INSTITUTE OF ACCOUNTANTS AND BOOKKEEPERS

Qualification Specification

IAB Level 4 Certified International Accounting Professional

Qualification Number: 610/4745/4

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Document history

Version/date	Changes	Owner	Authorised by
V5 August 2026	Minor revisions (including additional grade descriptors) and reformatted	AO Director	Professional Standards Committee
V4 August 2026	Review and update	Chief Examiner	Professional Standards Committee
V3 September 2024	Minor revisions to format	Chief Examiner	
V2 September 2024	Minor revisions to format	Chief Examiner	
V1 September 2024	Document created	Head of Awarding	Professional Standards Committee

Contents

Introduction

The objective of this Qualification Specification is to provide an overview of the IAB Level 4 Certified International Accounting Professional.

This document includes the aim, size, level, structure and content, including learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

There is guidance relating to the centre approval requirements, delivery and assessment for this qualification, and details of grading criteria and the grading of units.

Purpose of the qualification

This qualification is designed to provide learners with a comprehensive overview of business bookkeeping and accounting practices. It provides an in-depth understanding of the key principles and techniques essential to cost accounting and management accounting, as well as the implementation of international standards and regulatory compliance.

This qualification also indicates the importance of the development of personal and professional skills for professional career development.

Target learners

The Level 4 Certified International Accounting Professional has been designed to appeal to learners working in the financial sector with positions such as, professional accounts from different levels, management accounts, finance professionals or managers.

Entry requirements

The entry requirements below are for guidance only as applicants may apply with various backgrounds and qualifications.

Approved IAB Centres are responsible for checking applications against the following entry requirements and ensuring learners can fulfil the demands of the qualification before registration.

There are no entry formal requirements but relevant work experience in the field of bookkeeping and accounting will be an advantage.

For learners studying in a local language, B1 level of English on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) or equivalent is recommended.

Progression

IAB does not currently have qualifications offering a progression opportunity for holders of the IAB Level 4 Certified International Accounting Professional.

Qualification size, level and structure

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), and CCEA regulate qualifications, examinations, and assessments in England, and Northern Ireland. The IAB Level 4 Certified International Accounting Professional is a vocationally-related qualification on the Ofqual and CCEA Register of Regulated Qualifications.

Qualification size

The Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Guided Learning Hours (GLH) for this qualification are as follows:

Total Qualification Time (TQT)	Guided Learning Hours (GLH)
1400 hours	700 hours

TQT, including GLH, is calculated by considering the different activities that learners would typically complete to achieve and demonstrate the learning outcomes of the qualification.

Individual learners' requirements and individual teaching styles mean there may be variation in the actual time taken to complete a qualification.

Values for TQT, including GLH, are estimates.

Some examples of activities that can contribute to TQT include:

- independent and unsupervised research/learning
- unsupervised e-learning
- unsupervised e-assessment
- unsupervised coursework
- watching a pre-recorded podcast or webinar
- unsupervised work-based learning
- all GLH.

Some examples of activities that can contribute to GLH include:

- classroom-based learning supervised by a teacher
- work-based learning supervised by a teacher
- live webinar or telephone tutorial with a teacher in real time
- e-learning supervised by a teacher in real time
- all forms of assessment that take place under the immediate guidance or supervision of a teacher, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

Qualification level

This qualification is at Level 4 on the Register of Regulated Qualifications in England and Northern Ireland.

IAB qualifications comply with level descriptors set by Ofqual, which are divided into two categories:

- knowledge and understanding
- skills.

The descriptors below set out the generic knowledge and skills associated with the typical holder of a qualification at that level.

Knowledge descriptor The learner:	**Skills descriptor** The learner can:
• has factual, procedural and/or theoretical knowledge and understanding of the occupational area to address problems that are well-defined, but complex and non-routine • can analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas • is aware of the nature and approximate scope of the area of work or study • has informed awareness of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.	• identify, adapt and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills to complete work activities, inform actions, and address problems that are complex and non-routine while normally well defined • review the effectiveness and appropriateness of methods, actions and results.

Qualification structure

The qualification is made up of six mandatory units. The units, sizing information and assessment type for the IAB Level 4 Certified International Accounting Professional are set out in the following table.

