

ACCA

Diploma in International Financial Reporting

Syllabus and study guide

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Think Ahead

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This syllabus and study guide is designed to help candidates to plan their studies and to provide detailed information on what could be assessed in any examination session.

1. AIMS

To provide qualified accountants or graduates, possessing relevant country specific qualifications or work experience with an up to date and relevant conversion course, providing a practical and detailed knowledge of the key international financial reporting standards (IFRS® Standards) and how they are interpreted and applied.

2. OBJECTIVES

On completion of this syllabus, candidates should be able to:

- Understand and explain the structure of the international professional and conceptual framework of financial reporting.
- Apply relevant international financial reporting standards to key elements of financial statements
- Identify and apply disclosure requirements for entities relating to the presentation of financial statements and notes
- Prepare group financial statements (excluding group cash flow statements) including subsidiaries, associates and joint arrangements.

3. POSITION OF THE COURSE WITHIN THE OVERALL PORTFOLIO OF ACCA'S QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

The Diploma in International Financial Reporting (DipIFR) builds on the technical and/or practical knowledge acquired from recognised country specific accountancy qualifications or relevant work experience. The syllabus introduces candidates to the wider international framework of accounting and the system of standard setting. The Dip IFR concentrates on the application of conceptual and technical financial reporting knowledge that candidates have already obtained to the specific requirements of financial reporting under IFRS Standards

The DipIFR also provides essential international financial reporting knowledge and principles that will equip candidates to operate in an increasingly global market place .

The prerequisite knowledge for DipIFR can either come from a country specific professional qualification, from possessing a relevant degree (giving exemptions from *Accountant in Business (AB)*; *Management Accounting (MA)* and *Financial Accounting (FA)* and *Corporate and Business Law (LW)* of the ACCA qualification) and two years' accounting experience, or by having three years' full-time relevant accounting experience, supported by an employer's covering letter.

4. APPROACH TO EXAMINING THE SYLLABUS

The examination is a three-hour fifteen minute paper. ACCA has removed the restriction relating to the 15 minutes reading and planning time, so that while the time considered necessary to complete this exam remains at 3 hours, candidates may use the additional 15 minutes as they choose. ACCA encourages students to take time to read questions carefully and to plan answers but once the exam time has started, there are no additional restrictions as to when candidates may start writing in their answer books.

Time should be taken to ensure that all the information and exam requirements are properly read and understood.

Most questions will contain a mix of computational and discursive elements. All questions are compulsory.

All questions will attract 25 marks. Question one will involve the preparation of one or more of the consolidated financial statements that are examinable within the syllabus. This question will often include issues that will need to be addressed prior to performing the consolidation procedures. Generally these issues will relate to the financial statements of the parent prior to their consolidation.

Question two will often be related to a scenario in which questions arise regarding the appropriate accounting treatment and/or disclosure of a range of issues. In this question candidates may be asked to comment on management's chosen accounting treatment and determine a more appropriate one, based on circumstances described in the question.

Question three will usually focus more specifically on the requirements of one specific IFRS. This question will typically contain a mixture of explanation of the principles underpinning the standard and practical application of those principles.

Question four will usually consist of a scenario in which the candidate is given a series of queries from a superior relating to the financial statements. The requirement will usually be to answer each query. The queries will normally be independent of each

other. It will be rare for the queries in question four to require a numerical answer.

Some IFRS Standards are very detailed and complex. In the DipIFR exam candidates need to be aware of the principles and key elements of these Standards. Candidates will also be expected to have an appreciation of the background and need for international financial reporting standards and issues related to harmonisation of accounting in a global context.

The overall pass mark for the Diploma in International Financial Reporting is 50%.

5. SYLLABUS CONTENT

A INTERNATIONAL SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

1. The International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) and the regulatory framework

B ELEMENTS OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Revenue recognition
2. Property, plant and equipment
3. Impairment of assets
4. Leases
5. Intangible assets and goodwill
6. Inventories
7. Financial instruments
8. Provisions, contingent assets and liabilities
9. Employment and post-employment benefits
10. Tax in financial statements

11. The effects of changes in foreign currency exchange rates

12. Agriculture

13. Share-based payment

14. Exploration and evaluation expenditures

15. Fair value measurement

C PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES

1. Presentation of the statement of financial position, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income and the statement of changes in equity
2. Earnings per share
3. Events after the reporting period

