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APCON

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APCON

**ACCREDITATION OF ADVERTISING
PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIAN
UNIVERSITIES AND POLYTECHNICS**

GENERAL GUIDELINES

AND

CRITERIA

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INTRODUCTION

The Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) was established in 1989 vide Decree (now Act) 55 of 1988, which was later amended by Decree (now Act) 93 of 1992.

The responsibilities of APCON as enumerated in the law are:

- (a) Determining who are advertising practitioners;
- (b) Determining what standards of knowledge and skill are to be attained by persons seeking to become registered as members of the advertising profession and reviewing those standards from time to time.
- (c) Securing in accordance with the provisions of this Decree, the establishment and maintenance of a register of persons entitled to practice as advertising practitioners and the publication, from time to time, of lists of those persons.
- (d) Regulating and controlling the practice of advertising in all its aspects and ramifications;
- (e) Conducting examinations in the profession and awarding certificates or diplomas to successful candidates as and when appropriate and, for such purpose, the Council shall prescribe fees to be paid in respect thereof;
- (f) Performing the other functions conferred on the Council by this Act.

In performing these functions, APCON is responsible for spearheading the development of manpower for the advertising industry, an assignment whose fulcrum is the education of prospective entrants into the profession.

This task of developing manpower at the entry level is shared between APCON and the sundry departments at tertiary educational institutions, which offer courses leading to qualification for registration as advertising practitioners.

APCON liaises with these departments to regularize standards and ensure that the advertising contents of the programmes are good enough to produce the level of manpower the industry needs.

On its parts, APCON runs a professional Diploma in Advertising programme. The programme, equivalent to the CAM Diploma qualification is an entry requirement for relevant post-graduate degree programmes. It is an examinations only programme.

THE APCON ENABLING LAWS

The Principal Law, originally known as the Advertising Practitioners (Registration, etc) Decree (now Act), which became operational on December 27, 1988, is divided into six parts and two schedules. Part I deals with the establishment of APCON and membership of the advertising profession, while Part II addresses the regulation of practitioners. Part III takes care of training and Part IV, the privileges of registered persons and offences by unregistered practitioners. Discipline and supplementary matters are dealt with in Parts V and VI respectively. Schedule I spells out the qualification and tenure of office of Council members, while Schedule II makes supplementary provisions relating to the Disciplinary Committee and the Investigating Panel.

Part I

Section I of Part I establishes the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria and specifies the statutory roles of the Council as enumerated on Page 1.

Section 2, which deals with the membership of the Council provides for a Chairman to be appointed by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, seven persons to be appointed by the Minister of Information to represent various interests in the field of advertising, ten persons to be elected by the Association of Advertising Agencies in Nigeria, AAAN, and two persons to represent institutions of higher learning in Nigeria offering courses leading to approved qualifications. The two are to be appointed by the Minister in rotation, ensuring that they do not come from the same institution.

Other provisions made in the section include those relating to the power of the Council, its funding and the appointment of the Registrar and other staff of the Council.

Part II:

Section 8 states that it is the duty of the Registrar of the Council to prepare and maintain, in accordance with the rules made by the Council, a register of the names, addresses, approved qualifications and such other particulars as may be specified, of all persons who are entitled in accordance with the provisions of the law to be registered as Fellows, Full Members, Associates or Students of the profession and who apply in the specified manner to be so registered.

Section 2, provides for entry qualifications into the profession. Those seeking to register as Student Members must satisfy the Council that they are undergoing a course of study recognized by the Council leading to a qualification in the profession in an institution approved by the Council.

A person seeking to register as Associate Member should hold a university degree or HND in advertising or other disciplines recognized by the Council, and must be employed in a recognized organization where he or she is acquiring professional experience. The applicant must in addition, not be less than 21 years old, must be of good character and must not have been convicted of any offence involving fraud or dishonesty. Those applying for Full Membership and Fellowship of the profession, in addition to satisfying the conditions for Associate membership, must have been in continuous active practice for at least five and fifteen years respectively.

Part III:

Training:

Part III empowers the Council to approve and, if it thinks fit, to withdraw any approval given for courses or to institutions that train advertising practitioners. It also empowers the Council to supervise examinations leading to qualification for entry into the profession.