Unit title	GLH	Assessment method
Fundamentals of bookkeeping and accounting	130	Online examination (2 hours)
Advanced accounting practices	200	
Cost accounting and management accounting	30	
Regulatory compliance	110	
Computerised accounting	200	
Human resource skills and personal development	30	
Total	700	

Assessment, achievement and grading

Methods of assessment

The assessment for this qualification is delivered online via the IAB Education platform. A pilot assessment is provided for the purposes of practice and revision. The pilot assessment is not timed and can be undertaken as many times as the learner chooses. Once the pilot assessment is passed, the learner can attempt the live assessment. Live assessments are timed.

The live online examination must be completed under controlled conditions.

Non-programmable calculators are required to complete the assessments.

Please note that mobile phones cannot be used to sit these assessments as some required functionality will not be available.

Delivering assessments

The IAB 'Assessment Delivery Policy' applies to all IAB qualifications and assessments and must be followed by approved centres to ensure that IAB assessments are delivered in accordance with the requirements.

A copy of this policy is made available to centres upon approval. The policy can also be requested from the IAB Awarding Organisation team at ao@iab.org.uk.

Marking and moderation

Marking is completed automatically by the IAB Education platform against the relevant assessment criteria and mark scheme. Moderation is a process undertaken following the marking of assessments prior to a result being released to learners. Moderation acts as a filter, which ensures that an assessment outcome (for example a mark and / or grade) is fair, valid, and reliable. Moderation ensures that the mark scheme was applied correctly, all parts of the assessment were marked and that the marks were totalled and recorded correctly

Achievement and grading

To achieve the qualification, learners must take and pass the online examination.

Outcomes are graded as follows:

80% and above	Distinction
65% – 79%	Merit
50% – 64%	Pass
49% and below	Fail

The table below provides descriptions of required learner performance associated with each grade.

Grade	Descriptor
Pass	Learners can: • recall, use and apply accounting facts, terms, definitions, processes and formulae • identify the correct procedures used in regulatory compliance • demonstrate a basic understanding of financial and management accounting processes, procedures and techniques • record business transactions using correct accounting techniques • prepare financial statements with routine transactions for different organisations • select and use financial and management accounting information • use computerised accounting software to record routine transactions • identify the importance of effective human resource management.
Merit	Learners can: • demonstrate knowledge of accounting facts, terms, definitions, processes and formulae use them in given scenarios • identify effective procedures used in regulatory compliance and identify areas of risk for a business • demonstrate a good understanding of financial and management accounting processes, procedures and techniques • accurately record business transactions using correct accounting techniques • prepare financial statements with routine transactions for different organisations • select and use relevant financial and management information from given information • select and use relevant accounting information to apply to given scenarios • use computerised accounting software to record routine transactions accurately and provide reports to decision makers

	• identify the importance of effective human resource management (HRM) and the features of a HRM approach which can benefit an employer.
Distinction	Learners can: • demonstrate a detailed knowledge of accounting facts, terms, definitions, processes and formulae using them consistently and effectively in given scenarios • identify effective procedures used in regulatory compliance and carry out an assessment of business risk in order to make recommendations to improve systems and procedures • demonstrate a detailed understanding of financial and management accounting processes, procedures and techniques • identify and record business transactions using correct accounting techniques with precision • prepare financial statements with routine and non-routine transactions for different organisations • select and use relevant information from a given scenario which may include redundant information • select and use relevant accounting information to analyse accounting problems • carry out business calculations to provide information to decision makers and make limited judgements based on a given scenario • use computerised accounting software to record routine and non-routine transactions accurately and provide reports to decision makers • identify the importance of effective human resource management (HRM) and the features of a HRM approach which can benefit an employer • prioritise work according to deadlines and timescales.

Certification

Upon confirmation of the result, and within three months of the examination date, the learner who achieves a pass, merit or distinction will receive an IAB Level 4 Certified International Accounting Professional certificate. The certificate will carry the full name of the learner as registered.

Reasonable adjustment

As an Awarding Organisation, the IAB has a duty not to discriminate against individuals in relation to conferring qualifications regarding the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. The IAB will take steps when developing specifications, identifying the assessment criteria, and drafting assessment content to minimise the impact on individuals with differing protected characteristics.

