# Level 7, Unit 5, Research Methods and their Application to Marketing (25 credits)

# Assessor's guide to interpreting the criteria

## RQF general description for Level 7 qualifications

- Achievement at Level 7 requires a learner to command and display mastery of the complex and specialised area of business studies, demonstrate expertise in highly specialised and advanced technical, professional, and research skills.

- Learners at this level are expected to be able to conduct professional activity, including research, using and modifying advanced skills and tools, and designing appropriate research methodologies. They would be expected to effectively communicate results of such research to peers.

- Learners should be able to develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques, and act in a wide variety of unpredictable and advanced professional contexts.

- The level of accountability at Level 7 expects the learner to accept full responsibility for relevant decision-making, including supervision and a significant degree of responsibility for other people's work, initiating activity and taking the lead.

## EQF general description for Level 7 qualifications (RQF Level 7 is mapped to EQF Level 7)

- Achievement at EQF Level 7 reflects the ability to build, use and transfer highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in the field of business, as the basis for original thinking and/or research. The learner must also demonstrate critical awareness of knowledge issues in the field of business and at the interface between it and other fields.

- This level commands specialised problem-solving skills required in research and innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields.
- A learner at this level is expected to manage and transform work and study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches.

- The levels commands that learners take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice, and for reviewing the strategic performance of teams.

## General requirements

- Conformance of individual student's performance to unit criteria and standards must be confirmed by a trained assessor.
- Centres, in collaboration with the assessors, must ensure that there is system in place allowing collection and storage of routine evidence of students' work (e-portfolios). E-portfolios should be in a format allowing online access, on request, by a TLM account manager.

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- When the assessor is satisfied with a candidate matching all the criteria to the specification subject to the guidance below, the Centre can request a review of the e-portoflio by an account manager.
- If the account manager confirms the assessor's judgements, the student will get 30 marks towards his/her final mark, and be allowed to sit a final examination.
- When the student passes the final examination (see below Method of assessment), the student is considered to have completed all the requirements for the qualification.

*Expansion of the assessment criteria*

**1 The learner will understand the role of research methods, within the context of management, marketing and business.**

**1.1 The learner can explain the reasons why research is important to marketing.**

Candidates should explain the nature of marketing research and how research methods, tools and instruments may contribute to effective marketing.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**1.2 The learner can identify strengths and weaknesses in the main research philosophies when applied to marketing.**

Candidates must attempt to uncover the strengths and weaknesses in the three main research philosophies in marketing context.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**Additional information and guidance**:
Learners should understand the difference between research philosophies and research methods. They should be acquainted and be able to discuss and compare the philosophies of positivism, interpretivism, and realism.

**1.3 The learner can explain the terms positivism, interpretivism, phenomenology, quantitative research, qualitative research.**

Extending the knowledge demonstrated in 1.2, candidates must explain the terms positivism, interpretivism, phenomenology, quantitative research, qualitative research.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**1.4 The learner can distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research methods.**

Candidates must differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research methods.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**Additional information and guidance**:
This criterion can be assessed from two perspectives - one, by providing the learner with multiple examples of both research methods, and two, allowing the learner to construct his/her own examples by abstraction. Ideally, the answers should contain sufficient evidence for a concise comparative analysis.

## 1.5 The learner can describe how to estimate uncertainties in the findings of market research.

Candidates must explain methods and techniques to estimate uncertainties in market research findings.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**Additional information and guidance**:
Firstly, learners should identify the situations which create uncertainties in market research. Then specific methods and tools should be discussed, and learners must assess their impact on the quality of market forecasts. Assessors may provide some initial guidance and limits, as the selection pool may be quite vast, depending on the curriculum.

## 2 The learner will be able to develop research designs to meet needs.

## 2.1 The learner can identify a need that has the potential to be satisfied through research.

Candidates must demonstrate that they can identify a situation and need arising in the organisation's marketing function, which can be dealt with, or satisfied, through research.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**Additional information and guidance**:
Although the criterion presumes a single need, candidates should be encouraged to identify a range of needs and explain why research -- in broad terms-- could satisfy these needs and suggest answers.

## 2.2 The learner can select a suitable research method to meet identified needs.

Candidates must apply their knowledge and analytical skills in selecting a suitable research method to meet identified needs.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**Additional information and guidance**:
Learners should be able to select the most effective research method for a given situation and

explain the rationale behind their choice. This criterion extends 2.1 and the two may be assessed in conjunction.

## 2.3 The learner can formulate a market research hypothesis to test using practical research.

Candidates can formulate a market research hypothesis for testing using practical research methods.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**Additional information and guidance**:
A good answer should result in a well constructed hypothesis, clearly stating the presumed problem, the proposed solution, and the anticipated result. Learners should devise a research method suitable for the suggested hypothesis and must understand that regardless of whether the hypothesis is confirmed or rejected, both results lead to meaningful data which a good researcher must consider.