Part IV:

Privileges of Registered Practitioners and Offences by Unregistered Practitioners

Section 16 (i) “States that no person who is not registered in accordance with the decree is entitled to hold any appointment in the public service of the Federation or of a state or in any public or private establishment, body or institution, if the holding of such an appointment involves the performance by him in Nigeria of any act pertaining to the profession for gain. Anyone who practices without registration is guilty of an offence and is liable on conviction, for a first offence, to a maximum fine of N1, 000 or to imprisonment for a term of six months or to both fine and imprisonment. For subsequent offences, the penalty is imprisonment of one to three years with no option of fine.

Part V :

Discipline:

Part V establishes the Advertising Practitioners Disciplinary Committee and the Advertising Practitioners Investigating Panel as the structures for the enforcement of discipline and professional ethics.

The Advertising Practitioners Disciplinary Committee, made up of seven members, is charged with considering and determining any case referred to it by the Investigating Panel. The Investigating Panel, on the other hand, has the duty of conducting preliminary investigations into any case where it is alleged that a registered person has misbehaved in his capacity as such, or should for any reasons be the subject of proceedings before the Disciplinary Committee.

Part VI:

Supplementary:

Among other provisions, this part empowers the Minister of Information to make regulations that may in his opinion be necessary or expedient for giving full effect to the provisions of Decree (now Act) 55 of 1988 and its administration.

Amendments:

Decree 55 of 1988 (cited as Cap 7, Laws of the Federation, 1990) has been subsequently amended by Decree (Act) 93 of 1992, which set up the Advertising Standards Panel, and the controversial Decree (Act) 116 of 1993, which set back the hands of the clock by duplicating the role of regulating advertisements in the food/drugs category between APCON and the Federal Ministry of Health.

THE DUTY OF ACCREDITATION

The educational responsibilities of APCON are listed and explained in APCON's enabling laws; of particular relevance are the following provisions:

- (i) (APCONshall be charged with the general duty of) “determining what standards of knowledge and skills are to be attained by persons seeking to become registered as members of the advertising profession and reviewing those standards from time to time; “....conducting examinations in the profession and awarding certificates or diplomas to successful candidates as and when appropriate and for such purpose, the Council shall prescribe fees to be paid in respect thereof.”
(S.1, (b) and (e) of Act 55 of 1998)
- (ii) (The Council shall consists of) “....two persons to represent institutions of higher learning in Nigeria offering courses leading to an approved qualification to be appointed by the Minister of information in rotation, so however, that the two persons shall not come from the same institution”
(S.2 (1)(b), Act 55).
- (iii) “The Council may approve for the purpose of Section II of this Act.

“Approval of courses”

- (a) Any course of training, which is intended for persons seeking to become members of the profession under this (Act) and which the Council considers is designed to confer on persons completing it sufficient knowledge and skill for the practice of the profession;
- (b) Any institution either in Nigeria or elsewhere which the Council considers is properly organized and equipped for conducting the whole or any part of the course of training approved by the Council under this section or;

- (c) Any qualification which as a result of examination taken in conjunction with the course of training approved by the Council under this section, is granted to candidates reaching a standard at the examination indicating, in the opinion of the Council that they have sufficient knowledge and skill to practice the profession.
- (2) The Council may, if it thinks fit, withdraw any approval given under this section in respect of any course, qualification or institution but before withdrawing such an approval, the Council shall:
 - (a) Give notice that it proposes to do so to persons by whom the course is conducted or the qualification is granted or the institution is controlled, as the case may be;
 - (b) Afford each such person an opportunity of making to the Council representation with regard to the proposal and;
 - (c) Take into consideration any representation made in respect of the proposal in pursuance of paragraph (b) of this sub-section.
- (3) In respect of any period during which the approval of the Council under this section for a course, institution or qualification is withdrawn, the course, institution or qualification shall not be treated as approved under this section, but withdrawal of such an approval shall not prejudice the registration or eligibility for registration of any person who by virtue of the approval was registered or eligible for registration immediately before the approval was withdrawn.
- (4) The giving or withdrawal of an approval under this section shall have effect from such date, after the execution of the instrument signifying the giving or withdrawal of the approval as the Council may specify in the instrument and the Council shall:
 - (a) As soon as may be, publish a copy of every instrument in the Gazette; and
 - (b) Not later than seven (7) days before its publication as aforesaid send a copy of the instrument to the Minister.

