

Level 3 Certificate in Advertising



International
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Annual Qualification Review

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INTRODUCTION

The annual qualification review provides qualification-specific support and guidance to centres. This information is designed to help teachers preparing to teach the subject and to help candidates preparing to take the examination.

The reviews are published in September and take into account candidate performance, demonstrated in both on demand and series examinations, over the preceding 12 months. Global pass rates are published so you can measure the performance of your centre against these.

The review identifies candidate strengths and weaknesses by syllabus topic area and provides examples of good and poorer candidate responses. It should therefore be read in conjunction with details of the structure and learning objectives contained within the syllabus for this qualification found on the website.

The review also identifies any actual or proposed changes to the syllabus or question types together with their implications.

PASS RATE STATISTICS

The following statistics are based on the performance of candidates who took this qualification between 1 October 2007 and 30 September 2008.

Global pass rate 36.39%

Grade distributions

Pass	25.68%
Credit	9.84%
Distinction	0.87%

GENERAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Strengths

- use of appropriate formats/layouts as requested in questions
- improved understanding of the subject and increasing observation of promotion in action
- answers to Question 1 provided that candidates have understood whether it is copy/layout, storyboard or script that is required

Weaknesses

- too much repetition of textbook information
- failure to fully read and understand the questions as set
- stock answers taken from previous model answers
- combination of above leads to answers without thought and relevance to the questions set

TEACHING POINTS BY SYLLABUS TOPIC

Syllabus Topic Area 1: Role of Advertising

A broad topic area which candidates fail to answer well as they fail to see how the background to the overall subject of marketing communications relates to the more specific areas covered in the rest of the syllabus

Specific recommendations are that candidates must:

- realise that the examiner is seeking the candidates' observed application of advertising and promotional techniques within the real world
- pick up key phrases such as 'an actual campaign' and not just repeat textbook information
- describe advertising and promotional campaigns when asked and not explain how they would mount campaigns
- review the role of promotional techniques relevant to actual economic and market conditions

Syllabus Topic Area 2: Types of Advertising

Too many candidates focus only on consumer advertising and its variations

Specific recommendations are that candidates need to:

- consider other, often more important or more applicable forms of advertising (e.g. trade, B2B promotions)
- avoid too much emphasis on repetition of learned textbook information
- consider the question posed
- avoid past model answers
- show fuller understanding or use of all types and forms of advertising

Syllabus Topic Area 3: The Advertiser

Candidates prepare to answer certain questions which are not ones relating to this topic and so fail to answer appropriately

Teaching points

- ensure questions are read clearly as many responses describe the roles and responsibilities of account handlers rather than the in-house advertising manager
- appreciate the fuller and increasingly important roles of the advertising manager within the organisations that they work
- concentrate on substance not the technicalities (such as supplying copy and layout as if answering question 1) if asked to express answers as a display advertisement. Candidates should also avoid the very simplest situation vacancy type of advertisement with no content
- learn and understand job functions and the marketing communications operation within an organisation

Syllabus Topic Area 4: Advertising Agency

As with syllabus topic 2, too much concentration is given over to the consumer advertising agency and variations such as the media independent and 'a la carte' agencies

Teaching Points

- there are more likely to be questions devoted to increasingly important trade and technical and industrial advertising agencies and the role of other specialist consultancies
- appreciate that promotion of FMCG is entering a higher and more costly spectrum beyond the needs and means of most small to medium enterprises who nevertheless need to communicate with target audiences
- candidates fail to understand the role of the account handlers and insist on describing the role of accounts in the conventional commercial sense
- similarly candidates should avoid describing the production department of the advertising agency in the normal industrial sense.

