

How to Pass Your Marketing Exams

The Guide to Becoming a
Successful Marketing Student

First Edition

Gary Davies

GARY DAVIES
SALTASH CORNWALL UK

This book is dedicated to Linda, Chris, Andy, mum and dad.

Gary Davies

52 Andrews Way, Hatt, Saltash PL12 6PE

First edition 2011

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phone: +44 (0) 1752 845841; email: permissions@garydavies.com

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ISBN-13: 978-0-9567934-0-9

For information on all Gary Davies publications visit the website at www.garydavies.com/books

Cover designed by Chris Davies

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Latimer Trend, Plymouth PL6 7PY

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Book review and acknowledgements

‘This excellent book would be of major use to students studying for a range of marketing examinations and assessments. It is easy to read and has excellent suggestions.

It should help them make a sensible choice about what to study, where and how. The section on instructional words will help students understand exactly what they are being asked to do and remove one of the major reasons why students fail assessments – not understanding the question!

Reading this book should be an essential element of course selection and examination preparation.’

***Professor Keith Fletcher MA PhD FRSA FCIM
Director of Education
The Chartered Institute of Marketing***

This book would not have been published without the enduring and faithful support of a small but select band of exceptional people.

My special thanks go to my wife Linda and my sons Chris and Andy who have always backed and encouraged me, especially during the most challenging stages of this particular writing project. My eldest son Chris displayed a degree of patience that is simply beyond my understanding, plus he always gave me sound and frank technical advice when needed. I wish I could be as cool and calm as him.

I would also like to record my sincere appreciation for the extremely useful and practical advice provided by Professor Keith Fletcher and for the guidance, technical support and considerable tolerance shown to me by Bob Brown and Keith Jones at Latimer Trend.

Preface

This unique book is the product of more than 20 years research and almost 40 years of successful practical experience in the field.

How to Pass Your Marketing Exams: The Guide to Becoming a Successful Marketing Student was written especially for students of marketing. Readers are provided with clear and valuable guidance on how to plan and manage their own study programme. Students are also introduced to a range of tried, tested and effective examination and assignment preparation techniques.

This book was developed specifically for students who are currently studying, or planning to study marketing at intermediate level. That means if your aim is to gain a formal marketing qualification, such as a professional marketing certificate, professional marketing diploma or any similar certified or professional marketing qualification, this book has been written for you.

The material has also been designed to meet the needs of students who may be required to study a single marketing module that forms an optional or mandatory component of a non-marketing specialised professional qualification, such as a purchasing, banking, media or hospitality and tourism diploma.

This guide can be used effectively in conjunction with any form of delivery programme, including traditional face-to-face classes and intensive residential workshops, or any type of open, flexible, distance or online learning system.

Students enrolled and supported at accredited study centres and also independent marketing students who plan to undertake their studies on a totally self-directed learning basis are equally likely to find the guidance and advice in this book invaluable.

Anyone who is studying for a marketing-related qualification such as e-marketing, marketing in hospitality and tourism, marketing communications, advertising or public relations is also likely to appreciate the numerous study, assignment preparation and examination tips.

In addition to highlighting the indispensable study skills and examination techniques that will enable students to achieve success in their marketing exams, this publication also incorporates a range of marketing exam style questions. These sample questions are specifically designed to provide readers with the opportunity to test their marketing knowledge and practice their question analysis, answer planning and writing skills.

If they wish, readers may submit their completed answers for professional marking and feedback. The marking is undertaken by an experienced and qualified marketing examiner and the answers are returned to the student, together with some appropriate and constructive feedback.

To remind students of the important marketing issues and to assist readers with their research, the key marketing models and topics are listed in the appendices at the end of the book.

About the author

Gary Davies is a writer, trainer, coach and consultant. He has also worked as a chief examiner, senior examiner, examiner and exam marker with various internationally recognised professional institutions.

Gary has also worked in B2C and B2B sales, marketing management and general management. He has lectured in marketing, management and business, managed numerous marketing education programmes and led teams of tutors and examiners.

Based in Cornwall in the South West of England, Gary now places the emphasis on writing and publishing. However, he still remains in contact with students and course delegates by designing and delivering the occasional marketing, sales, management and leadership training programme. He operates worldwide and has worked with numerous students from the United Kingdom, Africa, the Middle East and the Far East.

Gary's considerable practical experience is underpinned by a range of relevant marketing and management qualifications, including the Chartered Institute of Marketing Diploma (DipM) and a Masters Degree in Business Administration.

Notably, following the decision he made some years ago to resign from his secure marketing management job and embark on his own full-time studies, Gary became a successful, award winning mature student.

Chapter 1 – How to use this book

This book is written in an informal, personal style. My main aim is to provide you the reader with clear, worthwhile and easy to follow advice. I also want to encourage you to develop and apply the key study skills, as well as the proven examination and assignment preparation techniques.

Although this guide may be written in a less formal style than some marketing textbooks you might read, don't let the personal approach mislead you. The thoroughly tried and tested professional guidance that follows really can have a positive effect on your examination and coursework results.