Supervision of institutions and Examinations:

- (1) It shall be the duty of the Council to keep itself informed of the name of:
 - (a) The instruction given at approved institutions to persons attending approved courses of training and;
 - (b) The examinations as a result of which approved qualifications are granted;And for the purpose of performing that duty, the Council may appoint either from among its own members or otherwise, persons to visit approved institutions or attend such examinations.
- (2) It shall be the duty of a visitor appointed under subsection (1) of this section to report to the Council on:

- (a) The adequacy of instruction given to persons attending approved courses of training at institutions visited by him;
 - (b) The adequacy of the examinations attended by him and;
 - (c) Any other matter relating to the institutions or examinations on which the Council may either generally or in a particular case, request him to report, but no visitor shall interfere with the giving of any instruction or the holding of any examination.
- (3) On receiving a report made in pursuance of this section, the Council shall, as soon as may be, send a copy of the report to the person appearing to the Council to be in charge of the institution or responsible for the examinations to which the report relates requesting that person to make representation to the Council within such times as may be specified in the request not being more than one month beginning with the date of the request.

Powers of the Council to consider matters relating to training etc:

- (1) The Council may, if it thinks fit, consider and report to the Minister upon all matters relating to the professional training and other qualifications required for admission to the profession under this Act and the conditions of practice after registration.
- (2) The Minister may require the Council to advise him on any matter referred to in sub-section (1) of this section. (Part III of Act 55).

THE OBJECTIVES OF ACCREDITATION BY APCON

The essence of accreditation of advertising programmes by APCON is to encourage the production of well-qualified manpower for the advertising industry. The minimum qualifications which are approved for registration of advertising practitioners are:

- (i) The APCON Professional Diploma in Advertising
- (ii) A Degree or Higher National Diploma in
 - (a) Advertising
 - (b) Mass Communication
 - (c) Marketing or
 - (d) Graphic Arts

(iii) Any other qualification approved by the Council

The qualifications must be acquired from departments accredited by APCON. Holders of these qualifications from APCON- accredited schools have the edge of being directly considered for registration, whereas their counterparts who obtain similar qualifications from unaccredited institutions will have to undergo further screening which includes the inspection of academic transcripts. They may also have to sit for examination before they can be registered.

The accreditation exercise establishes that the advertising content of the programmes is adequate for entry into the profession.

Accredited institutions also avail their students of the opportunity of being registered as Student Members of the advertising profession, so that they only need to apply for upgrading upon graduation.

It is therefore, of great benefit to undergraduates and especially graduating students, that their departmental headships understand the importance of this exercise in the future of students who wish to pursue careers in advertising.

Relevant departments are thus advised to inform their students of the career potentials in advertising, but more importantly to enlighten the school authorities on the need to properly support the departments in their bid to provide adequate curricula, facilities and an environmental base for excellence in the profession.

Going with accreditation is the regular evaluation of examinations which APCON is also empowered to periodically do in all higher institutions offering the relevant courses.

One of the ultimate benefits of the supervision of advertising programmes by APCON is that in the future, APCON would be able to provide as well as attract financial, material and other forms of infrastructural support for accredited departments.

THE PROCEDURE

APCON monitors the introduction of advertising related courses in polytechnics and universities. It normally initiates moves for accreditation when it is satisfied that a particular programme is due for assessment, usually 3 years after the take-off of the programme. However, proactive departmental headships also invite APCON for accreditation.

APCON's accreditation teams usually give adequate notification usually between 2 and 6 months of intended visitation dates along with self study form and make provision for repeat visits where necessary, to ensure that every eligible department gets a fair chance.

There are of course, number of pre-requisites for accreditation. The key one is that the programme must have been approved by the appropriate bodies in these cases the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). APCON works closely with these two bodies, taking part in their curriculum activities. They also, in addition to the Federal Ministry of Education, play leading roles in the work of the APCON Education and Accreditation Committee.