Syllabus Topic Area 5: Creation of Press Advertisements

Most responses (i.e. producing copywriting and layout) achieve a pass or better if it is what has been requested in the question (see Syllabus Topic 6)

Teaching points: -

- it is now an established convention that this will appear in the question paper in rotation with storyboards and radio scripts
- it is not a test of creative copywriting nor ability to design and draw
- candidates are being tested on their understanding of the technicalities of copywriting and visualisation (should they be employed as an advertising manager, account handler or any other non-creative role in marketing communications)
- candidates are not being tested on any ability to necessarily be a member of the agency creative team

Syllabus Topic Area 6: Creating Broadcast Commercials

Most answers to this question are good to excellent if the candidates respond to the request for a storyboard or radio script as others supply the copy and layout for a press advertisement

Specific recommendations are that candidates: -

- should concentrate on the technicalities (e.g. camera directions, voice-overs [with variations of personnel and tones], effects etc.)
- lack of understanding the techniques might be compensated for by creativity
- should avoid visual directions (e.g. 'crossed his legs') in radio scripts

Syllabus Topic Area 7: Producing Advertisements

Most responses earn the marks on offer as they appreciate that the questions relate to the production of advertising and printed promotional material – and not production in the normal industrial sense.

Specific recommendations are that candidates should realise:

- the question does highlight that it relates to this area by using words like ‘print’
- technical terms requiring definition are related to producing advertisements, brochures etc, and not broadcasting commercials

Syllabus Topic Area 8: Production of Commercials

The two sections of the syllabus topic were the subject of questions within the review period but unfortunately they were confused by students answering them

Specific recommendations are that candidates need to: -

- read the question that has been set and so if asked for the approval procedures for commercials for broadcasting on television do not answer with the production stages of TV commercials. (This would have received a maximum of six [6] marks and that would have included those marks allocated for a format such as a memorandum or report)
- realise that vice versa, the candidate would receive no marks whatsoever

Syllabus Topic Area 9: Media Selection

Although it might be understandable that the next three syllabus topics related to media could be confused, it is up to teaching staff and students to ensure that they realise the significant differences.

Teaching points: -

- problems arise as candidates seeing the word ‘media’, react with all the knowledge that they have committed to memory
- topic relates to how the various media can target types of messages to apt target audiences
- attempts are made when creating the questions to focus candidates on key technical terms and their significance (such as ‘primary and secondary media’ and ‘above-the-line’ and ‘below the line’ etc.)
- candidates should learn and understand ‘intermedia’ and ‘intramedia’ as they are either not known or, more recently, confused with ‘internet’ and ‘intranet’.
- often questions relate to actual use of media in the candidate’s locality

Syllabus Topic Area 10: Media Research

Answers are often flawed as candidates deliberately focus on 'research' and missing the word 'media' or alternatively fail to fully read the question and discuss market research

Teaching points:

- candidates must look at the available independent research (such as NRS, BARB etc.) and other ways of quantifying the effectiveness of media in reaching the apt target audience.
- Local forms of media research are acceptable if plausible so requires description, justification and qualification

Syllabus Topic Area 11: Media Planning/Buying

Schedules are often well produced but others still rely on describing the scheduling of space in publications and airtime on radio and TV. Additionally, many answers fail to give any reasoning for the choice of media (which relates to Topics 9 and 10).

Specific recommendations are that candidates should realise:

- the topic refers to the scheduling of specific publications, radio stations and television channels etc., together with principles of costing as well as means of negotiating

Syllabus Topic Area 12: Voluntary Controls

Answers frequently include every form of control and regulation due, once again, to failing to read the question or shoehorning all memorised information into answers in the hope that some of it might be right

Teaching Points

- there is tendency for questions set by the examiner to be less related to the British system but use it as a basis for understanding voluntary controls generally
- questions are posed to encourage students to respond on the issue of ethical trading particularly in the candidate's market place
- too often the answers relate to the mandatory banning of products (such as tobacco products and alcohol – this often being unconnected with the marketing of such products)
- little reference to self-regulatory limitations on promoting products and services as time and effort is concentrated on mandatory (legal) controls
- terms such as 'self-regulation' and 'codes of practice' are deliberately used in the question to focus candidates' attention

Syllabus Topic Area 13: Law and Advertising

Questions on this topic are less frequently answered and many score high marks if they do but only if they concentrate on the subject of the question. Terms such as 'legislation', 'laws' and 'mandatory controls' are deliberately used in the question to focus candidates' attention

Specific recommendations are that candidates should realise the syllabus topic consists of four separate areas relevant to advertising and promotion (and not marketing):

- Civil laws (contract and copyright)
- Agency agreements/contracts/terms
- Legal relationship – agencies/media owners
- Consumer protection and its role in advertising

Note: Local variations can be used as long as they are plausible so they must be described, explained and qualified relative to questions as set

Syllabus Topic Area 14: Evaluation and Testing

Once again, candidates dump all their learned knowledge and so fail to gain the marks available.

