



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2006

STAGE 3 PROJECT

General Comments

The project brief required students to present an overview of the Irish off-license trade, commenting on the recent growth in at-home alcohol consumption. The brief additionally required students to suggest an integrated promotional strategy that could be used to promote a new Irish off-license retailer. Students had to also comment on the buyer behavioural factors that have led to an increase in at-home alcohol consumption. Finally, they were requested to discuss the diversity existing within Europe with regard to the prevalence and growth of at-home alcohol consumption.

The aim of the Stage 3 project was to encourage students to apply theoretical concepts from marketing communications, buyer behaviour and international marketing, to the practical scenario outlined in the project. Despite the fact that 15% of the project marks are now exclusively allocated to marrying theory and practice, a surprising number of candidates failed to do so adequately. In a lot of cases, large sections of the projects were unreferenced, with no clear indication of where the information came from. Where a reference was indicated, large sections of text or direct quotations were lifted wholesale from the source used.

Despite the above problems, in general, the quality of this year's Stage 3 projects was better than in previous years. 59% of students obtained a grade C or better and on average, 1 in 4 students obtained a B grade. In general, the examiner was satisfied with the overall standard of the projects submitted. In particular, the examiner wishes to congratulate students awarded A and B grades. These students showed evidence of considerable research on the topic and included some innovative and creative promotional ideas in their projects.

However, 8% of the projects submitted failed. These projects showed very little evidence of research on the Irish and European off-license trade. Some of these projects focused on discussing alcohol consumption in general, rather than at-home alcohol consumption, as specifically requested. These projects were in general poorly written and were descriptive in nature. They failed to show an understanding of how buyer behaviour factors have led to the growth of at-home alcohol consumption. These projects also failed to develop a comprehensive promotional plan for a new off-license retailer and as mentioned earlier, failed to integrate relevant marketing theory into their answers. It was disappointing that some candidates ignored certain sections of the project, even though the marks allocated to each section were clearly indicated.