Project Module Handbook for

Unit 7 Advanced Practitioner Project

Stage 3

Chartered Trading Standards Institute

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1.0 Introduction to the Advanced Practitioner Project

The Advanced Practitioner Project constitutes Unit 7, Stage 3, for students that have completed and passed both Stages 1 and 2 of the qualification's framework (or have a suitable antecedent). The project unit runs in place of a traditional dissertation and as such is the pinnacle of achievement within the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) qualification.

Undertaking the Advanced Practitioner Project (APP) (the project) will be a long but rewarding process in which you will produce a piece of work that explores in depth an area or topic of your choice, within your subject discipline. The project draws upon and consolidates earlier work throughout the qualification, and is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your learning, knowledge and research.

The scope for the project topic is very wide. You are responsible for selecting your own topic; however, your choice should fit within the broad remit of the trading standards profession, rather than the narrower role of management within local authorities. The research and final work should benefit the broader profession, whether locally to a relevant authority, or regionally or nationally,

1.2   Submissions and deadlines

The project proposal is an electronic submission and should be submitted by either:
    1 April [each year]
    OR
    1 September [each year]

The

should also consider what kind of data you will need, and how you will collect and analyse it.

background and context. A summary of your topic area, the scope and rationale for the project, why it is important and what research problem you are tackling

literature review.

2.4   Devising aims and objectives

The primary focus of your research project is expressed in terms of aims and objectives:

aim: what you hope to achieve on completion of the project

objective: the action(s) you will take in order to achieve the outcomes of the research

Aims are statements of intent and are often expressed in broad terms. They set out what you hope to achieve at the end of the project. Objectives, on the other hand, should be specific, clear and concise statements that define measurable outcomes of the research. The assessment of the final project will include an assessment of whether your objectives have been achieved.

Gathering and organising your thoughts to devise your aims and objectives may be the most challenging part of the project. It will take some time to achieve this and may require a change of focus or several drafts. However, once you have clarity and are clear on your aim and objectives then the rest of the project should run more coherently and smoothly.

The aim

The project must have a clearly identifiable and feasible aim with an analytical or evaluative approach. This should be a single-sentence statement of what you hope to achieve on completion of the project. Examples may include:

an evaluation of the impact of …

an analysis of the perceptions of …

to examine the critical success factors within …

The objectives

Your project should have no more than three or four objectives, which should be concise statements of the expected outcomes of the research. The objectives should not be a description of the steps taken to carry out the research. It is very important that the objectives are clearly stated and are achievable; you need to ensure that you can clearly demonstrate how they have been achieved at the end of the piece of work. It is common that one or two objectives may link to the literature review, one or two to the primary data and a final objective to the conclusions and recommendations. The objectives should be numbered and further illustrations include:

3.0 The final research project

3.1 Style and academic writing

In addition to the academic content of your project, your work will be assessed on the clarity and articulation of your discussion, and the coherence of the objectives and arguments presented, as well as the standard and style of academic writing. Some general conventions of academic writing include the following:

do not write in the first person. Maintain the third person in all academic writing. Avoiding using 'I' 'We' 'You' etc. For example, "the research data concludes …

3.3. Title page

The title page must include the following information, in this order:

(a) the CTSI Logo

(b) Trading Standards Advanced Practitioner Project - Unit 7 (TSAPP)

(c) the full title of your topic

(d) the month and year of submission

(e) your candidate number

(f) the precise total word length of the text (including quotations and references)

Do not put your name on the project submission at any point

3.5   Abstract

The

3.8 List of tables, graphs or figures

Use of graphs and figures is acceptable providing they are relevant to the text and discussion. These should be referenced; they should be listed at the beginning.

include the heading(s) 'LIST OF TABLES' all in capital letters

each entry must include a number, title, and page number

assign each table, figure, or constants in your project an Arabic numeral. You may number consecutively throughout the entire work (e.g., Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.), or you may assign a two-part

It can be difficult to identify the best order for sections in this chapter because the rationale for your choice of specific research question can be complicated, and there may be several inter-linked reasons why the research is needed. It is worth taking time to develop a logical structure as this will help to convince examiners of the relevance of your research, and that you understand its relevance. It will also provide you with a framework to refer back to in your discussion chapter, when you reflect on the extent to which your research has achieved what it set out to do.

The literature review not only helps refine the research focus, it will also inform preparation of your research instrument (questionnaire, structured or unstructured interview questions, etc) if you are collecting primary data, and should link to the results, analysis and discussion.

3.11   Research methods (1,000-1,250 words)

This chapter explains and justifies the methodology adopted to complete your research. The methodology section appears immediately after the literature review in your project, and should flow organically from it. Up until the point of writing your methodology, you will have defined your research question and conducted a detailed review of what other scholars in the field have to say about your topic. In this section there should be a discussion of relevant research methods and justification for using them for your project. Discussions are likely to focus around the use of qualitative or quantitative data, and means of analysis.

3.12 Results, analysis and discussion (1,500-2,000 words)

This chapter should present the analysis and fi04 Tf1 ?6 0 1 40 0.4 Tmthe

Its main purposes are to:

clearly state the answer to the main research question

summarise and reflect on the research

make recommendations for future work on the topic

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3.15 References

When you are writing an essay, report, dissertation, project or any other form of academic writing, your own thoughts and ideas inevitably build on those of other writers, researchers or teachers. It is essential that you acknowledge the sources of data, research and ideas on which you have drawn by including references to, and full details of, these sources in your work. Referencing your work allows the reader to:

distinguish your own ideas and findings from those you have drawn from the work of others

follow up in more detail the ideas or facts that you have referred to

Whenever you read, or research material for your writing, make sure that you include in your notes, or on any photocopied material, the full publication details of each relevant text that you read.