- frequently the questions concentrate, separately (and in rotation) on pre-production, post production or continuous monitoring
- the examiner does attempt to focus candidates by including key phrases such as 'before the campaign is launched' etc.
- attempts are made to 'shoe-horn' market research techniques into answers not those methods related to the monitoring of advertising

Syllabus Topic Area 15: Impact of Technology

Answers have improved since candidates no longer concentrate on the internet, world wide web and mobile phones

Specific recommendations are that candidates need to: -

- realise that question can be related to application of technology in any form of marketing communications or any of the syllabus topics
- avoid too much involvement with the technology and concentrate on its use
- consider and examine the disadvantages of technology and not be seduced by it
- be aware that technology is changing rapidly but its adoption does vary from place to place so these factors are taken into account by the examiner
- understand the use of systems within the organisation such as databases and EPOS etc.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

Planning answers

The most frequent examiner comment is that there is very little evidence of candidates planning their answers. The time allocation is sufficient for candidates to:

- read all the questions thoroughly so that they can be understood and select those the candidate is most able to answer
- select the information necessary for the answer by the use of brainstorming
- organise the information sensibly
- choose appropriate technical terms and vocabulary relating to marketing communications
- write the answer
- check the answer for errors and to correct them.

Organising information

In addition to the general approach to planning an answer that is given above, it is also helpful for candidates to remember that most types of business communication benefit from having:

- the required format and layout as requested in the answer – if in doubt, use headings, sub-headings and bullet points
- relevant descriptions or definitions, explanations, justification and qualification

Use of technicalities and vocabulary and their application

If candidates make definite, obvious attempts to use vocabulary and grammar appropriately and sensibly, occasional repetitions of given words and structures are expected and accepted.

What cannot be accepted is an answer that is really a collection of phrases and sentences taken directly from the question and repeated without any additional thought, plan or form.

Similarly, verbatim information memorized from the textbook is not acceptable as the technicalities must be related to the context of the question. The context is inevitably related to the realistic use of advertising and promotional means and methods and every effort is to ensure that questions are relevant to the age group of the candidates. Local contexts can be used but they must be plausible and can benefit by being explained and qualified as per the question set.

Note: It is essential to use the course textbook or any recent book on advertising and promotion to ensure that candidates are aware of technicalities of the subject and the most up-to-date practice in marketing communications. It is also worth surveying the use of advertising and promotion by reading newspapers and magazines, watching television, listening to radio and visiting stores and shops.

EXAMPLES OF CANDIDATE RESPONSES

The examples are taken from the Series 3 2008 question paper. The question is as follows

- a) Briefly describe direct response marketing (5 marks)
 - b) Explain how technology (**not just the Internet**) is assisting the development of direct response marketing. (6 marks)
 - c) State the problems that might affect the increased use of technology for direct response marketing. (9 marks)
- (20 marks)**

Answer (a) Fail Response

a) Direct Response Marketing

- Direct Response Marketing is the selling of goods and services without the use of shops
- It specialises in direct mail sent to key individual key a/c (sic) customers or brochures sent out to retailers and wholesalers
- It also uses trade journals like magazines which include a coupon to which customers can respond to

It is these responses that give an organisation an estimate of customers buying goods

b) Technology is affecting the development of direct response marketing in a number of ways. These are: -

- i) it has become easier to transfer information
- ii) easy to produce leaflets, brochures and catalogues
- iii) the production of brochures can be done on time
- iv) customers are able to purchase product via electronic connection such as mobile phone
- v) Assists in the development of quality magazines in short time

c) Problems Due to Increased Use of Technology

- Creates less jobs for the people
- Create a spread of diseases due to spending too much time on the computer can damage your eye sight
- People's performance will be affected as they will rely more on technology
- Technology can be expensive to produce and come up with brochures and magazines
- Certain emissions by technology devices such as airplanes can create pollution due to the emissions into the outside environment

The answer had very few good points:

Part (a) makes one basic point but then focuses – and not 100% accurately - on the use of direct mail in trade promotions

The second part (b) supplies only generalities without reference to the apt technology or misunderstands what it can actually do.

