



# MRS Advanced Certificate



PROSPECTUS



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## Welcome to The Market Research Study Centre's prospectus for The Market Research Society (MRS) Advanced Certificate in Market and Social Research Practice (MRS Advanced Certificate).

The MRS Advanced Certificate is designed for those who are within the first two years of their research career or for those looking to start a career in research. The qualification is suitable for anybody involved in, or hoping to be involved in research, in all types of company – research agencies and client companies, big or small.

The qualification will give you a very good grounding in research, and at the end of it you will have an excellent knowledge of the fundamentals of research which will stand you in good stead for your future career in research. The MRS Advanced Certificate is highly thought of throughout the research industry, indeed several of the larger research agencies run their own in-house MRS Advanced Certificate courses.

To complete the qualification successfully you need to pass two components – an Integrated Assignment (IA) and an Exam. We are here to help you with both!

For the **IA** you need to write a brief and proposal for a fictitious research project which you will decide upon yourself. The project can either involve quantitative or qualitative research.

The **Exam** lasts for two and a half hours. You have to answer the first compulsory question, and then two further questions out of a choice of six.

You can find out more about the qualification itself on The Market Research Society Website:

[https://www.mrs.org.uk/qualifications/advan\\_cert](https://www.mrs.org.uk/qualifications/advan_cert)

## About us

The Market Research Study Centre was set up by Virginia Barstow and Hilary Birt in June 2018. Hilary and Virginia have both worked for BPP (a leading provider of professional qualifications) for many years, and have vast experience of tutoring on MRS qualifications. Hilary has been tutoring students on the Advanced Certificate since 2003, and Virginia since 2004. Between them they have tutored hundreds of students successfully through the MRS Advanced Certificate.



### Hilary Birt, CMRS Course leader and tutor

After studying for a degree in Modern Languages at Cambridge University, Hilary spent a year teaching English in Switzerland before embarking on her market research career with Ipsos (now Ipsos MORI) where she spent 16 years in the Media Division, working her way up from Trainee Research Executive to Divisional Director.

At Ipsos her work covered a range of projects: quantitative and qualitative; UK and multi-country; large-scale syndicated projects (e.g. NRS, European Business Readership Survey) and smaller-scale projects for individual clients.

Since 2003 Hilary has worked as an independent research consultant conducting and managing a range of research projects including: the management of large-scale quantitative syndicated surveys in the medical media sector (JICMARS, Hospital Readership Survey); qualitative projects for individual media clients - involving focus groups, telephone depth/semi-structured interviews (much of this work business to business); and food sector consumer research - involving in-store interviewing, new product development, central location testing and focus groups.

Alongside her active research practice, Hilary, a long-standing Certified Member of MRS, has over 15 years' experience of tutoring on the MRS Advanced Certificate in Market and Social Research Practice through BPP.



## Virginia Barstow, CMRS

Tutor

Virginia studied psychology at Sheffield University. She started her career in research working for three research agencies in London, before moving onto the client side to work for Barclays Bank in a research role. In 1992 Virginia set up her own research consultancy and since then has worked for several of the large banks, transport companies and various Government quangos including Citizens Advice and Skills for Care.

In 2003 Virginia was approached to give a workshop to some start-up companies by The University of Glamorgan, and was subsequently asked to cover the market research element of the CIM Diploma at Newport University. She enjoyed teaching so much that she completed a Post Graduate Certificate of Education. Since then she has also lectured in market research at Cardiff University's Business School on a regular basis.

Virginia is a long standing Certified Member of the MRS. When she was young, single, footloose and fancy free, Virginia was a very active member of the MRS, speaking at evening meetings, and both summer and winter schools, serving on the MRS Conference Committee and (one of her madder ideas!) swimming a cross Channel relay in aid of the Market Research Benevolent Association.

The Market Research Study Centre is an **MRS accredited centre** for the provision of both The **MRS Advanced Certificate** and The **MRS Diploma**.



[www.mrs.org.uk](http://www.mrs.org.uk)



## Learning with us

We offer all our students a completely bespoke training programme – you decide when you want to study. We know that working and home life can be unpredictable and that you might not be able to work on your qualification on a regular, week by week basis. We will just fit in with you!

Most students like to have some sort of timetable to work to, and when you enrol we will work out a timetable together taking into account your busy periods at work and any planned holidays. If you have unexpected events at work or in your home life, it's not a problem – we'll just rework the timetable. We are here to help you get through your studies as painlessly as possible – no weekly commitments or rigid timetables – learning is meant to be fun, not a chore!

