AQR/MRS Recruiter Accreditation Scheme

Syllabus & Assessment Guidelines

July 2020

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1.   Introduction

The Recruiter Accreditation Scheme (RAS) has been developed by the Market Research Society (MRS) and the Association for Qualitative Research (AQR) to raise the profile and status of recruiters, by devising a training and accreditation scheme that recognises the knowledge, skills and competence of professional recruiters.

MRS is responsible for...

- Structure of the Scheme

- Assessment materials

- Liaison with buyers and commissioners of qualitative research recruitment services

- Promotion of the Scheme

- Setting and enforcing standards including the Recruiter Regulations

AQR is responsible for...

- Training materials

- Developing research participant materials

- Liaison with buyers and commissioners of qualitative research recruitment services

- Promotion of the Scheme

2.   The Aims & Structure of RAS

Although the focus is on the recognition of the knowledge, skills and competence requirements for professional research recruiters, the **overall aim of the scheme is to improve the quality of qualitative recruitment by all parties throughout the qualitative recruitment supply-chain:**

- For recruiters and recruitment organisations the accreditation will provide professional recognition and build professional status.

- For those that commission qualitative recruitment to raise awareness of the problems of poor recruitment commissioning and improve overall standards, including the need for more realistic recruitment quotas, timescales, etc.

- For buyers of research access to a pool of professionally recognised accredited recruiters to enable positive purchase discrimination.

This document contains details of the syllabus, learning programme and assessment specifications for the Recruiter Accreditation Scheme ('RAS').

RAS is designed for research recruiters working across a wide range of sectors who undertake research recruitment. It is also suitable for those who commission qualitative research and/or undertake research recruitment as part of a wider research role.

The RAS programme combines online training and assessment with self-directed work-based learning. All of the RAS online training is available for use without financial charge. The materials are available here: https://ras.mrs.org.uk/

The RAS is designed to recognise the range of knowledge and understanding required to:

- Understand the basic principles and concepts of research
- Understand the role of research recruitment
- Understand the different techniques used for research recruitment
- Understand the legal and ethical requirements which underpin research
- Understand the basics of project management

a) Entry requirements

RAS is open to all individuals who wish to participate.

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

b) Qualification requirements

Candidates must complete the following components in order to achieve RAS and be recognised as an Accredited Recruiter.

1) an approved learning programme:
   - the RAS Online learning programme **or**
   - an in-house learning programme **or**
   - 'on the job' learning
2) the RAS online assessment.

c) Approved learning programmes

The RAS online training course
The RAS online training course is an online learning programme developed by AQR and MRS. It can be taken as a stand-alone course of training or as a study route for the RAS online assessment which leads to become recognised as an Accredited Recruiter. As it is delivered online, it allows individuals to study for the qualification and accreditation wherever they are.

The RAS online training course reflects closely the structure of the RAS syllabus. However, candidates can expect to find information relating to the various learning outcomes in more than one section of the course.

The course provides core learning material and additional resources, including a toolkit of resources and links to relevant external resources. Candidates are encouraged to explore all of the resources fully before registering for assessment. Although the online programme is designed to provide access to the information needed to complete the assessment, candidates are also encouraged to access additional sources. A list of some suggested sources is given in the Resources Section https://ras.mrs.org.uk/topic-resources.

Completion of the RAS is estimated to require around 40 learning hours. Experienced recruiters do not need to undertake the online training if they believe that they have previously received adequate training to cover the RAS syllabus. For these practitioners, the RAS assessment can be undertaken immediately. It is anticipated that for some of the experienced recruiters specific elements of the online training may need to be undertaken, particularly those modules which cover recent changes such as data protection and GDPR.

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

d) The RAS Assessment

The assessment is completed online under the guidance of MRS, as the awarding body for the accreditation.

The assessment comprises 40 multiple-choice questions covering all five RAS modules. Each question is worth one mark. In order to pass, candidates must achieve a minimum score of 20 marks.

Details of how to register for the assessment are provided to candidates when they register for the online programme.

Pass requirements

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

Distinction:	32 – 40
Merit:	25 – 31
Pass:	24 – 20
Fail	19 – 0

Fail/Referred Candidates

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

- In order to be considered for RAS accreditation, Fail candidates must retake the assessment

- In order to be considered for the RAS accreditation, Fail candidates can re-sit multiples times

Accreditation

RAS accreditation lasts for 3 years, subject to the accredited recruiter maintaining MRS membership. This is required as compliance with the MRS Code of Conduct and associated standards is an accreditation requirement which underpins the Scheme.

