the participants' awareness of the ethical and legal frameworks which impact on effective research, and the implications of those frameworks on the whole process of research. In particular, participants should be encouraged to explore the range of implications which the ethical issues contained within the research project(s) being studied have for all the stakeholders involved.

### **Element 4: Evaluating the 'added value' of the project to the client (20%)**

It is now recognised that the researcher has a role which stretches beyond simply the planning and implementation of research. The final element of the unit focuses on the usefulness of the given research project, in relation to both the original problem and to the client. It encourages the participants to develop a greater degree of customer focus and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the research approach, particularly in terms of the value to the client and the Return on Investment of the research. Participants are also encouraged to identify and evaluate possible alternative approaches for addressing the research problem and to critically evaluate recommendations made.

## **4. Approach to delivery**

As the final, synoptic unit within the Diploma framework, this unit is designed to enable participants to draw on their learning across the previous three units and to apply that knowledge and understanding to 'real world' research practices. Materials that MRS selects for use in assessment will be drawn from a variety of market or social research projects on a diverse range of topics. Therefore centres are advised to expose candidates to a wide variety of research case materials.

The structure of the syllabus and learning outcomes for this unit are such that they require participants to analyse and discuss research practice from a wide range of perspectives. As a result, this unit lends itself to delivery via seminar and discussion groups, using studies of practical examples of research projects as source material. Industry journals such as the International Journal of Market Research (IJMR) and papers collected in the proceedings of the MRS Conference provide useful sources of such material.

The following table provides guidance for suggested content for courses and programmes leading to the completion of Unit 5. This is not an exhaustive list of the items to be included in any programme of learning, but indicates items which can be considered as core within this unit.



## Guidance on realising the syllabus

	Learning outcomes	Indicative content
<b>Element 1</b> Identifying management issues in research (20%)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and discuss the role or roles of management at different stages within a given research project</li> <li>2. identify and discuss the chain of management decisions taken within a given research project</li> <li>3. evaluate the allocation and management of resources within a given research project</li> <li>4. evaluate the management decisions made at each stage of the research process</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• principles of effective research project management</li> <li>• managing research teams</li> <li>• managing research resources</li> </ul>

<p><b>Element 2</b></p> <p>Evaluating choices in context</p> <p>(45%)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify and discuss the methodological choices made within the given research design, and in the analysis and interpretation of results</li> <li>2. identify and discuss differences between theory/best practice and actual practice at different stages within a given research project</li> <li>3. evaluate the choices made at each stage of a given research project, taking into account relevant theory/best practice and the existing practical limitations</li> <li>4. suggest, where relevant, possible alternative approaches to dealing with the issues which have been identified</li> <li>5. identify the strengths and weaknesses of any alternative approach suggested in relation to the given research project</li> <li>6. evaluate the relevance and applicability of the findings of a given research project, taking into account relevant theory/best practice and the existing practical limitations</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• further application to practice of aspects of the research process introduced in Unit 1, 2, 3 and/or 4</li> <li>• evaluation from the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Learning outcomes</b></p>	<p><b>Indicative content</b></p>

<p><b>Element 3</b></p> <p>Ethical &amp; legal issues in practice</p> <p>(15%)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify and discuss a range of legal and ethical issues present within a given research project</li> <li>2. evaluate the potential implications of the mishandling of the issues identified within the given research project</li> <li>3. evaluate the decisions made in relation to the identified ethical and legal issues</li> <li>4. suggest, where relevant, possible alternative approaches to dealing with the issues which have been identified</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• further application to practice of aspects of the research process introduced in Unit 1, 2, 3 and/or 4</li> <li>• evaluation from the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders</li> </ul>
<p><b>Element 4</b></p> <p>Evaluating the 'added value' of the project to the client</p> <p>(20%)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify and discuss the importance of the given research problem to the client</li> <li>2. evaluate the proposed research approach in relation to the given business problem and where suitable recommend alternatives with rationale for choices</li> <li>3. assess the value of the proposed research approach including its Return on Investment</li> <li>4. identify the potential implications, in terms of resources, management and/or future research, of the suggested alternatives</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• further application to practice of aspects of the research process introduced in Unit 1, 2, 3 and/or 4, and of the aspects of management introduced in Element 1 of this unit.</li> </ul>

## 5. Recommended Support Materials

Unit 5 is a synoptic unit. As such, the recommended reading is an amalgamation of the books from the first four Diploma units with extra recommended reading in relation to the management of a research project.