The final section (c) does not actually state the more apt problems that might affect the increased use of technology for direct response marketing but the effects of increased technology

Answer (b) Pass Response

- a) Direct response marketing is when /where an advertisement is shown to the customer to get the chance of responding to it in order to purchase or to get a discount for (e.g. In Sri Lanka 'Telecine Marketing' promotes their products using a similar system).
- b)
- 1) Direct Response TV – this where you get the chance of responding by clicking button your remote control (e.g. CNN in the news industry uses a similar system)
 - 2) On-line Internet – this is mainly done the use of pop-up and/or using several other links
 - 3) During TV commercials – here a hotline number is given for the customer in order to purchase, get discount reserve gifts etc.
 - 4) Using SMS – here a SMS is sent to tour mobile phone where customer can respond immediately
- c)
- 1) Here the customer cannot witness the product for real
 - 2) If people does not have facilities to respond this might not be very successfully
 - 3) When person responds to purchase delivering might be difficult to some geographical areas
 - 4) There can be barriers of payments (e.g. If a person does not have a credit card, then purchasing cannot be done)
 - 5) Language barriers – sometimes if the advertisement is in English and the person who watches it does not understand English, there might be a problem

The answer has faults including:

- **too vague description In the first part (a)**
- **examples in (a) and (b), without expansion, provide no further qualification**
- **simplistic and basic in parts**

There were improvements compared with answer (a) such as:

- **covered four forms of technology and used basic descriptions**
- **provided a number of disadvantages utilised disadvantages related to direct response marketing and modified or included others that made it relevant to the question as set**

Answer (c): Distinction Response

- a) Direct Response Marketing is the promoting and selling of goods without intermediaries such as shops or personal salespeople by the use of telephone calls, catalogues, general mails shots and sending e-mails to potential customers
- b) As we discuss the way of direct response marketing; we can analyse the impact of technology on each method: -
- Direct mail – it is the way of promoting via e-mail by forwarding them to certain recipients. Now you have a facility to forward one e-mail to thousands of multi-recipients at a time and get a delivery report as well (electronically created) so it's time saving and quantifiable because of mail server technology improvements, the use of a customer database (SQL server) and the contact details of the recipients are received making direct mails much cheaper, effective and time saving
 - SMS Promotions - due to the development of telecommunications and the SMS broadcasting, one script of SMS can be broadcast to thousands or millions of customers at a time which is time saved and very cheap as well, compared to above the line media as the number of mobile phone users has increased. This is becoming a popular advertising tool.
 - Telemarketing – development of the telephone switching system and mobile phone together with database systems and electronic directories etc. has led to telemarketing promotions and reduced the sales force and personal selling costs as well as eliminating field visits
 - Internet – a must for direct marketing using websites, search engines, hyperlinks, messages and directory etc.
- c) There a number of issues: -
- hackers hacking into secret customer database and secure information
 - virus and increased junk mail to customers so they need e-mail filter to only open their important e-mails – such situations are wasting time for the advertisers
 - If the power or systems go down, our entire promotions are stopped and it can affect the work directly
 - if call charges went up, it directly affects the cost of the organisation
 - Day-to-day, employed staff has to be trained. However, they do not remain for a long time

There are some areas that could be improved as the answer:

- covered the major points of describing direct response marketing
- showed understanding of latter technology maybe to the extent of being seduced by it
- was well-considered answer for part (c) - relating the issues to points made in part (b)

There is room for improvement: -

- repetitive relating to e-mail and SMS
- need to look at wider picture – not just communication to the individual
- more explanation of databases etc.
- mention of credit card fraud

EDI

International House
Siskin Parkway East
Middlemarch Business Park
Coventry CV3 4PE
UK

Tel. +44 (0) 8707 202909
Fax. +44 (0) 2476 516505
Email. enquiries@ediplc.com
www.ediplc.com



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