

**QP pre-entry education  
competency requirements for degree holders  
(accountancy degrees and conversion  
programmes)**

## Overview

This competency set consists of two parts: generic competencies and technical competencies. It defines the knowledge, skills and ability that candidates should possess at the point of entering the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (HKICPA) Qualification Programme (QP). This set is applicable to entrants who are accounting graduates or graduates of conversion programmes.

### Table of content

#### Generic competencies

The generic competency requirements are set in the following areas:

- Intellectual Qualities
- Commercial Qualities
- Intrapersonal Qualities
- Interpersonal Qualities

#### Technical competencies

The technical competency requirements are set in the following areas:

- Financial Accounting
- Auditing
- Information Management
- Management Accounting
- Finance
- Taxation

## Generic Competencies

### Intellectual Qualities

#### Information technology proficiency

- Is familiar with various common computer software (e.g., word processing, spreadsheets, presentation software, internet, email).

#### Language proficiency

- Use English in both written and spoken context (e.g., presentation, discussion, report writing).
- Use Chinese in written form and Putonghua to a level required by the China business environment.

#### Analytical thinking and problem solving

- Research, access and integrate relevant information for analysis.
- Evaluate different information and apply analysis according to different contexts.
- Identify the overall purpose of work tasks and establish links between pieces of work.
- Identify problem and recognize its potential impact.
- Apply critical analysis and logical reasoning to issues and problems.
- Identify, conceptualize and structure key issues and problems.
- Use decision sciences and quantitative models and techniques (e.g., statistics, SWOT, PESTE) to solve problems and to accomplish tasks.
- Understand and consider constraints in problem solving.
- Show independence of mind and an inquisitive orientation.
- Analyze the situation and solve the problem independently as appropriate.
- Judge when to inquire further information or to seek others' input to solve a problem.
- Judge when to report or escalate the problem to senior level for their attention and action.

### Commercial Qualities

#### Commercial acumen and China focus

- Is aware of the legal and regulatory environment of business and other organizations, including the law relating to business transactions, business entities and taxation.
- Is aware of the economic environment of business, including the concepts and tools of macro and micro economics.
- Show basic understanding to other business functions (e.g. marketing, market research and strategies, operations management, services) and how they relate to the accounting function.
- See the relevance of and apply academic skills (e.g. analysis techniques, usage of figures and data) to the business context.
- Understand the social, economic, regulatory and political environment relating to business organizations in China.
- Understand the regulatory environment of accounting in China.

### **Creativity and change orientation**

- Understand the need for change and is comfortable with changes.
- Demonstrate creative thinking in approaching tasks to do things better.
- Introduce new method to improve work process.
- Embrace lifelong learning.
- Adapt to unstructured and unfamiliar problems and situations readily.
- Describe the process of change to help others adapting to changes.

## **Intrapersonal Qualities**

### **Integrity and professionalism**

- Demonstrate personal integrity and adhere to ethical conduct in practice.
- Adhere to principles and values in practice.
- Adopt a professional approach to fulfill personal and social responsibilities.

### **Drive and resilience**

- Demonstrate self-initiative and motivation to get things done.
- Is committed to life-long learning and continuous improvement.
- Is proactive in highlighting potential problems to senior level as appropriate.
- Show adaptability in approaching different people and situation.
- Handle stressful work demand effectively.
- Remain composed to deal with challenges.

### **Execution and result orientation**

- Apply time management and prioritize work tasks to get things done.
- Set goals, objectives and implement actions to complete task on time and meeting expectation.
- Is reliable and consistent in delivering commitments.
- Monitor work progress and stay on track.

## **Interpersonal Qualities**

### **Leadership and teamwork**

- Lead others to accomplish the common goal in teamwork.
- Provide direction and guidance to others to complete tasks.
- Understand organizational behavior and human resources management.
- Provide support to team members to finish tasks.