### Recommended Reading

Birn, RJ	2000	The Handbook of International Market Research Techniques	London; Kogan Page
Brown, MN	2003	Asking the right questions: a guide to critical thinking	Prentice Hall
Dawson, R	2005	Developing knowledge-based client relationships – 2nd edition	Oxford; Butterworth Heinemann
Burlington, MA	2007	Market Research Handbook	ESOMAR
Gordon, W	1999	Good Thinking – A guide to qualitative research	ADMAP
Silverman, D	2001	Interpreting Qualitative Data	London; Sage
Smith, DVL & Fletcher, JH	2001	Inside Information Making Sense of Marketing Data	Chichester; Wiley
Smith, DVL & Fletcher, JH	2004	The arts & science of interpreting market research evidence	Chichester; Wiley
Wilson, A	2011	Marketing research: an integrated approach 3rd edition	London; FT/Prentice Hall
Newton, R	2009	The Project Manager: Mastering the Art of Delivery	FT/Prentice Hall
Newton, R	2010	The Management Consultant: Mastering the Art of Consultancy	FT/Prentice Hall
Markham, C	2004	The Top Consultant: Developing your skills for greater effectiveness - 4th Edition	London; Kogan Page
MRS	2010	MRS Code of Conduct	MRS
Allsop, D & Moore, B	2004	The ROI Imperative: How to build measurable value	Proceedings of ESOMAR Congress 2004
Gupta, S & Rout, S	2007	Scalpel or hand grenade? Understanding client decision making	Proceedings of ESOMAR Congress 2007

### **Case Study Material**

Studies of research projects should form the bulk of study material for this unit. Material can be accessed from a wide range of websites which archive market and social research reports, and journals which provide case studies of innovative practice. The following provides guidance to a range of relevant sites and journals but it is not exhaustive.

### **Websites**

UK Data Archive	<a href="http://www.data-archive.ac.uk">www.data-archive.ac.uk</a>
Mintel	<a href="http://www.mintel.com">www.mintel.com</a>
World Advertising Research Centre	<a href="http://www.warc.com">www.warc.com</a>

### **Journals**

International Journal of Market Research    WARC

## **UNIT 5 - ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATIONS & GUIDELINES**

### **6. Introduction**

The assessment for this unit requires candidates to examine and evaluate decisions made at different stages within the research process, from the initial brief to the recommendations made as a result of research findings, and/or to propose potential alternative solutions to those provided.

The material used in the examination draws on real-life case studies in order to allow candidates to demonstrate their skills in identifying, analysing and evaluating research choices in practice.

### **7. Mode of assessment**

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

### **8. Format of the examination**

The examination is provided twice a year, in June and December.

The examination comprises two sections:

- Section 1: Exam Preparation Materials = reading and preparation (up to 90 minutes) - to start at 11.30am – and to end no later than 1.00pm
- Section 2: Examination Questions (3 hours) - 2.00pm – 5.00pm

#### **Section 1: Preparation**

Candidates are provided with material which forms a case study of a research project. The material comprises:

- information about the client's research and information requirements, normally in the form of a research brief
- information about a project, designed to meet the client's research needs outlined in 1. This material will normally be in the form of a research proposal.

#### **A Typical Research Brief**

This document will usually comprise of no more than 5 pages, and while the exact content will vary from brief to brief, will typically include:

- background information about the client and the topic to be researched
- an outline of the client's research objectives / information requirements
- if appropriate, client suggestions/comments on methodology and associated issues
- the client's reporting requirements, timing requirements, and budget considerations

### **A Typical Research Proposal**

This document will usually comprise of no more than 20 pages, and while the exact content will vary from one piece of research to another, will typically include:

- an introduction followed by an outline of the research objectives
- recommended methodology and related issues and considerations
- reporting, envisaged timings, costs, and research team

Candidates have up to 90 minutes to read and make notes relating to the material. Candidates will be provided with paper on which to make their notes. Candidate notes are to remain in the examination room during the break between Section 1 and Section 2.

### **Section 2: Examination**

The examination consists of three questions, each of which may be subdivided into a maximum of three tasks. Candidates must answer all three questions. Candidates may refer to the notes made in Section 1.

There is a break of one hour between Section 1 and Section 2. During this time, candidates may leave the examination room but all materials and notes must remain in the examination room.

## **9. Question specifications**

Each of the 4 elements included in the syllabus for this Unit will be assessed in the examination questions, i.e.:

- Identifying management issues in research
- Evaluating choices in context
- Ethical & legal issues in practice
- Evaluating the 'added value' of the project to the client

The aim of all questions included in the examination is to encourage candidates to reflect on and evaluate the research project from a range of perspectives. Each question is related to the information described under Section 1 of this document.

The information provided is sourced from real-life research projects in order to provide both range and depth of information. In order to mirror the need of researchers to be aware of and to take into account a wide range of issues which vary from project to project, the specification of each question has been left open. However, the questions are likely to follow the broad specifications given below.

The specifications included below are intended to provide examples of the types of topics and issues the exam will cover, and the sorts of tasks that might be included in each question, and should not be seen as a comprehensive typology.

## **Possible Question Types:**

### **i. The research need**

#### ***Focus***

Questions focusing on the business case for research would be designed to assess the candidate's ability to analyse and evaluate the importance of the research to the client.