You must use a Harvard referencing or Footnote style - please refer to a comprehensive Harvard referencing guide if you are unsure as to the requirements.

3.16 Appendices

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Literature review

do they place the results within the context of the background issues identified in the introduction?
do the conclusions identify where and to what extent the aim and objectives have been achieved?
overall, have the aim and objectives been achieved to a satisfactory level?
are the practical implications recognised and appropriate recommendations made?
does a process of 'reflection' take place in which the issues are re-evaluated and the methodology scrutinised?
are there any recommendations for future

Consistency of marking across all projects is assured through a process of moderation. This will provide a further opportunity for any necessary adjustment to be made. Projects where the agreed mark is on the border between grades will be moderated as part of a sample that contains projects from across the range of marks awarded and includes projects where third marking was required.

Marks are ratified by the examination board and candidates are notified by letter after the ratification meeting. Two ratification meetings occur each year. Information can be found on CTSI website Stage 3 area on timelines and ratification points.

To formulate and justify appropriate research methods to address research objectives	incoherent logic between research methods and research objectives ethical standards erroneous, wrong or missing in the design of the research missing or inappropriate evidence of chosen approach being informed by research methods literature	incomplete or contradictory logic between research methods and research objectives ethical standards inadequately applied in the design of the research limited or irrelevant evidence of chosen approach being informed by research methods literature	adequate logic demonstrated between research methods and research objectives ethical standards adequately applied in the design of the research sufficient evidence of chosen approach being informed by research methods	a congruent logical connection made between the research methods and objectives a careful attempt to apply ethical standards in the design of research a clear attempt to evaluate chosen methods using a range of research methods literature	a precise logical connection made between the research methods and objectives a rigorous attempt to apply ethical standards in the design of the research a fluent attempt to evaluate alternative approaches and justify chosen methods using a range of research methods literature	a convincing logical connection made between research methods and objectives a persuasive attempt to apply ethical standards in the design of the research with understanding of how this fit with broader ethical debates an ambitious attempt to evaluate alternative approaches and justify chosen methods using a range of research methods literature	an authoritative logic made between research methods and objectives an insightful attempt to apply ethical standards in the design of the research with understanding of how this fits with broader ethical debates
Apply skills of critical	no recognisable analysis or evaluation of current issues or problems are evident erroneous / inaccurate execution of analysis that does not address stated research question(s)/ objectives. insufficient discussion of findings extremely limited attempt to provide ethical and sustainable conclusions, recommendations or solutions absent or formless consideration of professional and commercial issues emerging from the research. communication skills appear to be characterised as extremely lacking in content or incoherent in expression	little analysis or evaluation of current issues or problems. inadequate execution of analysis that does not address stated research question(s)/ objectives. superficial discussion of findings. E.g. Does not relate findings to the conceptual framework. limited attempt to provide ethical and sustainable conclusions, recommendations or solutions. inadequate consideration of professional and commercial issues emerging from the research. communication skills appear to be characterised as inconsistent in content and unstructured in layout.	reasonable attempt at analysis and evaluation of current issues or problems selection and use of research methods is somewhat confused analysis addresses research question(s)/ objectives with some criticality adequate but descriptive discussion of the findings sufficient attempts to provide ethical and sustainable conclusions, recommendations or solutions adequate consideration of professional and commercial issues emerging from the research communication skills satisfactorily demonstrated in terms of quality of expression and content (albeit mainly descriptive)	satisfactory level of analysis and evaluation of current issues or problems addresses research question(s)/objectives with a thoughtful critical analysis congruent discussion of the findings mostly careful attempt to provide ethical and sustainable conclusions, recommendations or solutions coherent consideration of professional and commercial issues emerging from the research communication skills coherently demonstrated in terms of content and quality of expression	good level of analysis and valuation of clearly articulated current issues or problems addresses research question(s)/objectives through a thorough critical analysis rigorous discussion of findings analytical, precise and logical attempt to provide ethical and sustainable conclusions, recommendations or solutions1		

Project Proposal

Your project should be of benefit to your authority, your region or the profession overall.

Once you have read through the handbook and guide and confirmed the subject you want to base your project on and the specifics of what you are looking at, you will need to complete the **Unit 7: Project Proposal Form**.

You can download the proposal form from off the Stage 3 area on the website. Use previous link.

Ensure you complete it in accordance with the handbook.

You should discuss and seek approval from your employer on the subject area you want to cover, you must gain their approval as part of this process.

When your employer has approved your choice of subject, they are required to complete the **Unit 7: Employer Approval and Support Form**. This must accompany your proposal form.

Have you got all your consent forms? You must provide these with your project submission form.

Timelines

Re-submissions

Where the examiner feels there is a minimal deficiency within your project that could be easily rectified, you will be given two weeks to re-submit your updated project. The examiner will provide you with basic feedback on what you need to concentrate on to improve your submission.

If the examiner feels that there is substantial work required still on your project, this will go through the normal process of marking and the final mark will be taken to the boards for ratification. You will be able to re-submit at the next submission point.

On resubmitting your work, this will be re-examined and moderated.
Your mark will be taken to the next available ratification meeting.