



## EXAMINER'S REPORT

AUGUST 2008

### LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT

#### **General Comments**

The results this August were not as good as this examiner expected, however two scripts got 'A's but there was very few 'B's or 'C's. The way this course and exam is structured requires the student to really get into the theory, the techniques and how to apply the ideas in practice. This follows a learning cycle. Ideally students should look at the cases early on to get an idea of the types of problems which occur. These are mixtures of marketing, logistics, mathematics and strategy. Subsequently one should get into the theory, but not spend the year learning it off. Usually it is reasonably well done. Basically a clear understanding of what is in the text is expected and some practical illustrations from outside, such as from Irish applications. The middle part of the year should be spent on the quantitative techniques, hopefully linking them into the cases and the theory, and anecdotes about Irish companies where possible.

Students can get through by focusing on one of the parts, but this year there were few instances of full marks for a question. Consequently, students who failed invariably did one of the sections very poorly and were not able to compensate from another section. There were quite a few cases of grades in the mid-thirties where the candidate had not attempted one of the four sections. If they had they would surely have passed. This is indicative that they did not study all sections. It is safer to study all the sections.

There is no need to do roughwork and then write your answer out neatly. It wastes your precious time. Transcribing answers takes effort that would be better used on another question. Do your chosen questions as best you can. If you think you are making a mistake say so; then try to correct it. If you blank out, just leave two pages so that you can move onto other questions. Maybe later you will be able to do the rest of that question. Do not waste your time doing restarts. Try to make your points clear by highlighting them in bullet points and then elaborate if required.

*It is worth mentioning that the student should cover all the contents within the module syllabus and previous exam papers can only be considered as a guide to the way questions may be asked. It is a wrong study strategy to rely mainly on previous exam papers.*

## SECTIONS A & B

The case questions are geared at bringing one through a process of analysis, evaluation, diagnosis and prognosis. Most students tried all parts of the case section, and attempted all the sections in the exam. Consequently there were fewer than ever failures due to not attempting one or more sections. In the past this was the most common cause of failure and the reason for the high average failure rate. It should be understood that Logistics is important not just of itself but also because it requires one to put on one's quantitative thinking cap when addressing marketing problems. When answering the case you should use the structure of the questions; it had four parts this August. Within each part it is a good idea to make a statement, possibly using a headline or point form, and then justify it in a few sentences. **Section A&B are non-quantitative parts and they contain 60% of the overall examination mark.**

### Quantitative Questions

**Section C** contained an inventory question that was straight forward. This is a long section in the text and likely to occur every year. This year the question used the probabilistic model of inventory control and the use of normal distribution curve is essential to come up with the order point which is 578.27 litres while the Safety Stock is 78.27 litres.

**Section D** was an easy application of assignment problem. As has been stated before it seems to have not been well prepared generally. It is not a simple method; one must develop an understanding of the technique. The basics are straightforward. Most of the students did have attempts on this question but very few scored full marks and the majority had not succeeded to solve it. The final assignment to this problem is:

Job	Machine
1	D
2	A
3	C
4	B

The total production: 40

**Question 7** is an example of a standard application of networking in projects which not many people got right or even tried. The logic of building a network using the predecessor activities is important and students have to be prepared to do that. The network was a simple one. The critical path is A, C, E, F, and the anticipated project completion time is 15 days. The total cost:

$$TC = 400 + 800 + 520 + 600 + 255 + 600 = \text{€}3175$$

It is the sum-up of all activities in the project. The project networking and cost crashing is not a regular question but it is easy question if you are familiar with the technique.