

-SQA- SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

HIGHER NATIONAL UNIT SPECIFICATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

-Unit Number- **6560395**
-Superclass- **BA**
-Title- **MARKETING RESEARCH**

-DESCRIPTION-

GENERAL COMPETENCE FOR UNIT: Demonstrating the use of appropriate research techniques and procedures to satisfy marketing information requirements and allow operational decisions to be made.

OUTCOMES

1. describe the role, scope and constraints of marketing research techniques within an organisation;
2. design a research project to meet specified objectives;
3. analyse data and report on research findings;
4. implement forecasting techniques to facilitate future marketing decisions.

CREDIT VALUE: 2 HN Credits

ACCESS STATEMENT: Access to the unit is at the discretion the centre. However, it would be beneficial if the candidate had prior achievement of competences in communication and numeracy. This may be evidenced by possession of National Certificate Modules 7110055 Communication 4 and 81053 Mathematics: Business Numeracy or equivalent.

For further information contact: Committee and Administration Unit, SQA, Hanover House, 24 Douglas Street, Glasgow G2 7NQ.

Additional copies of this unit may be purchased from SQA (Sales and Despatch section). At the time of publication, the cost is £1.50 (minimum order £5).

HIGHER NATIONAL UNIT SPECIFICATION

STATEMENT OF STANDARDS

UNIT NUMBER: 6560395

UNIT TITLE: MARKETING RESEARCH

Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

OUTCOME

1. DESCRIBE THE ROLE, SCOPE AND CONSTRAINTS OF MARKETING RESEARCH TECHNIQUES WITHIN AN ORGANISATION

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) The role of marketing research is defined accurately.
- (b) The scope of marketing research is described comprehensively.
- (c) Constraints on marketing research are accurately described.

RANGE STATEMENT

Types of research: product research; communications research; pricing research; distribution research; marketing research.

Scope: test marketing; concept testing; media planning; pricing strategy; packaging variation.

Constraints: Time dimension; costs; facilities.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written and/or oral evidence which indicates that the candidate has fulfilled all of the performance criteria covering all the critical classes in the range statement.

A minimum of one piece of evidence must be provided.

OUTCOME

2. DESIGN A RESEARCH PROJECT TO MEET SPECIFIED OBJECTIVES

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Choice of data sources to be used is consistent with specified research objectives.
- (b) Choice of field research technique to be used is consistent with the specified research objectives.
- (c) Design of field research procedures is consistent with specified objectives.

RANGE STATEMENT

Data: primary; secondary; continuous.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written and/or oral evidence on a specific research brief, covering all performance criteria, which demonstrates that the correct choice of techniques and procedures has been made.

A minimum of one piece of evidence must be provided.

OUTCOME

3. ANALYSE DATA AND REPORT ON RESEARCH FINDINGS

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Application of statistical techniques is correct and appropriate to the specified research design.
- (b) Analysis of results of research is accurate and consistent with data collected and specified research objectives.
- (c) Presentation of results is appropriate and comprehensible.

RANGE STATEMENT

The range for this outcome is fully expressed within the performance criteria.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written and/or oral evidence on market research findings concerning all the performance criteria.

A minimum of one piece of evidence must be provided.

OUTCOME

- 4. IMPLEMENT FORECASTING TECHNIQUES TO FACILITATE FUTURE MARKETING DECISIONS

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) An explanation of the strengths and weaknesses of a range of sales forecasting techniques is accurate.
- (b) Identification of the constraints that limit a forecasting situation is accurate.
- (c) Time series data is analysed correctly.

RANGE STATEMENT

Techniques: projection; subjective prediction.

Constraints: internal data; external data; economic; environment; product.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written and/or oral evidence for Performance Criteria (a) and (b) that the candidate understands the strengths and weaknesses of forecasting techniques and constraints involved.

Written evidence for Performance Criterion (c) that includes appropriate graphical and tabular presentation.

MERIT

A candidate who achieves all performance criteria for all outcomes will be awarded a pass.

A pass with merit may be awarded to a candidate who consistently demonstrates some or all of the following:

as a result of individual initiative, use of a number of relevant, up-to-date resources and communication skills in relating performance criteria to the implementation of the research proposal prepared for the unit;

particular skills in problem solving are used in identifying the research process for an identified marketing problem;

exhibition of superior skills of data analysis and interpretation, and presentation of the research report.