You can start your studies at any time – you are not limited to a certain start date. When the MRS entry closing date approaches (usually about three weeks before the Exam) we will review with you whether you are ready to sit the Exam and submit your IA, or whether you should consider delaying things until the next sitting.

We will tutor you through your written IA, and your Exam preparation (Premium Students). Most students like to work on their IA and Exam preparation at the same time – this parallel learning embeds knowledge and competencies. However, you can always choose to write your IA for one sitting, and sit the Exam in the next sitting. We're all about flexibility!

All our teaching is done via e-tutoring – you will have regular one-to-one contact with your tutor via email (Premium students).

Some people find that distance learning can feel a bit isolated. We can put you in touch with other students who are studying at the same time as you are, so that you can compare work and help to keep each other motivated.



## Approaches to studying, and prices

We offer two approaches to studying for The Advanced Certificate qualification:

### PREMIUM

#### The fully tutored route

We are here throughout your studies to offer advice and support. You can send us a draft of each section of your IA for feedback and we will look at the final draft of your IA before you submit it. Before we send your IA off to MRS we will check that it is compliant, that you have filled out the cover sheet properly and that you have included all the necessary information.

We will also help you to prepare for success in the Exam. We are available to answer any queries you have about what you have read about in the recommended text or other reading. We will ask you to complete several exercises before the Exam, including a mock Exam, for which we will provide detailed feedback so that you know how to improve your performance for the Exam itself.

### ESSENTIALS

#### The tutor review route

We will look at the final draft of your IA once before you submit it. We will also ask you to complete the mock Exam and will give you detailed comments as to how you can improve your performance in the real Exam. Before we send your IA off to MRS we will check that it is compliant, that you have filled out the cover sheet properly and that you have included all the necessary information.

We would not recommend the Essentials route unless you are competent at designing research projects and writing research proposals. If at any stage you feel that you need to upgrade to the Premium Fully Tutored route, that's not a problem.

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#### PREMIUM FULLY TUTORED ROUTE

Tuition (regular tutor support and study materials)	£825.00
MRS Registration and exam venue fee	£240.00
<b>Total excluding VAT</b>	<b>£1,065.00</b>
<b>Total including VAT</b>	<b>£1,278.00</b>

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#### ESSENTIALS TUTOR REVIEW ROUTE

Final checks of IA draft and mock Exam, and study materials	£450.00
MRS Registration and exam venue fee	£240.00
<b>Total excluding VAT</b>	<b>£690.00</b>
<b>Total including VAT</b>	<b>£828.00</b>

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Discounted price of £775 for companies submitting 3+ students per sitting - £1,015 + VAT = £1,218

Please talk to us if you are unsure which approach is best for you.

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## Study materials

We give all students study materials to help make the most of the recommended text. Our materials guide you through the text book, chapter by chapter, and include chapter summaries, worksheets, quizzes and example questions from past Exam papers to help you to complete the IA and revise for the exam. We will also be sending you tips on distance learning, Exam revision and other things which are useful to know, when you sign up for the course.

## Course schedule

The MRS assesses the Advanced Certificate twice each year – in January and June.

You can start the course with us at any time. We would usually recommend that you take at least six months to complete all the necessary reading, the IA and the Exam preparation. Candidates with several years of research experience under their belts may require less time to complete their studies.

## How the Assessment Works

In order to obtain the MRS Advanced Certificate you need to pass both the IA and Exam.

If you fail either the IA or Exam, you can resubmit/re-sit it up to two more times within a three year period.

If you fail either component you are able to pay for a report from MRS which will give you feedback on your strengths and weaknesses.



## Entry requirements

Candidates will normally meet one or more of the following criteria:

- one year of relevant experience in market or social research
- completion of the MRS Foundation course/MRS/City & Guilds Certificate in Market & Social Research
- two A Levels (or equivalent)
- satisfactory nomination by an employer
- satisfactory nomination by course tutor (for candidates taking the qualification as part of an undergraduate degree)

Additionally, candidates are recommended to have GCSE English & Maths (Grade C or above), or equivalent.

Please contact us if you are unsure whether you are able to meet the necessary criteria.

## Overseas Students

We welcome overseas students but please be aware the language used in both assessment components is English.

The English requirement for this course is Cambridge English: Advanced Proficiency 175 with no less than 162 in each component or equivalent. All candidates must have a good command of written and spoken English. Please contact us if you need more details about the required language proficiency.

