General Comments

The results this May were slightly similar to last year with almost a 58% pass rate. Although there were few "As" and "Bs", but the numbers are still higher than last year results. The case and theory questions scored better marks while the quantitative questions were not done well even though the questions were easy.

The way this module and exam is structured requires one 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, strategy and operations management issues.

Theory Questions & Case Study

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. Consequently there were fewer than ever failures due to not attempting one or more sections.

Dell's Supply Chain Management case study is new and reflects on current supply chain management issues. Most of students described the Direct Model used by Dell yet failed to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of Dell's strategic decision to get into the retail business.

Most of the students did no critical evaluation in the case, which was regrettable. The examiner expected most students to be better prepared for the case as it is relatively new and relevant. The case is worth 40%, equivalent to two questions, so it is justifiable to invest more time preparing and studying before the final exam.

For theory questions, try to be specific when you discuss any topic and highlight on the key issues. For example; in the components of value; the key elements will include:
- Perceived benefits ('get')
- Perceived sacrifice ('give)

Followed by a discussion on the main parts of each element is recommended. A schematic diagram would add value to the answer and help to score higher marks and save time.
There is no need to mention your company name in the context as an example rather than say retail or electronic business or company.

Quantitative Questions

Before I get into specifics, I would like to emphasis that there is no need to do rough work first then write your answer out neatly. Save your time and do the work in the same sheet as you answer away.

Question 4 was a very easy question and more than 90% of the students attempted to solve it. Many scored the full mark for this question. The following is a summary of the final answers:

a) EOQ (optimal quantity) = 624.5 pistons
b) Optimal Total Cost = €30312.25
c) Time between orders = 15 days

Question 6 in Section D contained a very easy assignment problem and unexpectedly not many solve it correct. The initial table:

Job	Aodh	Blanaid	Colm	Donal	Eoin
1	6	14	20	9	17
2	25	18	22	11	14
3	12	22	11	14	6
4	14	8	13	17	9
5	17	14	10	12	15

First, check balance of the problem so that there is an equal number of jobs to reps, then continue the optimisation procedure (iterative) to minimise the total time. The final table of the solution is shown below:

Job	Aodh	Blanaid	Colm	Donal	Eoin
1	0	6	10	0	11
2	17	8	10	0	6
3	6	14	1	5	0
4	8	0	3	8	3
5	11	6	0	3	9

Job	Rep	Time
Job 1	Aodh	6
Job 2	Donal	11
Job 3	Eoin	6
Job 4	Blanaid	8
Job 5	Colm	10
		41 minutes

The other part of the question will need to create a new dummy column in order to balance the problem before you conduct similar steps to assign jobs.