## 2.4 The learner can identify potential bias in approaches to gathering evidence.

Candidates must explain the concept of bias and the different types of bias, which a particular research may imply when gathering evidence and interpreting findings.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

## 2.5 The learner can distinguish between primary and secondary sources of evidence.

Candidates must be able to identify and critically discuss a range of primary and secondary sources of evidence and make conclusions as to their reliability and the value they could bring to a research.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**Additional information and guidance**:
This criterion relates to criteria 3.2 and 3.3 and assessors may opt for a common task/assignment.

## 2.6 The learner can structure a research design with respect to objectives, evidence gathering, information processing, review and reporting.

Candidates must pay particular attention to details when putting together a research plan. They should carefully define objectives, and design the evidence gathering, information processing, review and reporting phases and processes.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

## 2.7 The learner can reference research planning with supporting literature to validate the

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**methods adopted.**

Candidates must equip their research plans with relevant, appropriate, and sufficient supporting reference in order to validate the research methods that they have adopted.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**3 The learner will be able to carry out a practical research project.**

Using this set of criteria, assessors should be able to validate learners' practical research skills.

**3.1 The learner can implement a research plan based on a rational design.**

Candidates must demonstrate that they can put to work a research plan which is reasonable, rational and well structured.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**Additional information and guidance**:
Assessors should look for proof that candidates can understand a research plan and that they can explain and apply in practice the steps, processes and research tools it contains. Candidates should be provided with a research plan prepared or adapted for this purpose.

**3.2 The learner can collect evidence that is relevant and fit for purpose.**

Candidates must demonstrate in practice how they collect relevant and appropriate evidence within the framework of a research plan.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**Additional information and guidance**:
This criterion relates to criteria 2.5 and 3.3 and assessors may opt for a common task/assignment.

**3.3 The learner can review and validate evidence.**

Candidates must demonstrate their practical skills in reviewing, evaluating and validating evidence, when presented with a research plan which clearly outlines the research objectives.

**Additional information and guidance**:
This criterion relates to criteria 2.5 and 3.2 and assessors may opt for a common task/assignment.

**3.4 The learner can process results using appropriate tools and methods.**

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Candidates must demonstrate that they can select appropriate methods and tools for processing information, apply them to gathered evidence, and arrive at a coherent dataset.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**Additional information and guidance**:
This criterion strongly relates to units focusing on quantitative methods in previous levels of this qualification.

**3.5 The learner can present findings in an informative and objective style including accuracy and validity of results.**

Candidates must demonstrate presentation skills when announcing findings to business educated audience.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**Additional information and guidance**:
The presentation should be well structured, concise, objective, and accurate. Evidence, datasets, and interpretation of findings must be clearly delimited. They must understand the importance of communication as a key element of research.

**3.6 The learner can reference sources of information both empirical and theoretical.**

Candidates must demonstrate that they are aware of, and can use in their work, the principles and rules of referencing different types of information sources.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**Additional information and guidance**:
Learners should typically be aware of the existence of different referencing conventions, but may limit their answers to a single one.

**4 The learner will understand the theoretical basis under-pinning market research practice.**

**4.1 The learner can provide a summary of the main documented findings from previous relevant practical research.**

Candidates must demonstrate communication skills in summarising findings from a previous research.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

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**Additional information and guidance**:
Assessors should make available to their learners a document based on real-life research that contains research's findings, conclusions, and possibly estimates and forecasts. Exact context, while necessarily lying in the field of marketing, is arbitrary. Learners are expected to make correct and concise representation of the research findings, highlighting the most important of them, and advising caution on information and datasets where errors and bias may be present.

**4.2 The learner can relate theories to practice in market research.**

Candidates should be able to trace theories and their key concepts along the entire line of different practical market research algorithms.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**4.3 The learner can compare and contrast theoretical perspectives on market research.**

Candidates must demonstrate comparative and analytical skills in discussing the theoretical perspectives on market research.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**Additional information and guidance**:
Learners should explain and contrast qualitative and quantitative marketing research, and methods based on observations and experimental techniques. They should explain how the theory and principles behind these different research methods are reflected in the specific techniques they employ.

4.4 The learner can use personal practical experience to contribute valid and original support for the theoretical base under-pinning market research.

Candidates must demonstrate that they can relate their personal market research experience to the relevant theory, and that they can use this experience to support and suggest furthering of the theoretical base.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

**4.5 The learner can describe the main statistical methods for collecting data from large sample groups in quantitative studies.**

Candidates should explain the principal statistical methods for data collection in quantitative studies in the context of large samples.

**Evidence**: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

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**Additional information and guidance**:
Learners must demonstrate their competency by discussing the different sampling methods and recognising the related errors and biases in data collection.

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