APCON maintains a register of approved institutions running advertising and advertising-related programmes in Nigeria. Upon the satisfaction of the first pre-condition (accreditation by NUC or NBTE), the following other procedures obtain:

- [1] APCON contacts the department through the head of the institution, notifying it of APCON's statutory role in accreditation of relevant programmes.
- [2] APCON notifies the institution of the requirements, such as standards for course content, studio facilities, library etc.
- [3] A date is fixed for the accreditation visit.
- [4] A visitation is undertaken and grading done.
- [5] APCON Council ratifies the report of the accreditation team.
- [6] The result indicating accreditation status and remedial actions where applicable is released to the institution.

Accreditation visits involve cost-sharing between APCON and the institution visited. A successfully accredited programme shall enjoy the accreditation status for a period of 5 years after which period the programme shall become due for a fresh accreditation visit.

A programme which falls short of the minimum standard required for accreditation shall be denied accreditation and shall cease to be eligible to admit students into the programme.

BASIS OF ASSESSMENT

Various standards of attainment are required of departments to be accredited by APCON. As much as possible, a balance is sought between pure academic learning and practical knowledge and skills.

Cognizance is often taken of the poor state of the national economy, which has deprived many higher institutions of the standards and facilities they normally should have. With this in mind, APCON accepts proof of good access to standard production facilities by students where the facilities are not fully available within the department/institution.

- * Proof is required of easy access to good printing houses, newspaper/magazine houses, radio/television stations and modern audio-visual studios, for adequate practical training in print and audio -visual production.
- * Sharing of adequate facilities by departments within one institution may also be conceded, provided access is not restricted in any form.
- * Departments are also required to have run the programmes due for accreditation for at least 2 academic sessions.
- * Successfully accredited programmes are normally re-evaluated after 5 years.
- * It is, therefore, necessary for institutions to maintain the approved standards at all times.

Grading: Grading is spread from 0 to 9 on the scale A to E, in the following order:

A - 9 points (Very good standard)

B - 7 points (Good standard)

C - 5 points (Average standard)

D - 3 points (Low standard)

E - 0 points (Very low standard)

The highest attainable score is 180 points, while the lowest is 0. (See evaluation and weighing criteria on page 12)

MINIMA:

Minimum acceptable standards are expected under each scoring criterion. To attain a standard for Full Accreditation, a programme must score up to 90 points. Borderline case may be reviewed, depending upon factors adjudged to be responsible for their scoring low. Where such a review is favorable, a programme may be granted Provisional Accreditation for a specified period, usually 1-2years, depending on the nature of the shortcomings.

This means that the department may enjoy the benefits of accreditation until the expiration of the period granted, during which time another visitation will be scheduled. The visitation will re-examine the areas in which the programme was earlier found inadequate.

CRITERIA

A. ACADEMIC CONTENT:

[I] **Admission Requirements:** Programmes will be judged on the adoption of the following minimum admission qualifications:

- (a) **Master's Degree Programme:** Good first degree (minimum of second class honours) or HND with Post-Graduate Diploma.
- (b) **4-year Higher National Diploma Programme:** SSC/GCE, with Credit passes in at least 5 subjects including English Language, with at least a Pass in Mathematics.
- (c) **3-year Bachelor's Degree Programme:** SSC/GCE, with credit passes in at least 5 subjects including English Language, and Advanced Level GCE (or equivalent) pass in at least 2 relevant papers.
- (d) **2-year Higher National Diploma Programme:** Good National Diploma

[II] **Course requirements (Advertising Content):**
The minimum acceptable standards are:

For undergraduate programmes (Bachelor's/HND):

Year	Units of Advertising
I	-
II	12 credit units
III	4 credit units
IV	8 credit units
Total	24 credit units

Students must take and pass a cumulative of 24 credit unit courses adequately spread across the four years duration of the course.

For post-graduate programmes (Master's):

<u>Semester</u>	<u>Units of Advertising</u>
1st	6 credit units
2nd	6 credit units
3rd	6 credit units (including project)
Total	18 credit units

Students must take and pass a cumulative of 18 credit units courses spread across the duration of the programme.

The same total of 18 credit units is required for 2-semester Master's programmes.

For Doctoral Programmes:

Apart from a satisfactory number of credit hours work, the theme of the Dissertation/Thesis must be advertising based.

