Examiner's report

CTSI Professional Competency Framework

Stage 2: Regulating Markets Professional Interview Examiner's Report May 2021

General

A total of eighteen candidates attempted the Regulating Markets professional interview and I am pleased to report that all of them passed with marks ranging between 48% to 70%, with the majority of marks falling in the central band of this range. A total of four questions were set, all of which were used, and the candidates were allocated the question in advance of the interview.

The examination is a problem-solving exercise which requires candidates to think on their feet and determine the relevant strategy and tactics to address a regulatory challenge, rather than recite legislation and most candidates understood this. They demonstrated good knowledge of regulatory risk assessment, data collection and intelligence development and the regulatory tools that are available to address these to ensure consumers are protected in a trading environment of fair competition.

The interviews were conducted online, with the relevant controls for exam conditions as far as were possible, but obviously there has to be an element of trust in a professional examination which is delivered remotely.

As previously, candidates were given a regulatory scenario with ten minutes to read it and make notes before being asked the questions in turn. Following a decision from the awarding body the questions were put on the screen after the reading time was finished so that candidates could read them as they were being posed and those with time remaining were given the opportunity to reread the questions and add to their answers if they wished. Again, the entire interview was recorded on the MS Teams platform to allow later viewing, marking and moderation.

As with previous examinations, the scenarios were drawn from a wide range of trading standards regulatory issues, so as not to disadvantage candidates following any particular route through the qualifications system.

Overall, the answers given to the questions posed demonstrated the relevant skills and application of the knowledge that underpins regulatory practice. There was varying performance across all four questions, although candidates appeared to find some questions harder than others.
In summary, the standard was generally very high, and candidates clearly understand the expectations of this examination and address these in a positive way, despite the challenges of an oral problem-solving examination conducted online.

Example Scenario:
You received a complaint about a local trader who is selling cheap jewellery charms via eBay. The charms are very similar to a well-known premium high street brand, and the complainant stated that they thought that the products were the same as these, even though no specific claims were made, and the price is significantly less. The complainant also noted that they had suffered an itchy rash on the skin next to where they wore it. The trader sells approximately 200 different product lines.

Questions Asked during the interview:

1. What would your initial assessment of this complaint indicate?
2. You obtain a further sample of the product tested and the result indicates that there is excess lead and cadmium in the composition over and above the limits set in legislation. Explain how you would carry out the risk assessment and what assumptions you would make in these circumstances?
3. You approach the trader and ask for documentation to support the safety of the products he is selling, but he has none. How would this change your risk assessment?
4. If your risk assessment indicated that a serious risk was presented. What are the obligations of the trader and the trading standards department in these circumstances?
5. What further actions would arise from this investigation and assessment in respect of the rest of the market?

Knowledge to be demonstrated
Q1 Knowledge of the way in which risk assessments are built, documents, other complaints, reviews, intelligence product, RAPEX, technical documentation etc
Resource allocation and priority.
Further sample of the product for testing – use of these results
Q2 Refinement of risk analysis – Hazard, injury, injury scenario, probabilities leading to risk.
All can be quantified by research, empirical sources and estimation.
Q3 Assumptions about risk and control. Consideration of whole product range if no traceability to production units, not way of distinguishing products.
Possibly suspend entire product range pending further testing, although this may not be reliable as a measure of compliance as there is no evidence of product or batch homogeneity.
Q4. Knowledge of obligations and corrective actions to reduce the risk of injury arising from the product to a tolerable level.
Different types of corrective actions and choosing the correct strategy to maximise risk reduction.
Q5. Knowledge of intelligence systems and data sharing, RAPEX and ICSMS, UK Product Safety Database. Future targeting of this type of product/economic operator/supply chain.
Market risk management via improved intelligence product.