The duty of the IAB to make a reasonable adjustment will apply where assessment arrangements would put a learner who has a disability or learning need at a substantial disadvantage compared to a learner who does not have a disability or learning need. In such circumstances, the IAB must take steps to mitigate that disadvantage.

Please refer to the Centre Area of the IAB website www.iab.org.uk for a copy of the policy and associated procedure.

Results enquiries and appeals

Please refer to the Centre Area of the IAB website www.iab.org.uk for further information about the process, procedures and policies for making a results enquiry and/or an appeal.

Unit specifications

The unit specifications (*see* below) indicate the content, in terms of learning outcomes and assessment criteria, of the six mandatory units that comprises the IAB Level 4 Certified International Accounting Professional.

All the learning outcomes and assessment criteria must be covered by providers when delivering the qualification. The live assessment covers a selection of the unit learning outcomes and assessment criteria and full coverage is achieved across the live assessment variations.

The content of the assessments is subject to ongoing review by the IAB and changes periodically.

Unit	Fundamentals of bookkeeping and accounting		
Level	4		
GLH	130	TQT	260

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Understand fundamentals of bookkeeping and accounting	1.1. Describe the key processes of bookkeeping and accounting 1.2. Explain the purpose of reconciliation statements 1.3. Discuss the concept of depreciation 1.4. Describe the stages involved in the preparation of final accounts 1.5. Describe the use of ratio calculations as a tool for financial analysis 1.6. Develop key Microsoft office skills
	What learners need to learn
	a. Basic accounting formulae and accounting terminologies in common use b. Capital and revenue transactions- capital and revenue expenditures, capital and revenue receipts c. Measurement, valuation and accounting estimates d. Bookkeeping basics – double-entry system e. Books of prime entry, subsidiary books f. Recording of cash and bank transactions, voucher preparations g. Preparation of ledger accounts and trial balance-interpretation and usefulness h. Bank reconciliation statement and rectification of errors i. Depreciation - methods and calculations j. Preparation of Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet), Statement of Profit or Loss (Income Statement) and Cash Flow Statement k. Accounting treatment of bad debts, reserve for bad and doubtful debts, provision for discount on debtors and provision for discount on creditors l. Financial ratios and their calculations – liquidity, efficiency, profitability m. Financial statement analysis n. Skills relating to MS Word, MS Excel, MS Outlook, MS PowerPoint

Unit	Advanced accounting practices		
Level	4		
GLH	200	**TQT**	400

Learning Outcome	**Assessment Criteria**
2 Understand advanced accounting practices	2.1. Identify the main year-end accounting processes 2.2. Describe essential payroll principles 2.3. Explain the basic principles of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)
	What learners need to learn
	a. Inventory accounting b. Accruals accounting c. Assets accounting d. Adjustments accounting e. Multi-currency transaction reconciliation f. Hire purchase g. IFRS and GAAP – basic requirements and principles, compliance, managing problems and information requests, advantages and disadvantages h. International variations in GAAP – UK, US, Australia

Unit	Cost accounting and management accounting		
Level	4		
GLH	30	**TQT**	60

Learning Outcome	**Assessment Criteria**
3 Understand cost accounting and management accounting	3.1. Identify common costing systems 3.2. Describe the use of cost management tools and techniques 3.3. Explain the benefits of effective cost management
	What learners need to learn
	a. Principles of costing b. Preparation of cost sheets c. Management accounting fundamentals d. Receivables and payables management e. Key stages of cost management – setup, resource planning f. Budgets and budgeting g. Cost estimation h. Cost control i. Inventory valuation j. Cost accumulation k. Cost assumption l. Input measurement basis m. Inventory capability and capacity n. Reduced overspending o. Support for planning p. Use of standards q. Risk mitigation r. Key challenges to cost management – change management, effective communication, project scope, under-estimation

Unit	Regulatory compliance		
Level	4		
GLH	110	TQT	220

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
4 Be able to comply with regulatory compliance	4.1. Explain taxation laws 4.2. Demonstrate Anti-Money Laundering (AML) 4.3. Evaluate the financial forensics
	What learners need to learn
	a. Principles of taxation b. International variations in taxation laws c. Anti-money laundering fundamentals d. Concept of financial forensics e. Assessment of business risk f. Risk assessment processes – risk aggregation, models, human factors g. Management of risk – risk management plan, acceptance, rejection, transfer, mitigation h. Enterprise Risk Management i. Meaning and definition of forensic accounting j. Branches of accounting k. Financial crimes l. Fraud m. Crime detection and prevention n. Deterrence o. Digital forensics