### **Communication and relationship building**

- Present arguments and thoughts in a structured, logical and systematic way, to justify the outcome or solution proposed.
- Use layman's terms to explain technical accounting terms and concepts.
- Understand negotiation processes and influence tactics.
- Establish productive working relationships with peers, supervisors and clients.
- Show active listening in interacting with peers, supervisors and clients.
- Interact with culturally and intellectually diverse people or groups in a global environment.

## Technical Competencies

### Fields of competency

The items listed in this section are shown with an indicator of the minimum acceptable level of competency, based on a three-point scale as follows:

#### 1. Awareness

To have a general academic awareness of the field with a basic understanding of relevant knowledge and related concepts.

#### 2. Knowledge

The ability to use knowledge to perform tasks competently without assistance in straightforward academic situations or applications.

#### 3. Application

The ability to apply comprehensive knowledge and a broad range of skills in an academic setting to solve most problems generally encountered.

## Financial Accounting

### Framework of financial accounting and reporting

- Explain the historical development of the accountancy profession and accounting thought. 2
- Explain the conceptual and theoretical basis of accounting. 2
- Describe the legal and reporting framework as it applies to financial accounting in Hong Kong. 2
- Describe the standard setting process and role of accounting standards, Hong Kong and International. 2
- Describe the role of accounting guidelines and other professional pronouncements and exposure drafts. 2
- Describe the financial reporting framework and standard for small and medium-sized entity. 2

### Recording and presenting financial information

- Explain the information needs of financial decision makers and the role of accounting information in addressing these needs. 3
- Apply the relevant processes to identify, gather, record, summarize and analyze financial information. 3
- Identify the components of primary financial statements. 3
- Account for transactions in accordance with Hong Kong Financial Reporting Standards. 3
- Prepare financial statements for individuals, unincorporated businesses, partnerships and companies applying relevant guidance in relation to accounting treatment of transactions. 3
- Prepare calculations for groups involving subsidiaries, associates and joint ventures. 3
- Explain the features of information systems (computerized and manual) which meet an organization's external reporting requirements. 3

### **Ethics in financial reporting**

- Explain the ethical responsibilities for professional accountants in preparing financial reports. 2
- Understand forensic accounting and various misstatements arising from fraudulent financial reporting. 1

### **Current issues and developments in financial reporting**

- Explain the corporate governance debate and its impact on financial reporting disclosures. 2
- Discuss the disclosure requirements on directors' remunerations, board composition, audit committee and their importance to corporate governance. 2
- Understand the growing emphasis and the developing needs of corporate social responsibilities. 1
- Understand the current issues in financial reporting both in Hong Kong and internationally. 1

## **Auditing**

### **Nature and purpose of auditing**

- Explain the conceptual and theoretical basis of auditing. 2
- Explain the need for and nature of third party assurance. 2
- Describe the legal and regulatory framework governing the auditing profession in Hong Kong. 2

### **Audit process and practice**

- Identify and explain audit objectives. 2
- Explain the principles of collecting and assessing audit evidence. 2
- Describe the approach to audit assignments including understanding the business, audit risk, audit methodologies, evidence, materiality, risk assessment and internal control. 2
- Describe the nature of and need for an auditor's report on financial statements. 2

### **Professional standards and guidelines**

- Demonstrate an understanding of Hong Kong Standards on Auditing. 2
- Demonstrate an understanding of the Institute's Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants as it applies to auditors. 2

### **Current issues and developments in auditing**

- Discuss current issues in auditing both in Hong Kong and internationally. 2
- Describe approaches to applying a corporate governance framework and the impact on auditing and the auditing profession. 2

## Information Management

### Information

- Explain the specific information needs of managers in different functional areas of an organization, including production, operations, marketing and sales, accounting, human resources and IT. 2
- Explain the increasing roles and responsibilities of accountants as user and owner of data and the corporate information system. 2
- Describe the opportunities and threats to corporate information system including capabilities in data treatment and analysis, data integrity, system security and issues in access restriction, and business contingency/continuity. 2
- Describe the role of information technology in solving business and accounting problems. 2

