



MRS Diploma in Market & Social Research Practice

**UNIT 4 – Collecting, Analysing & Interpreting Qualitative
Market and Social Research Data**

Assignment Guidelines

**Distribution Date to Candidates:
Submission Date to MRS:**

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MRS Diploma in Market & Social Research Practice
Unit 4 – Assessment Guidelines
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Introduction

The assessment for this unit requires you to apply your understanding of theoretical principles to the practical tasks of collecting, analysing and interpreting qualitative data.

Mode of assessment

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

Material for Assignments

Material for this assignment is a set of qualitative data collected, analysed and interpreted by the individual candidate. 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:

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

In all cases, you 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 your transcripts are an important part of your 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.

Assignment Specifications

Candidates are expected to review and evaluate 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; clearly explaining the rationale for both the method chosen and the structure of the discussion
- the analysis of the resultant data, using identified approaches
- the interpretation of the information in relation to the research objectives (note it is evident from past submissions that some candidates fail to separate out analysis from interpretation)
- for each of the above the theoretical rationale should always be clearly demonstrated

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

Assignment length

The total word count for all four tasks should fall between 5,000-6,750 words (excluding appendices).

All words within the main body of the text, including those within tables and bibliography are included within the word count. Text within the title page, contents page and Footnotes are not included in the word count.

Materials included in appendices are outside of the word count and must *illustrate* points made in the body of the assignment and not be used to extend the word limit. **Please note** that your transcripts are an important part of your submission and must be included as an appendices.

Assignments that considerably exceed the 6,750 word limit (by more than 10%) will be graded as 'non-compliant' as they do not comply with assessment criteria and cannot be assessed with the qualifications framework.

Appendices

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).

Please note that MRS cannot accept audio or video recordings of interviews or focus groups.

Presentation of your assignment

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

Make sure that each section within your 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 include a bibliography, organised using Harvard referencing. The bibliography should not be included in the word count.

The assignment should be secured with a staple in the top left hand corner. Please do not bind your assignment by any other means.

All assessed components of the MRS Diploma should be completed in English.

Candidates should be aware that the language of their assignment should be appropriate to both the task and the professional nature of the qualification.

Number of copies

You 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 will be retained by your centre, the remaining 2 copies will be sent to the MRS for external assessment.

Overall Result

No overall grade is awarded for the MRS Diploma. The *certificate* issued to successful candidates will give the level of achievement in each unit of assessment.

Pass requirements

In order to complete a unit successfully, candidates should meet or exceed the Pass requirements highlighted in the assessment sections of the handbook.

In order to be awarded the Diploma, candidates must achieve a Pass grade (or above) in all 4 units of assessment.

Grading System for each unit of Diploma assessment

Unit 1

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.

Units 2 & 3 and 4

Candidates are given an overall band grade (Distinction, Pass, Fail). The assessment criteria for each assignment is included in the assignment specifications. In addition, the level descriptors provide guidance for the expected depth and range which are expected to be demonstrated at pass, distinction and fail grades. In order to pass the assessment candidates will normally be required to achieve a minimum of a Pass grade for each task within the assignment. Candidates who are awarded a Fail grade for a task will normally be expected to achieve a strong Pass grade or above in one or more of the remaining tasks to pass.

Unit 5

Candidates are 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.

For full guidance on the levels of attainment required for awarding each grade for all Units please refer to the **Full Syllabus & Assessment Guidelines Handbook**.

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