Unit	Computerised accounting software		
Level	4		
GLH	200	TQT	400

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
5 Know how to use computerised accounting software	5.1. Understand accounting software packages 5.2. Evaluate taxation software packages 5.3. Analyse computerised payroll software packages
	What learners need to learn
	a. Computerised accounting systems – types, benefits, key features b. Popular software packages – Sage, Quickbooks, Xero c. Digital resources d. Use of Excel for bookkeeping e. Automated data entry f. Customised reports g. Security h. Cloud accounting

<table>
<tr><td>Unit</td><td colspan="3">Human resource skills and personal development</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level</td><td colspan="3">4</td></tr>
<tr><td>GLH</td><td>30</td><td>TQT</td><td>60</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Learning Outcome</td><td colspan="2">Assessment Criteria</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="3">6 Human resource skills and personal development</td><td colspan="2">6.1. Describe the human resource function
6.2. Identify time sheet regulations
6.3. Explain the significance of business ethics
6.4. Discuss the importance and benefits of effective communication
6.5. Understand the stages of personal and professional development</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">What learners need to learn</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">a. The human resource function – recruitment, training and development, health and safety, termination of employment
b. HR management systems
c. Client timesheet management
d. CCH software
e. Communication skills – speaking and effective listening, business writing, telephone etiquette, presentation skills
f. Basics of lean management
g. Client management
h. Motivation and reward systems
i. Team building
j. Work planning and time management
k. Deadlines and timescales
l. Other soft skills – negotiation, team building, planning, time management</td></tr>
</table>

Sample assessments

The IAB has deliberately not included sample assessment questions within this qualification specification. Pilot assessments are provided on the IAB Education platform for the purposes of practice and revision. Pilot assessments are not timed and can be undertaken as many times as the learner chooses.

Delivering IAB qualifications

Staffing and physical resource requirements for centres

The IAB, in line with regulatory requirements, has a Centre Agreement in place which covers the two-way obligations between the IAB as the Awarding Organisation and each centre delivering our qualifications. A key section of this agreement is to ensure a professional approach to the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment, leading to the best learner experience.

Each centre engaged with the IAB is required to ensure viable levels of staffing, managerial and financial resources are in place to enable it to effectively and efficiently deliver the qualifications as required by the Awarding Organisation.

Quality assurance

Any centre approved to offer IAB qualifications is subject to a rigorous quality assurance regime to ensure compliance with the requirements set out in the Centre Agreement and any regulatory conditions. This regime includes, but is not limited to, policy and procedure review, performance review, on-site monitoring visits and virtual interviews to assess how well that centre operates in delivering IAB qualifications.

IAB policies and procedures

Policies and procedures are in place to provide a framework and outline the IAB's approach and objectives for key areas along with defined processes to be followed. These documents ensure credibility, compliance, consistency, and quality in the design, delivery, and awarding of qualifications. Relevant policies are issued to approved centres alongside Centre Agreements. These can also be accessed by contacting our awarding organisation team via ao@iab.org.uk

Examples of the Policies that can be found include, but are not limited to:

- Adverse Effects
- Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption
- Assessment Delivery
- Complaints
- Conflict of interest

- Contingency Plan
- Enquiries and appeals
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Malpractice and Maladministration
- Plagiarism, Collusion and Cheating
- Reasonable Adjustments
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Results and Certification
- Sanctions
- Special Considerations
- Withdrawal of approval

Centres delivering IAB qualifications should refer to the relevant policy for guidance as appropriate.

Equality and diversity

The IAB is committed to ensuring an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment for all learners undertaking its qualifications. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy requires all learners to have equal opportunity to access our qualifications and assessments, and our qualifications to be awarded in a way that is fair to every learner.

Approved centres delivering IAB qualifications must have a policy relating to equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion to ensure a positive learning environment is provided to all learners. This is reviewed and assessed as part of our monitoring process which may include on-site inspections.

Contact us

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