



# STAGE 2

  

## PROJECT

  

## GUIDELINES

### **Objectives**

The aim of the Stage 2 Project is to learn about marketing by studying a specific marketing application while integrating the skills and knowledge that have been acquired from the various subjects on the programme both at Stage 1 and Stage 2. It also provides an opportunity for students to manage their time and work schedule without regular classroom supervision. By its nature the Stage 2 Project emphasises the development of skills in the collection, evaluation, analysis and presentation of information. Finally, an important objective of this project is to enable the student to demonstrate initiative in all the above.

### **Project Requirements**

In relation to the project brief, the instructions provided are very structured in that students are given explicit indications as to what information is being sought. Any projects which fail to conform to the brief rate badly.

The project brief has essential components. A marketing application area is outlined and students are asked to provide an analysis of this, typically identifying the conditions and trends that apply to the marketing area. In order to provide a comprehensive and sound examination, students are required to collect, evaluate, analyse and then present the information. Any information sources are acknowledged in the report with any material used clearly referenced. In critically evaluating information students are to consider the accuracy and source of any information provided. For example is the information provided from an objective source? Is the source reliable? How old is the information? Does the information apply to the Irish context? In the analysis, students are to identify any trends or developments within the application area. This may involve, for example, looking at activities over a period of time or studying developments in other markets. The information should be provided in a logical well-structured report presentation. The reader is introduced to the marketing area and should obtain a good feel and understanding of its current characteristics.

The Stage 2 Project draws very directly on the Marketing Research skills developed within the programme. As such the project normally requires students to undertake primary research. The research takes the initial analysis of the application area a stage further. The nature and selection of the research methodology will clearly depend on the type of information sought and the nature of the population being investigated. Students may choose to undertake a personal interview survey or a focus group or use observation or any other

primary research activity or combination of activities that they believe suitable. The sort of investigation pursued must be appropriate to the objectives of the primary research.

The objectives of the research are stated explicitly and these are well integrated with the preceding analysis and have a direct bearing on the requirements of the project brief. The research work is planned and well thought out. How the work is managed and undertaken draws directly from the Marketing Research skills and techniques to which the student is exposed in other areas of the programme. Similarly too, how the resulting data is processed and analysed draws from the same Marketing Research base. It is apparent that students have limited resources which they can commit to such a study. Nevertheless any work, no matter on how small a scale, must be well planned and managed and any limitations of the study clearly indicated. The information gathered should meet the requirements of the project brief.

Another main element of the Stage 2 Project usually asks students to speculate on possible future developments within the marketing application area. This part of the exercise typically attracts one fifth or more of the overall marks. As such it is given the attention it warrants. Obviously, whether the speculations are in fact realised only time will tell, but the validity of the speculations can be assessed on the basis of the preceding analysis. Any conclusions reached must stem directly from information and analysis previously made available.

### **Presentation & Referencing**

It is important to state that the content of the project is very significant, but its presentation and appropriate referencing is also important. In other words issues such as spelling, grammar, structure and citations are given considerable attention. A detailed comprehensive bibliography must be provided which identifies all the material sources of information. The reader should be logically led through an introduction which sets the scene, an analysis which identifies the main issues at play, to a conclusion which may be accepted as valid on the basis of the evidence given.