### Business systems

- Formulate appropriate information systems strategies to support implementation of business and functional strategies. 2
- Use the system development life cycle to plan, design, implement, and evaluate an IT system. 2
- Describe the application of information technology to accounting systems and the generation, reporting, internal control and attestation of accounting information. 2
- Recognize and understand the roles of accountants in all stages of the system development life cycle: systems analysis; systems design; systems implementation; and systems operation and maintenance. 2

### Financial information

- Demonstrate an understanding of the behavioural issues of implementing information systems in organizations. 2
- Describe how change management can contribute to successful implementation of information systems. 2

## Management Accounting

### Role and purpose of management accounting

- Explain the features and uses of business information. 2
- Describe the role of management accounting in organizations. 2
- Describe theories and principles of management control. 2

### Budgeting and forecasting

- Describe the principles of budgeting. 2
- Prepare budgets and explain variances. 3
- Prepare and explain forecasts and projections. 3

### Cost accounting

- Explain the classification of costs and revenues. 2
- Apply alternative costing techniques to products and services and explain variances. 3
- Apply contribution analysis in decision making. 3

### Performance measurement

- Identify and explain performance measurement needs. 2
- Calculate and explain the performance of products and business segments. 3
- Describe the use of financial and non-financial indicators in performance measurement. 3
- Describe the leading models of performance measurement system including triple bottom line management and balanced scorecard. 1

### Pricing strategies and decisions

- State the factors affecting pricing policies and describe pricing strategies. 2
- Apply the different approaches of pricing products and services considering external market factors and internal cost structures. 3

### Working capital management

- Describe the principles of working capital management. 2
- Apply the procedures involved in working capital management to calculate the funding requirements for working capital of different types of organizations. 3

### Strategic management accounting

- Explain current issues in strategic management accounting. 2
- Explain the linkages between management accounting and the strategic management of an organization. 2
- Describe the business planning processes including the development of corporate strategic plans. 2
- Explain organizational changes methodologies and processes and variations in business models. 2
- Describe strategic cost management techniques, including just-in-time (JIT) and total quality management (TQM) concepts, product life cycle costing, target costing, quality costing, theory of constraints and throughput analysis. 2

## Finance

### Financial environment

- Describe the financial environment in which an entity operates. 2
- Describe the structure of Hong Kong equity and debt markets and its financial and banking system. 2
- Explain the role of treasury management and describe its responsibilities and activities. 2

### Sources of finance and capital structure

- Explain the different sources of finance. 2
- Identify and explain the advantages and risks associated with both debt and equity finance. 2
- Explain and perform calculations using the theory of capital markets including: portfolio theory; capital asset pricing model; cost of capital; Modigliani Miller theories; and efficient market hypothesis. 2
- Understand the use of financial products, including derivatives, in relation to corporate financing and risk management. 1
- Use of external expert for advisory on transaction services for fund raising. 1

### Capital investment appraisal

- Analyze strengths and weaknesses of different project appraisal techniques. 3
- Apply different appraisal techniques to evaluate capital investment projects including payback accounting rate of return net present value and internal rate of return. 3
- Describe the impact of taxation, inflation, risk and uncertainty in capital investment appraisal. 3

### Financial forecasting and planning

- Prepare business plans for an organization. 2
- Prepare cash flow and profit projections for a business. 3

### Financial analysis

- Identify and calculate main stock exchange indicators. 2
- Calculate and explain main ratios used in internal financial management. 3

## Taxation

### Overview of taxation system

- Describe the key aspects of the tax system in Hong Kong including tax administration. 2
- Identify the various types of taxation and tax bases applicable in Hong Kong. 2
- Describe the criteria for ascertaining chargeability for all major taxes. 2
- Explain basic tax planning issues. 2

### Tax computation

- For straightforward transactions and situations, calculate and advise on tax liabilities for individuals, unincorporated businesses, partnerships and companies arising from: 3
  - Salaries tax;
  - Profits tax;
  - Stamp duty; and
  - Property tax.