1. Practicals:

Scores are awarded based on the following requirements:

(a) Opportunities for relevant industry training:

The standard duration is 1 year for a 5-year ND/HND programme and 4 months for a 3-year degree programme.

(b) Training publications/prints production facilities:

Marks are awarded for availability of in-house publication in which experience in media page planning and ad-space selling, advertising design, layout etc, are required.

(c) Studio facilities:

Marks are awarded for the availability of studio facilities for photography, radio/T.V. facilities for the production of audio-visual commercials.

Note:

Where (b) and (c) above are not available within the institution, consideration may be given to access by students to these facilities in the outside establishments that are within easy reach.

Criteria for scoring include:

- [I] Type of facilities (how modern, how relevant, etc)
- [II] Number of equipment
- [III] Equipment being functional
- [IV] Availability of experts capable of demonstrating the use of equipment.

B. PERSONNEL:

Scoring criteria are the following:

- (a) Departmental academic staff strength (general)
- (b) Departmental staff strength (advertising)
- (c) Staff/Student ratio (departmental)
(Acceptable standard 1: 16)
- (d) Quality of Staff (advertising) :
 - [I] Years of teaching/research experience

- [II] Years of practical/consultancy experience
- [III] Publications, exhibitions etc.
- [IV] Highest qualification in advertising
- [V] Registration as advertising practitioner

C. EQUIPMENT:

Criteria for assessment (see “Studio Facilities” above) include the availability of (or access to) the following :

- (a) Art and layout laboratory (5 points)
- (b) Radio and Television broadcast equipment (10 points)
- (c) Radio/Television/Video production studios (5 points)
- (d) Printing shop (5 points)
- (e) Photo studio (2 points)
- (f) IT environment (5 points)

D. LIBRARY:

- (a) Books, periodicals etc:
 - [I] Quantity (General)
 - [II] Quantity (Year of publication, relevance etc)
 - [III] Publication/Student ratio (advertising)
(Standard 1: 10)
 - [IV] Reading/Study facilities
 - [V] Lending facilities
- (b) **Academic Journals:**
Same as above
Standard ratio 1: 20
- (c) **Demonstration films:**
Same as above
Standard ratio 1: 50

E. PLACEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT RECORDS:

Under this head, what is sought includes the following:

- (a) Average number of advertising students graduated annually.
- (b) Average number of graduates that take up careers in advertising.

APPEAL FOR SUPPORT

Despite the vast size of Nigeria, the increasing number of relevant programmes and limitations of funding, APCON makes every effort to ensure that all eligible programmes are evaluated.

With greater awareness and interest, especially by teachers of advertising, it would become easier for all schools to be covered.

APCON appeals to all players in advertising to support it in this fundamental responsibility.

Ijedi Iyoha (Mrs), rpa
Acting Registrar/Chief Executive
For: APCON

APPENDIX

APCON

ACCREDITATION OF ADVERTISING PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES AND POLYTECHNICS

ASSESSMENT FORM (SPECIMEN)

GRADING SYSTEM:

The scores obtainable on each item in the criteria are spread between 0 and 9 points on the scale A-E in the following order:

- A - 9 points (Very good standard)
- B - 7 points (Good standard)
- C - 5 points (Average standard)
- D - 3 points (Low standard)
- E - 0 points (Very low standard)

The highest score obtainable is 180 points while the lowest score obtainable is zero. For an institution to be accredited to graduate registrable advertising practitioners, it must have scored the average, which is 90 points.

Admission Requirements:

- (a) 4-year Bachelor's Degree Programme:
SSC/GCE, with credit passes in at least 5 subjects including English Language, with at least a pass in Mathematics.
- (b) 3-year Bachelor's Degree Programme:
SSC/GCE, with credit passes in at least 5 subjects including English Language, and Advanced Level GCE (or equivalent) pass in at least 2 relevant papers.
- (c) 2-year Higher National Diploma Programme: A minimum of Ordinary National Diploma.
- (d) Master's Degree Programme:
Good first degree (minimum of second class honours) or HND with Post-Graduate Diploma.