After this period individuals must re-submit for assessment via the online assessment. During any 3-year period the RAS training materials will be updated, if needed to reflect any changes in practice and/or understanding. The assessment will be updated to reflect any such changes in the RAS syllabus.

3.   Syllabus

The RAS syllabus is designed to help the development of understanding of the key underlying principles of research, enabling candidates to undertake legal and ethical qualitative recruitment.

Successful completion of the qualification demonstrates that candidates can:

- **understand** the basic differences between quantitative and qualitative research
- **identify** key issues affecting a research project and take these into account when recruiting for research projects
- **develop/select** appropriate recruitment tools, including screeners and social media materials, to support the effective recruitment of research participants
- **manage** the recruitment process including project management of activities including liaison with clients, participants and supporting facilities such as venues, host/hostesses, etc.
- **conduct** qualitative recruitment effectively, taking into account all ethical and legal requirements.

The syllabus has two key components:

- **Learning outcomes** define what you should be able to do by the end of the learning programme. They form the framework for assessment of candidate progress and achievement.
- **Indicative content** supports the development of learning programmes. It suggests some of the knowledge that you need in order to achieve the outcomes. NOTE: This list is not definitive; it *indicates* some of the key knowledge areas that you need.

The learning outcomes and indicative content are divided into two sections:

- **The Basics of Research**: This section refers to the setting in which research takes place, the basics of qualitative and quantitative research and the ethical and legal principles that underpin the research recruitment process. The learning outcomes in this section inform and guide each stage of the recruitment process.

- **The Tools Used in Research Recruitment:** The learning outcomes in this section reflect the specific skills and understanding required to conduct effective qualitative recruitment. There are four topic areas in this section:
  o Preparation
  o Managing the recruitment process
  o Communication and interpersonal skills
  o Recruitment tools and techniques

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

AQR/MRS RAS Syllabus	
Learning outcomes: By the end of the learning programme, the candidate should be able to describe…	**Content:** In order to achieve these outcomes, the candidate should know about…….
Element 1: The basics of research	
1. the role of market and social research in business and society 2. the role of data protection/GDPR legislation and the MRS Code of Conduct in the research recruitment process 3. the role of the recruiter 4. the links between client needs and the recruitment approach 5. the role of a research brief, research proposal, recruitment screener, pre- and post-recruitment tasks and de-briefs 6. the key features of quantitative and qualitative research	• definitions and categories of market and social research • why businesses use market and social research • the structure and size of the UK market research industry • the purpose and principles of the MRS Code of Conduct • the purpose and principles of the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 and its impact on qualitative research recruitment, data collection, retention and storage • the key features of a research brief • the key features of a research project lifecycle • the main types of research formats and their purposes • the different types of participants (e.g. children, vulnerable) and their different recruitment needs
Element 2: The tools used in research recruitment	
7. the key features, benefits and limitations of different recruitment techniques 8. the key features and tools of the recruitment process and the role and responsibilities of the recruiter in the process and the use of tools 9. the impact of the MRS Code of Conduct, GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 on the use and applicability of tools for different types of research and participants 10. the completion of all required administrative preparations to support the delivery of effective research recruitment 11. prepare all required resources to support the effective delivery of research recruitment 12. the benefits of effective communication with participants, associates and clients 13. the role and key features of social grades	• how to develop appropriate recruitment approaches • how participants can be recruited ethically and legally • how participants and their data can be used and retained including participant recontact • the benefits and limitations of different recruitment techniques • the steps involved in undertaking different types of research recruitment • the key recruiter responsibilities and requirements when using tools e.g. pre- and post-tasks, venues, incentives • how to manage communications with clients, suppliers and participants to avoid and manage problems and to maximise recruiter relationships • get the best out of participants, associates and clients • the reason for social grades, how social grades are structured and how to deploy social grades for different occupations and life stages

4.   Reading

Candidates are also encouraged to read around the topic more widely and a list of recommended and additional texts and sources is given below.

Dipping into this list will help candidates gain the depth of insight which will support the development of their research recruitment skills.

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

Research Live
https://www.research-live.com/

Codes, Guidelines & Legislation

In order to support the focus on ethics and professionalism in RAS, candidates should familiarise themselves with codes, guidelines and legislation which affect research.

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

MRS

MRS Code of Conduct: https://www.mrs.org.uk/pdf/MRS-Code-of-Conduct-2019.pdf
MRS Guidance: https://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/mrs-guidance
GDPR & data protection: https://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/data-protection

RAS

Training modules: https://ras.mrs.org.uk/course-catalogue
RAS Resources: https://ras.mrs.org.uk/topic-resources