



EXAMINER'S REPORT

AUGUST 2002

SERVICES MARKETING MANAGEMENT

Overall the main comments are as with the May examination. Students need to read the question precisely and answer what is asked. The instructions stated that marks would be awarded for the relevant use of contemporary Irish and international examples of marketing practice. In addition where such examples were sought marks were indicated on the examination paper, e.g. 5% of a total 20%. In spite of this many students presented answers with excessive examples and insufficient theory.

I must make the point that the text book is compulsory reading. Students cannot expect to get good grades or even pass grades if they have not studied the compulsory text.

Because of the small numbers involved in the August examinations in this subject it is difficult to make broad generalizations.

SECTION A

The compulsory question was similar to those questions previously asked. Students should have been well prepared for this type of question. Broadly speaking the question required an explanation of the unique characteristics of services, the expanded marketing mix, and other areas covered in the text. Unfortunately students seem to prepare for this question only. Because of that the compulsory question will be changed from next May.

SECTION B

Question 2

To the examiner's surprise this questions proved popular. Usually questions on pricing are avoided by students. The answer required students to discuss cost based, demand based, and competition based pricing structures. This topic is well covered in the text pp 437 – 443 and the majority of those attempting the question had prepared adequately. Indeed one in four of those who answered this question gained marks equivalent to 75%.

Question 3

Again this question was well answered. The question was based on Chapter 7 in the text and in particular pp 175 – 181. The only problem encountered was the tendency to rely too much on the examples. This was a feature of responses from students who had not studied the text and were hoping to pass on the basis of anecdotes. Unfortunately this is not a good exam technique!

Question 4

The most unpopular question on the paper; it was attempted by fewer than one in three candidates. Even at that it was very poorly answered. The answer would have allowed candidates to discuss the issues raised in Chapter 15, most of which is dedicated to this topic.

Question 5

Another unpopular question. The question was very straightforward and was based on Chapter 8. The area of new product development would also have been covered in other courses taken during the programme. However this appears to have been lost on those attempting the question. It was very poorly answered. Again many candidates depended exclusively on anecdotes and their opinion as to how the process should be managed rather than elaborating on the steps of a process outlined in their text.

Question 6

The most popular question in section B was generally well answered. However since knowledge of this topic is essential to the understanding of the text this was not surprising. Good students got the balance between theory and practice right. As already said on a number of occasions this notion of balancing theory and practice is essential to getting a good grade in this subject.