



## EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2000

### MARKETING INFORMATION ANALYSIS II (MIA 2)

#### General Comments

Approximately one quarter of candidates failed to attain the pass grade, D. On the other hand a similar proportion (about one quarter) obtained either an A or B grade. This represents an improvement on the previous year's results, where 30% did not pass the summer MIA2 examination, while only 20% obtained an A or B grade. As in all recent years, the disparity between candidates' capabilities in Sections A and B, is again apparent. However there appears to be an improvement in candidates grasp of matters relating to sampling as shown in answers to Question 5. Also, the presence of a largely non-quantitative question in Section B this year (Question 6), may have helped some candidates.

#### SECTION A

##### Question 1

Over 90% of candidates attempted this question. Most were able to answer part (a) quite well, but many lost marks because of an inability to explain clearly the various types of errors, referred to in part (b). As some of the issues involved here are quite subtle, this part of the question discriminated well between candidates with a general knowledge of the topics and those with a thorough knowledge based on specific study.

##### Question 2

Again over 90% of candidates attempted this question. Some candidates lost time by including material not asked for in the question. A concise diagram showing and briefly explaining the various types of external secondary data would have sufficed for part (a). As in Question 1, many candidates lost marks because of a somewhat hazy knowledge of the precise character and purpose of retail audits and diary panels.

##### Question 3

Most candidates find it relatively easy to describe Focus Groups. This is to be expected as, superficially, their purpose is intuitively obvious and "non technical." However when asked to explain or give examples of particular questioning techniques in qualitative research, many candidates experience difficulties. As always, performance in examinations reflects study effort.

#### **Question 4**

It would be very difficult to clearly distinguish measurement and scaling if one had not studied the relevant material in the text, or obtained similar information from other sources. Many candidates had great difficulties with this part of the question, while appearing to find the provision of examples of the four primary scales relatively easy. Part (b) of this question was not answered well, generally. The key information required was that the level at which an attribute is measured determines the type of information yielded and also determines the type of statistical method which is appropriate in analysing the data obtained.

### **SECTION B**

#### **Question 5**

Almost all candidates attempted this question and most showed some understanding of the relative merits of the different sampling methods. However, a minority do not appear to recognise that the various sampling methods have particular strengths and weaknesses, which need to be clearly indicated, as requested in the question.

#### **Question 6**

Many candidates ignored the request to indicate the *sequence of steps* involved in preparing data for computer analysis. While this did not necessarily entail a loss of marks (provided candidates were able to display the required information) it tended to mean that answers were unnecessarily lengthy and sometimes meandering. The importance of noting carefully the specific question asked, is demonstrated in Question 6 (b) by some candidates' tendency to include much irrelevant information on ways of improving response rates in surveys.

#### **Question 7**

This was by far the least popular question. While it is possible that the length of the syllabus is such that for many part-time/night students, lecturers are unable to cover statistical methods, probably a more important factor is the distaste many marketing students feel for any topic with significant quantitative content.

#### **Question 8**

This type of question has been asked in MIA2 examinations many times in recent years. On the whole, the quality of answering is not impressive. In tune with the comments made above in relation to Question 7, many candidates have great difficulty in grasping concepts associated with hypothesis testing, probability and the basic purpose of statistical tests.