Overseas students will need to arrange to sit the Exam at a local British Council Exam centre. An additional fee of £80 is payable to MRS by candidates for assessment outside of the UK. This fee covers MRS administration and examination materials despatch costs. Candidates who wish to sit the exam in their country of residence are responsible for making the British Council venue arrangements and for payment of the associated costs i.e. venue hire, invigilation, return postage & packaging etc. You can find your local British Council Exam centre at [www.britishcouncil.org/Exam](http://www.britishcouncil.org/Exam).





## Testimonials

### Testimonials about the course:

“I found the MRS Advanced Certificate really interesting and challenging; it helped me understand the research process much better and I often use elements of what I’ve learned in my day-to-day work. It is definitely worth the time and effort, and I have no doubt that my career will be furthered as a result.”

[Marketing Analyst, Financial Services](#)

“Completing the Advanced Certificate in Social and Market Research was a very straightforward and enjoyable process. I hadn’t done any studying since university days (over 20 years earlier) so it was great to have Virginia’s support as my online tutor when writing my assignment and following the course materials leading up to the exam. The content of the course has been very useful to me, both helping me fulfil the responsibilities of my current position in consumer market research and in giving me a broad grounding and understanding of the wider research arena. I would definitely recommend getting this qualification if you intend to spend any part of your career in the research industry.”

[Research Executive, Research Agency](#)

“The Advanced Certificate is an excellent way to get a firm grounding in market research, providing theoretical knowledge as well as real-life applicability.

[Research Manager, Research Agency](#)

“Studying for the MRS Advanced Certificate has proved to be invaluable in improving the quality of the surveys and questionnaires our organisation instigates. We are now getting good quality data and can perform meaningful analysis.”

[Research Officer, Local Government](#)

“I completed the ‘MRS Advanced Certificate in Social and Market research’ course in 2018. The course has overall helped me in my professional life by getting a broader understanding of the market research industry, resulting in making me more confident to answer client briefs and support my suggested research methodologies and sampling requests.”

[Senior Research Executive, Research Agency](#)

“The Advanced Certificate provided me with a greater overall understanding of Market Research and the process was made a lot easier with the invaluable help and advice I received from my tutor, Hilary Birt.”

[Research Executive – Research Agency](#)

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“Taking the step towards completing the MRS Advanced Certificate was scaring me for a long time, but I cannot explain how happy I am for taking it. I’ve learned a lot about the research process, but more importantly it gave me the confidence to speak to my stakeholders about best practices and research methods. I believe that completing the course has opened a lot of doors in my career and I would recommend it to anyone who is interested in pursuing a market/customer research career.”

Research Manager, Business Information Provider

#### Testimonials about our tutors:

Hilary was a brilliant tutor – her expertise in market research and research methods were invaluable, and her detailed knowledge of the Advanced Certificate itself was also huge help. Without Hilary, the process would have been far less worthwhile and certainly more stressful!”

Research Manager, Research Agency

“Virginia was incredibly helpful in leading me in the right direction and making me see things from a different perspective. I felt that she cared about how well I did. Feeling that someone else was invested in me was a huge incentive to put the hours in!”

Research Officer - Local Government

“Hilary was my supervisor and really helped me throughout the whole process. She helped me understand (and prioritise) key concepts and steered me in the right direction to make sure I covered everything important in my integrated assignment. Hilary saw me as an individual and put time and effort into helping me.”

Senior Research Executive, Research Agency

“I appreciated Virginia’s detailed and constructive feedback when doing my MRS Advanced Certificate. Her straightforward approach helped me to understand immediately where I was potentially misunderstanding the course material. She gave advice and examples wherever possible, which was also really helpful in a distance learning context.”

Marketing Analyst, Financial Services

“The feedback Hilary provided for my IA was incredibly useful and without her knowledge and expertise the whole process would have been a lot harder!”

Research Executive, Research Agency

“I’d like to thank my tutor, Virginia, for supporting me in this quest for knowledge. Her knowledge, ability to explain and support were invaluable!”

Research Manager, Business Information Provider

“Thank you for all your comments and advice throughout the IA...it was harder than I expected it to be...and I’m glad you kept me focused.”

Research Manager, Local Government

# COMPOSE

## The next steps

Contact us at [info@themarketresearchstudycentre.co.uk](mailto:info@themarketresearchstudycentre.co.uk) to talk to us about whether the Advanced Certificate is suitable for you. If you would like us to give you a call, just email us your 'phone number.

Alternatively you can simply download an [application form](#) and email it to us – we'll get back to you as soon as we can.



email: [info@themarketresearchstudycentre.co.uk](mailto:info@themarketresearchstudycentre.co.uk)

web: [themarketresearchstudycentre.co.uk](http://themarketresearchstudycentre.co.uk)