ASSESSMENT

In order to achieve this unit, candidates are required to present sufficient evidence that they have met all the performance criteria for each outcome within the range specified. Details of these requirements are given for each outcome. The assessment instruments used should follow the general guidance offered by the SQA assessment model and an integrative approach to assessment is encouraged. (See references at the end of support notes.)

Accurate records should be made of the assessment instruments used showing how evidence is generated for each outcome and giving marking schemes and/or checklists, etc. Records of candidates' achievements should also be kept. These records will be required for external verification.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Proposals to modify outcomes, range statements or agreed assessment arrangements should be discussed in the first place with the external verifier.

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HIGHER NATIONAL UNIT SPECIFICATION**SUPPORT NOTES**

UNIT NUMBER: 6560395

UNIT TITLE: MARKETING RESEARCH

SUPPORT NOTES: This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. None of the sections of the support notes is mandatory.

NOTIONAL DESIGN LENGTH: SQA allocates a notional design length to a unit on the basis of the time estimated for achievement of the stated standards by a candidate whose starting point is as described in the access statement. The notional design length for this unit is 80 hours. The use of notional design length for programme design and timetabling is advisory only.

PURPOSE This unit is designed to instil an understanding of the concepts and practices of marketing research, how these concepts and practices are used by an organisation to make strategic decisions concerning products or services.

It is intended to provide a sound preparatory base for candidates wishing to extend their studies of marketing to a higher level and to prepare candidates who are employed in a marketing organisation with the skills and knowledge to undertake a wide range of marketing research activities which organisations must develop to achieve competitive performance.

CONTENT/CONTEXT The marketing research objectives should be confined to a domestic market setting. Candidates are expected to demonstrate an understanding of all of the research methods outlined in the unit, but it is intended that only one marketing brief will be undertaken. The choice of brief will be concerned with either product research, pricing research, sales and distribution research or advertising research.

For Outcome 2 it is expected that candidates would use primary, secondary and continuous data sources; including suitable databases where appropriate; and that a diversity of research methods such as desk research, surveys, and experimental design would be used. An appropriate use of interviews, questionnaires, observation and qualitative research should also be designed into the research project. It would be advisable to consider a formal report as an acceptable means of presenting the evidence of this outcome.

For Outcome 3 candidates should be provided with suitable research findings which they are required to analyse using selected techniques such as univariate testing; null hypothesis; regression and correlation; dispersion; probability; association; factor analysis; and cluster analysis.

The presentation of the results should incorporate tabular and graphical charts which provide the required degree of clarity and accuracy.

In Outcome 4 it is intended that forecasting techniques such as delphi consensus opinion, linear regression, moving average and exponential smoothing are comprehended by candidates and the limitations of each method are known.

The comparison of the different quantitative techniques should be undertaken by the use of suitable error measurements such as mean absolute deviation, mean squared error, and standard error of regression. However, considerable emphasis should be placed on factors which limit the accuracy of forecasts such as lack of suitable internal and external data, economic and environmental constraints and product life cycles. The use of confidence intervals should also be incorporated into the forecast accuracy.

For data analysis it is recommended that use is made of suitable computer software packages. Use could also be made of SNAP for survey analysis and/or MARQUIS which is a package, linking questionnaire design directly to survey analysis.

The outcomes of this unit could be integrated with outcomes of Higher National Unit 6560355 Marketing Analysis and Planning.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES Centres may use the Instruments of Assessment which are considered by tutors/trainers to be most appropriate. Examples of Instruments of Assessment which could be used are: essays, case studies, exams, portfolio or a combination of all four.

RECOGNITION This unit contributes towards the HNC and HND in Marketing.

Candidates who achieve the HNC in Marketing will be eligible for entry to the Chartered Institute of Marketing's (CIM) Advanced Certificate in Marketing.

Candidates who achieve the HND in Marketing will be eligible for entry to the CIM Diploma stage.

REFERENCES

1. Guide to unit writing.
2. For a fuller discussion on assessment issues, please refer to SQA's Guide to Assessment.
3. Information for centres on SQA's operating procedures is contained in SQA's Guide to Procedures.
4. For details of other SQA publications, please consult SQA's publications list.

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