



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Marketing Research Applications

Unit code: FK8L 35

Superclass: BA

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Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to enable the candidate to apply marketing research applications. On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Conduct a qualitative research project.
- 2 Plan a research survey.
- 3 Process a research survey.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre however as candidates are to apply marketing research theory in this Unit, it would be helpful if they have knowledge of market research theory eg achieved an HN Unit in *Market Research Theory* and also have *Numeracy* skills at SCQF level 5.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication* at SCQF level 6; *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6; and *Numeracy* at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

General information (cont)

Context for delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Assessment

Assessment for this Unit can either be done per Outcome or partially integrated to facilitate a more holistic approach. Outcome 1 and 2 could be based around the same case study where, for example, a two-step research program is required with data generated through qualitative research (Outcome 1) being used to aid in the questionnaire construction (for Outcome 2).

For Outcome 3, centres could provide candidates with 'off-the-shelf' questionnaire results for analysis purposes. Alternatively, candidates could carry out the research survey designed for Outcome 2 and use this as their raw data. If this is the case, the brief used for Outcome 2 will need to take this into account, by making sure the research required is achievable by the candidate on the basis of a small-scale research survey. It is **strongly recommended** that candidates work with at least 30 completed questionnaires if this option is selected.

Although a holistic approach is to be encouraged, it is important that all the Evidence Requirements for each Outcome are still met in full when basing different Outcome assessments on the same core stimulus material.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Conduct a qualitative research project.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ A qualitative brief
- ◆ Appropriate qualitative research options
- ◆ Appropriate qualitative research tools
- ◆ Sampling methods for qualitative research
- ◆ Qualitative research data

Evidence Requirements

To achieve this Outcome each candidate must provide evidence that demonstrates his/her Knowledge and/or Skills.

Each candidate must provide evidence to show that she/he can:

- ◆ accurately interpret a qualitative brief
- ◆ select, design and discuss qualitative research options
- ◆ explore, select and design appropriate qualitative research tools
- ◆ apply selected research tool
- ◆ discuss and select appropriate sampling method
- ◆ accurately interpret qualitative research data.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed in a variety of ways. For example, a clear and unambiguous brief requiring qualitative research could be issued to the candidate in advance of the assessment period. The scope and nature of the research required by the brief must be achievable by the candidate in terms of a small-scale study. It is necessary for the candidate to provide evidence for all items listed in the Evidence Requirements.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Marketing Research Applications

Where a written response is given for this assessment, it is advised that it would be c.1,000–1,500 words in order to cover all Evidence Requirements. Also, the response and the research on which it is based could be completed in the extra hours of candidate time rather than under supervised conditions.

It should be borne in mind that the length of response is merely indicative and it is accepted that some candidates may require a little longer to complete the assessment. A flexible and pragmatic approach is encouraged and any additional time given to a candidate will be at the discretion of the individual centre.

However, it should be noted that the candidate should already be familiar with the key theoretical concepts underlying both qualitative research and sampling as the emphasis here is on successful application of the theory. It is suggested that the assessor may wish to adopt a 'tutorial' and 'project supervising' form of delivery.

Outcome 2

Plan a research survey.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ A research-survey brief
- ◆ Appropriate questionnaire
- ◆ Sampling methods for survey research
- ◆ Methods of questionnaire administration

Evidence Requirements

To achieve this Outcome each candidate must provide evidence, which demonstrates his/her Knowledge and/or Skills.

Each candidate must provide evidence to show that she/he can:

- ◆ accurately interpret a research-survey brief
- ◆ construct a questionnaire appropriate to the brief
- ◆ assess alternative sampling options, appropriate to survey research
- ◆ consider and assess alternative methods of questionnaire administration.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed in a variety of ways. For example, a clear and unambiguous brief requiring questionnaire-based research could be issued to the candidate in advance of the assessment period. It is necessary for the candidate to provide evidence for all items listed in the Evidence Requirements.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Marketing Research Applications

It is advised that evidence should include:

- ◆ a narrative explaining the structure and content of the questionnaire
- ◆ a copy of the final questionnaire
- ◆ details of sampling method to be used, with reasons
- ◆ details of how the questionnaire is to be administered, together with reasons.

Where a written response is given for this assessment, it is advised that it would be c.1,000–1,500 words in order to cover all the Evidence Requirements. Also, the response and the research on which it is based could be completed in the extra hours of candidate time rather than under supervised conditions. It should be noted that the candidate should already be familiar with the key theoretical concepts underlying both questionnaire-based research and sampling as the emphasis here is on successful application of the theory. It is suggested that the assessor may wish to adopt a 'tutorial' and 'project supervising' form of delivery.

It should be borne in mind that the length of response is merely indicative and it is accepted that some candidates may require a little longer to complete the assessment. A flexible and pragmatic approach is encouraged and any additional time given to a candidate will be at the discretion of the individual centre.

Outcome 3

Process a research survey.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ survey data using statistical techniques
- ◆ questionnaire-generated data
- ◆ questionnaire findings

Evidence Requirements

To achieve this Outcome each candidate must provide evidence that demonstrates his/her Knowledge and/or Skills.

Each candidate must provide evidence to show that she/he can:

- ◆ use appropriate statistical techniques to accurately analyse survey data
- ◆ interpret questionnaire-generated data accurately
- ◆ formally present the questionnaire findings.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Marketing Research Applications

Assessment Guidelines

The assessment for this Outcome could take a variety of forms.

For example, the candidate could be supplied with the original research objectives set for the questionnaire and the intended audience for the results. The candidate could then produce a report covering all of the above knowledge/skills items.