#### ***Some examples of the types of tasks which may form this question include:***

- Identifying and discussing issues related to the client's perception of the research need and value of the research to the client
- Evaluating the research needs in relation to the organisation's business objectives
- Evaluating the proposed resource allocation in relation to the research need
- Identifying and making suggestions related to ethical and/or legal issues around the research need
- Evaluating & clarifying the stated research objectives

### **ii The proposed research project**

#### ***Focus***

Questions focusing on the proposed research project would be designed to assess the candidate's ability to analyse and evaluate the proposed programme of research, and to identify potential alternative solutions.

#### ***Some examples of the types of tasks which may form this question include:***

- identifying and discussing the theoretical principles underpinning different aspects of the proposed project
- evaluating the proposed methodology in relation to the business objectives
- identifying and evaluating possible alternatives to the approaches chosen in the proposal
- identifying possible limitations to the proposed research and suggesting ways of overcoming these

### **iii Managing research**

#### ***Focus***

Questions focusing on the management of research would be designed to assess the candidate's ability to identify and discuss solutions to management and/or ethical/legal issues arising from the research project.

#### ***Some examples of the types of tasks which may form this question include:***

- identifying appropriate solutions for problems occurring during the research process
- identifying and discussing appropriate strategies and processes for handling the client/supplier relationship
- identifying and evaluating ways to support the client in the implementation of the recommendations
- identifying and evaluating potential routes for maximising the value of the research to the client



## **10. Assessment weighting**

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

## **11. Assessment grading**

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

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

Guidance on the general assessment criteria for each grade can be found in the following table.

## Assessment Level Descriptors

The following table provides guidance on the levels of attainment for all Units.

The document should be read alongside the Assessment Specifications and Criteria for this unit. The Specifications & Criteria provide guidance on the core information required by each question.

	<b>Fail</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>Distinction</b>
	<b><i>The candidate's work</i></b>	<b><i>The candidate's work</i></b>	<b><i>The candidate's work</i></b>
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates limited understanding of principles, key concepts, issues and theoretical approaches relevant to the subject</li> <li>demonstrates limited awareness of the of the subject in both breadth and depth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an awareness of the underlying principles, key concepts, issues and theoretical approaches relevant to the subject.</li> <li>demonstrates an adequate understanding of both the range and depth of the subject.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of principles, key concepts, issues and theoretical approaches relevant to the subject.</li> <li>demonstrates a thorough understanding of the subject in both breadth and depth.</li> </ul>
<b>Skills (Intellectual/Subject)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates limited judgement in analysing routine issues for presenting ideas.</li> <li>may offer a personal and unsubstantiated point of view, with limited reference to sources and limited use of examples.</li> <li>may demonstrate little or no connection between subject knowledge and the candidate's professional practice when</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates an ability to critically analyse the relationships between differing arguments and evidence</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to examine and evaluate a range of sources, research methods and strategies and assess the appropriateness of their use</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to advocate a point of view and exercise critical judgement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates evidence of clear and original thought, and of critical thinking</li> <li>draws on and uses a wide range of knowledge to address questions</li> <li>analyses concepts and theories and applies them to issues of practice in a systematic way</li> <li>draws appropriately on a range sources.</li> <li>demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate the significance</li> </ul>

	required to do so.	<p>with good use of examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates evidence of familiarity with primary and secondary sources.</li> <li>• where appropriate, demonstrates evidence of the candidate's ability to make connections between aspects of subject knowledge and their professional practice</li> </ul>	<p>and limitations of theory and practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates an appreciation of alternative and competing methodological choices</li> <li>• where appropriate, shows evidence of advanced professional competence</li> </ul>
<b>Values &amp; attitudes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates little or no evidence of critical awareness of the wider social, political and/or economic implications, relevant to market and/or social research practices when required to do so</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• demonstrates some evidence of critical awareness of the wider social, political and/or economic implications, relevant to market and/or social research practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• demonstrates a high level of critical awareness of the wider social, political and/or economic implications, relevant to market and/or social research practices</li> </ul>

<p><b>Presentation &amp; transferable skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• makes inappropriate or very limited use of specialist terminology</li> <li>• demonstrates limited or no evidence of the ability to interpret and/or present data in a format which is appropriate to the task</li> <li>• presents information in a manner which does not reflect a coherent structure and which may impede the reader's understanding</li> <li>• is written in a style which is inappropriate to the task and which puts strain on the reader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• makes generally appropriate use of specialist terminology</li> <li>• demonstrates the ability to interpret and/or present data in a format which is appropriate to the task.</li> <li>• presents information within a generally coherent structure which does not impede the reader's understanding</li> <li>• provides generally clear, consistent and accurate referencing</li> <li>• is written in a style which is appropriate to the task and puts little or no strain on the reader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where appropriate</li> <li>• makes effective and appropriate use of specialist terminology</li> <li>• demonstrates a well-developed ability to interpret and/or present data in a variety of forms and in a critical and constructive way.</li> <li>• presents arguments and information in a logical, coherent and creative in order to assist the reader's understanding</li> <li>• provides clear, consistent and accurate referencing</li> <li>• is written in a style which is appropriate to the task and puts no strain on the reader</li> </ul>
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