



## EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2007

### BEHAVIOURAL ASPECTS OF MARKETING

#### General Comments

This year an overall pass rate of 59% was recorded, slightly up on last year. Of students sitting *Behavioural Aspects of Marketing*, 22% achieved higher grades (A and B), achieved grade 15% C, and 27% were awarded a D grade. All of the questions on this paper were explicit in their demands of students on issues that are frequent visitors to this paper i.e. Attitudes, Groups, Demographics, Perception, Personality and Motivation.

#### Areas for Development

Every year the examiner draws attention to strategies that if noted by students will improve the chances of their success, such as:

- This is a textbook driven subject area, the examiner always recommends a core text, which should imply that examinations at this stage are strongly derived from this text. It has always been the case and will continue to be that case. Ignoring the text and choosing to waffle through anecdotal personal stories always ends in failure. Buy the text, borrow the text from your library but don't ignore it.
- Potentially the most worrying feature of this year's examination was a dramatic increase in the number of students attempting less than the required 5 questions. This year a total of 39% of students attempted 4 or less questions, and more than 1 in ten attempted 3 or fewer questions. There is a very strong correlation between failure and failure to address the requisite number of questions.
- Students do not read the questions properly and do not note (or understand, or choose to ignore) the meaning of question key verbs such as Evaluate, Compare, Contrast, etc. It must be noted that these verbs are consciously chosen by examiners to evaluate specific areas of candidates' knowledge;
- Students who wish to sit the *Behavioural Aspects of Marketing* examination are encouraged by lecturers and tutors to familiarise themselves with past papers. It is obvious that many choose to ignore this advice;
- In many cases it was clear that students did not budget enough time for the required 5 questions, understanding the nature and importance of time management does pay dividends to students.

#### Positive Comments

The general upward trend of students achieving higher grades (A and B) over the last number of years has continued. The increasing trend in the use of labelled, explained and comprehensible diagrams and figures, remains a positive feature of the papers reviewed.

### **Question 1**

This question was intended to focus students' attentions on perceptual organisation, i.e. Gestalt principles, and social categorisation. However, it was surprising to note that many answers contained either elaborate descriptions of the entire perceptual process or focused entirely on sensory experience (for example thresholds & JND's). This question proved to be the most popular question on the paper, with nearly 90% of students attempting it, of which 50% passed.

### **Question 2**

Lengthy discussions of the sources of attitudes, the consistency theories or attitude measurement were not directly salient to the question. What was required was an engagement with the issues of congruence and attitude change. A well answered question with 50% of those passing in the honours grades brackets.

### **Question 3**

A definition of the term personality was required as was a description of the Nomothetic or law setting approach and its core tenets. Trait theory, type theory and personality measurement considerations brought rich rewards. An exceptionally well answered question, with 50% of those attempting, earning high class honours grades

### **Question 4**

The annual issue of motivation allowed descriptions of Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory of work motivation. High class honours questions appropriately addressed the components of Expectancy, Instrumentality and Valence, a category into which fell a third of candidates.

### **Question 5**

This question was intentionally included as an open-ended and potentially a get-out-of-jail-free question. Students could 'fall' on either side of the fence, or sit on it if they wished. As was expected the majority fell on the positive (usefulness) side. Students were required to indicate either the usefulness or uselessness of the behavioural sciences to marketers by reference to behavioural science principles, for example Sensation, Attitudes, Demographics or management etc. Lengthy discussions and descriptions of some of the disciplines that form the behavioural sciences or discussions entirely focusing on what *are* the behavioural sciences did not serve students well. Of the one third of candidates attempting one third of those received honours grades

### **Question 6**

A straightforward and very frequently asked question, asking students to explain Tuckman's stages of groups formation: Forming Storming, Norming, Performing (Adjourning). Generally a very well answered question, with the vast majority of students better than passing. However, this was not directly a question on the types of groups, why individuals join groups. Attempted by 60% of students - half of which received honours grades.

### **Question 7**

Generally a very well answered question, with the vast majority of student focused entirely on Irish demography issues solely, migration, emigration, mobility etc. As always a small percentage of students seemed confused with the relative meanings of emigration and immigration. 50% of students attempted this question, of which 50% passed.

### **Question 8**

Most candidates recognised that this question was directly on the assessment of group power and proceeded to discuss same referencing The Hawthorne studies, Milgram, Asch's experiment as proof, which was a very worthwhile approach to take. However those who concentrated on the stages of group formation and the primary categorisation of groups for their entire responses were definitively off course.