Where a written response is given, it is envisaged that it would be c.1,000 words in order that all Evidence Requirements are covered and could be completed in the extra hours of candidate time rather than under supervised conditions.

As with earlier Outcomes, it should be borne in mind that the length of response is merely indicative and it is accepted that some candidates may require a little longer to complete the assessment. A flexible and pragmatic approach is encouraged and any additional time given to a candidate will be at the discretion of the individual centre.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Marketing Research Applications

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit appears in several HN Group Awards, such as HN Marketing and HN Advertising and PR. This Unit is intended for candidates who are already be familiar with the basic ideas and concepts of marketing research which underpin this Unit, such as those included in the HN Unit entitled *Marketing Research Theory*. The focus of this Unit is on practical application of the ideas, theories and concepts of marketing research.

It may be helpful to highlight to candidates the impact that the rapid growth of digital media is having on marketing, including marketing research.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Outcome 1: delivery/assessment should be directed towards giving candidates a sense of the realities and practicalities of conducting a piece of qualitative research. The candidate should be encouraged to reflect on this experience through their narratives. It should be stressed to the candidate that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' qualitative tool to select when answering the case study. The assessment should centre on the candidate's understanding of the options available and ability to justify whatever choice s/he has made. The candidate should be encouraged to explore the full range of qualitative research techniques before making a final choice.

Outcome 2: delivery/assessment should confront the candidate with the scope and nature of the preparatory work undertaken before a single respondent completes a questionnaire.

This should cover:

- ◆ The justification of every question included
- ◆ The justification of question formats chosen (open, scaled, dichotomous, multiple response, ranked etc)
- ◆ Coding frame decisions
- ◆ Quantifying of qualitative/open-question responses
- ◆ The structure of the questionnaire and question order
- ◆ Clarity of question wording/respondent instructions
- ◆ Critical examination of questions for in-built bias
- ◆ Pre-testing of questionnaires
- ◆ How population of interest is to be sampled
- ◆ How the questionnaire is to be administered.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Marketing Research Applications

Outcome 3: delivery/assessment should introduce candidates to the realities of the post-questionnaire completion stage:

- ◆ The 'number crunching' dimension should be stressed.
- ◆ The distinction between 'reporting' and 'interpretation' of research findings should be highlighted.
- ◆ A firm grasp of presentation skills should be evident from the candidate's report in terms of intended audience; readability, highlighting of key findings; use of graphs to easily communicate key findings; the use of appendices for those readers wishing to investigate the data on which the report is predicated in more detail etc.

Attention is drawn in particular to the first knowledge/skills item of Outcome 3, which involves the application of statistical techniques. The realities of a limited time frame for delivery and working with candidate groups who have little or no statistical background are appreciated. However, candidates should be pushed to go beyond simple percentages and averages when analysing data. It is recommended that this should include basic knowledge of standard deviation from the mean.

In Outcomes 2 and 3, candidates should be made aware of the increasing use of on-line research tools.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are no Core Skills embedded in this Unit. However, the following table gives some examples of the opportunities for developing Core Skills within this Unit.

Core Skill	SCQF level	Opportunities for development
Communication	Level 6	All three Outcomes can contribute to the reading and writing aspects of this Core Skill.
Written Communication (Reading)	Level 6	Candidates are expected to read and understand complex written information and to apply theoretical marketing research concepts to a marketing research brief or case study.
Written Communication (Writing)	Level 6	Candidates have opportunities to produce written well-structured and clear responses addressing the Evidence Requirements. eg reports produced in writing; questionnaire construction etc.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Core Skill	SCQF level	Opportunities for development
Problem Solving	Level 6	There is the opportunity to develop problem solving skills across this Unit, eg to assess sampling options; to interpret research data; to select sampling methods etc.
Numeracy	Level 6	When designing the questionnaire; using statistical techniques and interpreting results, candidates will have the opportunity to develop numeracy skills.

Open learning

If this Unit is delivered by open or flexible learning, additional resources and material will be required for candidate support, assessment and quality assurance. For further information and advice please refer to our website www.sqa.org.uk.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Insertion of short guidance in Support Notes (in Guidance on the content and context and delivery and assessment) of this Unit re inclusion of the impact of digital marketing on the application of marketing research.	04/11/14

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General information for candidates

Unit title: Marketing Research Applications

This Unit is intended for those already familiar with theories and concepts of marketing research. You will therefore already be familiar with many of the ideas and concepts that you will meet in this Unit. However, as suggested by the title for this Unit, the emphasis here is on application.

For this Unit, you will be asked to conduct a piece of qualitative research, an area fraught with pitfalls for even the most experienced researchers. This exercise will allow you to appreciate and document the issues and problems that arise with this type of research. Equally, the advantages and possibilities offered by this type of research should also be apparent.

You will also be asked to plan a research survey. The focus here is on the extensive preparatory work required for a successful questionnaire and survey. This aspect of the Unit will require you to apply a rigorous and disciplined approach in terms of what you want to find out and who you want to ask.

Complementing the above, there is a section of the Unit which focuses on what happens after the questionnaires are filled in. It will require you to apply numeracy skills (in terms of processing the data) and literacy skills (in terms of interpreting and presenting your results).

On completion of this Unit, you should therefore be able to:

- ◆ conduct a qualitative research project
- ◆ plan a research survey
- ◆ process a research survey.

The assessment for this Unit can take a variety of forms, such as the production of reports. However your tutor will provide full details of all assessment arrangements.