



## **EXAMINER'S REPORT**

**MAY 2001**

### **STAGE 3 PROJECT**

In general, the standard of this year's stage 3 projects was good with 57% of candidates receiving a grade C or better. 5% of students attained a grade A, while at the other end of the spectrum, 9% failed the project. The main reasons for failure were inadequate research, a poorly focused strategy, inability to apply marketing theory to practical situations, and project content which showed little effort in preparation of the report.

The project was designed to test the research capability, knowledge and skills of the students in applying the theoretical concepts of marketing to the practical situation of a small Irish company called 'Paiste'. 'Paiste' sells handknit sweaters throughout Ireland and is considering entry into an export market. The project involved the identification of a possible overseas market for 'Paiste' products and the development of an outline marketing plan for the export initiative. The endeavour also involved describing the buyer behavioural factors that needed to be considered in the marketing of 'Paiste' products and the promotional strategies that could be used. The better projects were well structured and presented and included an abstract, a clear statement of objectives, details of the methodology employed in the preparation of the report and a statement of the assumptions made. Another feature that distinguished the better projects was an overview of the selection procedure or criteria used to select the target market and a justification for the target market chosen. The projects receiving a higher grade were those that included clear promotional objectives, budget outline recommendations, a time schedule for promotion, and a promotional strategy with a focus not only on advertising, but also on below-the-line promotional tools. The better projects were also those that indicated clearly how a wide range of buyer behavioural factors – cultural, social, personal and psychological – need to be considered in marketing 'Paiste' products.

Reports awarded a low grade tended to neglect the importance of structure and were weak in content, gave incomplete answers, failed to answer certain questions, and failed to integrate marketing theory with the practical situation outlined. They also indicated the components of a marketing plan, but never developed a marketing plan specific to 'Paiste'. The examiner also noted that a lot of these projects failed to reference the sources used in the writing of the project document.

In general, the examiner was satisfied with the overall standard of the projects submitted and was impressed with the presentation quality of most projects. It was evident that a considerable amount of effort, research and thought went into the preparation of the projects. It was also impressive to see the extent to which the Internet was used as an information source and the extent to which the children's knitwear market was researched. The examiner wished to congratulate those students who received an A grade. These students undertook extensive research, both primary and secondary and produced extremely impressive reports which contained many innovative and creative ideas.