EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2009

**MARKETING INFORMATION
ANALYSIS 1 (MIA 1)**

General Comments

1.   This examiner is glad to say that most candidates this May did extremely well as can be seen below.

Grade	Percentage of candidates
A	35%
B	0%
C	12%
D	18%
E	6%
F	29%

The overall pass rate at 65% is higher than usual and congratulations to the high proportion who got an A grade.

2.   The task for each cohort of students is to master the basics of business information analysis and communication. So each year the students are asked to deal with averages, charts, forecasting, relationships between variables and other descriptive issues. In addition, they should master inferences, i.e. be able to gain solid and reliable information from sample data. It is may appear to be quite similar to sections of the MIA 2 paper but this module places greater emphasis on calculation rather than discussion or interpretation.

The challenge is to be competent in the monitoring of business performance and so the paper tests basic skills rather than aiming to become more difficult. Therefore the topics examined and the format of the paper do not fundamentally change from year to year (i.e. eight areas of the course are examined every session over eight questions). So you should master previous papers to ensure that you will gain a pass in the one you face.

3   In addition to the consistency of papers, there is a corresponding similarity in all the examiner's reports. Indeed it has have suggested over a long time that the wide variety of question types in each paper – charts, sampling practice, interpretation of data, use of correlation and regression formulae forecasting etc) all can be used to your advantage. I would study to capitalize on my strengths and avoid my weaknesses. So I would pick the questions on which I am likely to score highest and I would prepare these thoroughly.

Question 1

This was neither popular nor well done. Students were asked to describe stratified random sampling and quota sampling and to distinguish between them. This is very straightforward and the answer in a few lines can be found in any statistics or marketing research text. The second part of the question is also quite familiar as it deals with confidence intervals for a population mean value. As you know, it takes only a few minutes to do this calculation. Finally the candidates were asked to show

the effect of sample size on the precision of a confidence interval. None of the three topics was answered well.

Question 2
Part (a) of the question is routine and requires a histogram to be made from raw data. While there were 81 people in the sample, some failed to check that their frequency table added correctly and so they finished with totals of 80, 83 and even 74!! Accuracy is important in business and so you should always check that you have the correct total. Also, the calculation of the mean and standard deviation are standard skills that should cause no problems. About 30% of the candidates got full marks for this question.

Question 3
Index numbers weren't very popular as a topic even though a Laspeyres Overall Price index was in part (a). The section on making an index of purchasing power wasn't great either.

Question 4
As usual, the question on time series was both popular and well performed. Again over 30% got full marks. Candidates were generally able to graph the data and to calculate the trend. The calculation of seasonal variation and forecasts were also dealt with in a competent manner.

Question 5
Candidates also did well in the question on regression. It is very straightforward and candidates were generally good at drawing the scatter diagram and using a regression equation to make a forecast.

Question 6
Less than a third of the candidates took these short questions on probability and they were generally very poor attempts with one notable exception where a candidate got full marks.

Question 7
Surprisingly, no one attempted this question on a Chi-square test and hypothesis test for the difference of two populations using data from large samples.

Question 8
Again, the examiner was surprised that only half of the candidates attempted the research planning exercise. It is an essay-type question which on this occasion dealt with present and anticipated behaviour and attitudes of Irish people regarding saving in Irish banks. The examiner expects candidates to have good detailed answers prepared for all such research.