While no book can guarantee exam success, I am confident that the advice provided in this book can work for you. I know this because when I was a mature student, I applied all the key principles myself and as a direct result I achieved considerable examination success. Later, when I became a marketing tutor and senior examiner, I passed on the benefit of my own experiences and successes to my students. The subsequent exam results and the positive student feedback received over many years, confirm the effectiveness of the techniques and methods that now form the basis of this book.

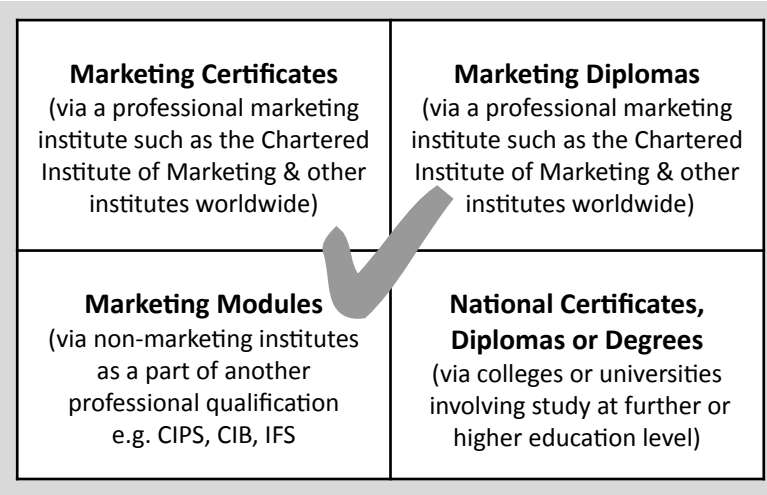
Target readership

As mentioned already, the contents of this book were developed specifically for students who are currently studying, or planning to study marketing at intermediate level. The intermediate study level includes professional marketing certificates and diplomas and also single marketing modules.

Anyone who is working towards many of the marketing-related qualifications, such as e-marketing, marketing in hospitality and

tourism, marketing communications, advertising or public relations certificates or diplomas, is also likely to benefit considerably from following the advice contained in this guide.

As illustrated in Figure 1.1 students will find the contents of this book indispensable, whether they are undertaking their studies on an open, flexible, distance or online learning basis, undertaking self-directed studies at home, attending intensive residential workshops or face-to-face classes at college or university.



Marketing Certificates (via a professional marketing institute such as the Chartered Institute of Marketing & other institutes worldwide)	Marketing Diplomas (via a professional marketing institute such as the Chartered Institute of Marketing & other institutes worldwide)
Marketing Modules (via non-marketing institutes as a part of another professional qualification e.g. CIPS, CIB, IFS)	National Certificates, Diplomas or Degrees (via colleges or universities involving study at further or higher education level)

Figure 1.1 The marketing qualifications covered by this guide

By the way, the material in this book should also assist marketing undergraduates who need to sit traditional exams, or submit coursework assignments as part of their university assessment programme.

Although some content (such as the material in the sample questions section) is specific to the intermediate level of study, much of the

advice and most of the techniques are likely to be relevant and beneficial to all students of marketing.

An outline of the contents of this guide

Before exploring the various study skills and techniques in detail, here is a brief outline of the contents of each chapter of the book.

Some readers may want to start at the beginning and then work through the book from cover to cover. Others may prefer to prioritise specific chapters, or read them in a different order.

Basically, think of this guide as a useful resource that can be consulted when required, depending on your own individual needs and preferences. Of course, the amount of time you have available before the exam will also affect how you approach your reading.

Chapter 1 – How to use this book

Throughout the remainder of this chapter I will suggest how I think you should proceed with your reading, depending on your individual needs and the timing of your exams. I will also outline the main elements and features of this guide, including the submission facility that allows you to answer questions and submit your answers for professional marking and feedback.

Chapter 2 – Courses and study methods

This chapter is aimed at readers who have not yet made the decision to sign up for a specific marketing course or qualification. It incorporates advice on the selection of marketing as course of study and as a career. Chapter 2 also highlights the need to establish the value and credibility of any qualification you plan to gain, as well as the suitability of the proposed study method and the competence

of the provider. It also emphasises the need to establish early on precisely how and when your knowledge and understanding of the subject will be assessed.

Chapter 3 – Study planning

In this chapter you will find some advice on developing a study plan, conducting a personal SWOT analysis and participating in a student self-help group, or an informal ‘study buddy’ arrangement. Chapter 3 also highlights the need to thoroughly check out the syllabus and then schedule and manage your time effectively, so that you can pay the necessary attention to your studies.

Chapter 4 – Effective studying

This chapter outlines the key tasks that new students should undertake in order to give themselves the very best start possible. Advice is provided on note taking, course handouts, undertaking the necessary reading, completing any required coursework and avoiding complacency. Because marketing tends to surround and involve us all (at least to some degree) recommendations are made on identifying and capturing current examples that can be used later to good effect in the exam, or in any suitable assignments.