A. ACADEMIC CONTENT:

1. Course Requirements (Advertising)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Scores</u>	<u>(Tick)</u>
I	-	A (24 units)	[]
II	12 credit units	B (20 - 23)	[]
III	4 credit units	C (15 - 19)	[]
IV	8 credit units	D (10 - 14)	[]

Total Units = 24 units

Practicals

2. Industrial Attachment (Duration):	A (1 year)	[]
	B (6 months)	[]
	C (3 months)	[]
	D (1-2 months)	[]
	E (Nil)	[]

3. Student Training Publications: (Media selling/Advert Design)	A (Monthly)	[]
	B (Quarterly)	[]
	C (Twice yearly)	[]
	D (Annually)	[]
	E (None)	[]

4. Opportunities for Practical	A	[]
	B	[]
	C	[]
	D	[]
	E	[]

B. PERSONNEL:

5. Staff Strength in the Department: (Standard - 1: 30)	A (1: 30)	[]
	B (1: 40)	[]
	C (1: 50)	[]
	D (1: 60)	[]
	E (1: 70+)	[]

Quality of Staff:

	Scores	(Tick)
6. Staff -Student ratio: (Standard - 1: 30)	A (1: 30)	[]
	B (1: 40)	[]
	C (1: 50)	[]
	D (1: 60)	[]
	E (1: 70+)	[]
7. Years of teaching/research experience of Advertising Lectures:	A (10 years+)	[]
	B (7-9years)	[]
	C (4-6years)	[]
	D (1-3years)	[]
	E (- 1year)	[]
8. Advertising Lecturers' Practical Experience/Consultancy:	A (10 years+)	[]
	B (7-9years)	[]
	C (4-6years)	[]
	D (1-3years)	[]
	E (- 1year)	[]
9. Journal Publications and Exhibitions:	A (10+)	[]
	B (6-9)	[]
	C (2-5)	[]
	D (1)	[]
	E (Nil)	[]
10. Highest academic qualifications (in advertising):	A (All staff have Ph.D)	[]
	B (60% of staff have Ph.D)	[]
	C (50% of staff have Ph.D, MSc.)	[]
	D (All staff have M.Sc)	[]
	E (50% of staff have B.Sc., M.Sc.)	[]

C EQUIPMENT (Volume/Quality/Ratio per student) A B C D E

	Score	(Tick)
11. Presence of at least one senior lecturer (Ph.D) and enough teachers specializing in advertising	A	[]
	B	[]
	C	[]
	D	[]
	E	[]
12. Art and Layout studio (Laboratory) & Computers (A minimum of 5 functional computers with current graphic software)	A	[]
	B	[]
	C	[]
	D	[]
	E	[]
13. Radio and Television Equipment (A minimum of radio/T.V broadcast studio or proof of easy access to a broadcast station within the locality)	A	[]
	B	[]
	C	[]
	D	[]
	E	[]
14. Radio and Television Studios: (A minimum of radio/T.V broadcast studio or proof of easy access to a broadcast station within locality)	A	[]
	B	[]
	C	[]
	D	[]
	E	[]
15. Printing Shop: (Availability of a functional offset litho press or proof of easy access to a printing press within the locality)	A	[]
	B	[]
	C	[]
	D	[]
	E	[]

	Scores	(Tick)
16. Photo Studio:	A	[]
(A functional photographic studio with modern Cameras and processing facilities)	B	[]
	C	[]
	D	[]
	E	[]
Library:		
17. Books (Volume/Quality/Ratio per student)		
(Standard - 1: 10)	A	[]
(Large volume of recent i.e. Not more than 5 years Publication date of books and journals)	B	[]
	C	[]
	D	[]
	E	[]
17. Books (Volume/Quality/Ratio per student)		
(Standard - 1: 10)	A	[]
(Large volume of recent i.e. Not more than 5 years Publication date of books and journals)	B	[]
	C	[]
	D	[]
	E	[]
17. Journals and other publications		
Demonstration films etc. (Volume/Quality/Ratio (Standard 1: 2 0 for Journals, 1: 50 for films)	A	[]
(Large volume of recent i.e. Not more than 5 years Publication date, of books and journals)	B	[]
	C	[]
	D	[]
	E	[]
D. PLACEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT RECORDS:		
19. Average number of graduates produced in advertising annually	A	[]
	B	[]
	C	[]
	D	[]
	E	[]
20. Average number of those that get employed in advertising areas	A	[]
	B	[]
	C	[]
	D	[]
	E	[]