Chapter 5 – Exam preparation

In this chapter the emphasis is given to exam preparation. Readers are reminded of the need to re-visit the course syllabus document and reading list, to ensure they have not missed out anything important. Suggestions are provided on how you might acquire and analyse the past exam papers and re-assess your strengths and weaknesses. The need to practice your question analysis and answering techniques is highlighted, as is the importance of examination planning so that nothing is left to chance.

Chapter 6 – In the exam

This chapter makes the point that from the very start you should aim to make a positive impression in the exam. It also stresses the need to read the exam paper carefully, manage your time effectively, analyse and address each question, then plan and develop your answer. Advice is also provided on adopting the correct answer format and differentiating your answer from the competition.

Chapter 7 – Answer planning

This chapter explains the reasons why students should carefully analyse questions and prepare an answer plan in the exam, before writing out their answer in full. It also illustrates how to analyse a question and develop an answer plan by utilising a suitable framework. The analysis and planning techniques are applied to a sample question, to fully demonstrate the recommended approach.

Chapter 8 – Case studies and assignments

As case studies are often featured in marketing exams, guidance is provided on how to approach and review case studies and how to develop focused and highly specific case study answers. In recognition of the fact that coursework is now a key element of many marketing qualifications, advice is also offered on how to prepare and submit case study assignments and practical work-based assignments.

Chapter 9 – Report writing

This chapter offers guidance on how to produce an exam answer or a coursework assignment in the typical 'report format'. The content is designed to assist readers who need to demonstrate the ability to present their findings in the form of a structured professional report.

The report writing principles discussed in this chapter can be applied either in an assessment context, or in a practical work-related situation. The typical sections of a report are summarised and advice is provided on how to present and structure the report.

Chapter 10 – Sample exam questions

A range of intermediate level exam style questions covering a variety of important marketing issues, form the basis of this chapter. However, in order to assist marketing students at every level, guidance is also provided on what examiners are likely to expect from marketing students at the lower, intermediate and higher levels of study.

Chapter 11 – Submission procedure

Because readers have the opportunity to answer and submit the sample exam style questions for marking and feedback, this chapter explains how to submit completed answers for marking by a qualified and experienced examiner. Full details of the submission procedure are provided, including guidance on the required answer formats. Instructions on how to obtain an update on the associated marking fees and turnaround times are also included.

Chapter 12 – Instructional words

This chapter provides an explanation of the meaning of the various *instructional* or *command* words that marketing examiners are likely to use in exam questions.

Additional information about the author

The book concludes with some additional background information for those who may wish to know a little more about the author.

Appendices

Appendix 1 lists the key marketing models that intermediate level marketing students should ensure they are familiar with.

Appendix 2 lists the key marketing topics that intermediate level students need to know about and understand.

Using the remainder of this book

I suggest you begin by making an honest assessment of your personal situation.

Consider the time you have available, your strengths and weaknesses as far as your knowledge of the subject is concerned, plus your recent exam-related experience. Also think about how much time you have available before you must sit the exam, or submit any coursework or work-based assignments.

Key Point

Aim to be honest with yourself and make an objective assessment of your situation, before deciding exactly how you will take advantage of the information in this guide. Then adopt a reading approach that suits your own particular style, preferences and individual circumstances.

The 2 basic approaches to reading this book outlined in Figure 1.2 are provided purely as a guide.

More about the author

This section has been included for readers who would like to know a little more about the author. Gary has worked successfully for many years in sales, marketing, management, education and training. He took his first important career step when he became a young sales representative in the financial services and banking sector back in 1973.

After gaining various promotions, changing roles and working in different industrial sectors (including spending many enjoyable and rewarding years as a lecturer in marketing, management and business) Gary became the general manager of a Science Park.

He left the Science Park to establish his own training, consultancy and writing business. Since then he has developed an international client list and worked with numerous sales, marketing, management and business students and delegates, teaching, training and providing examination advice and support.

Gary has worked as an examiner, a senior examiner and a chief examiner on a range of sales and marketing qualifications for various internationally known and respected professional institutions. He has written the questions for the exams, managed the marking teams, marked and sampled the exam scripts and prepared the post-examination reports.

In addition to holding relevant professional qualifications Gary has considerable experience in sales, marketing, business, management and leadership. His practical experience was gained throughout a long, diverse and successful career, although his professional qualifications were all obtained relatively late in life.

The qualifications Gary gained as a full-time and part-time mature student include the following:

- Masters Degree in Business Administration (MBA);
- Chartered Institute of Marketing Certificate;
- Chartered Institute of Marketing Advanced Certificate;
- Chartered Institute of Marketing Diploma (DipM);
- Institute of Export Professional Qualifications.

Following his mid-career decision to resign from a secure job in order to undertake a concentrated period of full-time study, Gary was subsequently awarded 'Mature Student of the Year'.

During his first year as a mature student he was also presented with a certificate of 'Exceptional Proficiency' by the Lord Mayor of London, for his performance in the professional examinations.

These early modest academic successes as a mature student, after what can best be described as an undistinguished performance at grammar school many years earlier, encouraged Gary to pursue his professional studies further and ultimately changed the direction of his career.

More about Gary, including his latest projects and forthcoming books can be found at www.garydavies.com.