4. Accounting policies, changes in accounting estimates and errors

5. Related party disclosures

6. Operating segments

7. Reporting requirements of small and medium-sized entities (SMEs)

D PREPARATION OF EXTERNAL FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR COMBINED ENTITIES, ASSOCIATES AND JOINT ARRANGEMENTS

1. Preparation of group consolidated external reports
2. Business combinations – intra-group adjustments
3. Business combinations – fair value adjustments
4. Business combinations – associates and joint arrangements
5. Complete disposal of shares in subsidiaries

EXCLUDED TOPICS

The following topics are specifically excluded from the syllabus:

- Partnership and branch financial statements
- Complex group structures, including sub-subsidiaries or mixed groups and foreign subsidiaries
- Step acquisitions, partial disposal of subsidiaries and group re-constructions
- Financial statements of banks and similar financial institutions
- Preparation of statements of cash flow (single company and consolidated)
- Preparation of interim financial statements
- Accounting for insurance entities
- International financial reporting exposure drafts and discussion papers

- The international public sector perspective
- Multi-employer benefit schemes
- Information reflecting the effects of changing prices and financial reporting in hyperinflationary economies
- Share-based payment transactions with cash alternatives

KEY AREAS OF THE SYLLABUS

The key topic area headings are as follows:

- International sources of authority
- Elements of financial statements
- Presentation of accounts and additional disclosures
- Preparation of external reports for combined entities, associates and joint arrangements.

6. STUDY GUIDE

A INTERNATIONAL SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

1. The International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) and the regulatory framework

- Discuss the need for IFRS Standards and possible barriers to their development.
- Explain the structure and constitution of the IASB and the standard setting process.
- Understand and interpret the IASB's Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting®.
- Explain the progress towards international harmonisation.
- Account for the first-time adoption of IFRS Standards.

B ELEMENTS OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Revenue recognition

- Explain and apply the principles of revenue recognition:
 - i. Identification of contracts
 - ii. Identification of performance obligations
 - iii. Determination of transaction price
 - iv. Allocation of the price to the performance obligations
 - v. Recognition of revenue when/as performance obligations are satisfied
- Describe and apply the acceptable methods for measuring progress towards complete satisfaction of performance obligations.
- Explain and apply the criteria for the recognition of contract costs
- Specifically account for the following types of transactions:
 - (i) Principal versus agent;
 - (ii) Repurchase agreements;
 - (iii) Bill and hold arrangements
 - (iv) Consignment agreements

- Account for different types of consideration (including variable consideration) and where a significant financing component exists in the contract.

- Prepare financial statement extracts for contracts with multiple performance obligations, some of which are satisfied over time and some at a point in time.

2. Property, plant and equipment

- Define the initial cost of a non-current asset (including a self-constructed asset) and apply this to various examples of expenditure, distinguishing between capital and revenue items.
- Identify pre-conditions for the capitalisation of borrowing costs.
- Describe, and be able to identify, subsequent expenditures that should be capitalised, including appropriate borrowing costs.
- Compute the impact on the financial statements when property, plant and equipment is measured under revaluation model and a revaluation to fair value is made
- Account for gains and losses on the disposal of re-valued assets.
- Calculate depreciation on:
 - revalued assets, and
 - assets that have two or more major items or significant components.
- Apply the provisions of accounting standards relating to government grants and government assistance in relation to property, plant and equipment.
- Describe the criteria that need to be present before non-current assets are classified as held for sale, either individually or in a disposal group.
- Apply the requirements of IFRS Standards for non-current assets and disposal groups that are held for sale.

- Discuss the way in which the treatment of investment properties can differ from other properties.
- Apply the requirements of IFRS Standards to investment properties.

3. Impairment of assets

- Identify, circumstances which indicate that the impairment of an asset may have occurred.
- Describe what is meant by a cash-generating unit.
- Define and calculate the recoverable amount of an asset and any associated impairment losses.
- State the basis on which impairment losses should be allocated, and allocate a given impairment loss to the assets of a cash-generating unit.
- Account for the reversal of an impairment loss that was recognised in a previous period.

4. Leases

- Account for right of use assets and lease liabilities in the records of the lessee
- Explain the exemption from the recognition criteria for leases in the records of the lessee.
- Account for sale and leaseback transactions in the financial statements of lessees.
- Explain the distinction between operating leases and finance leases from a lessor perspective.
- Account for operating leases and finance leases in the financial statements of lessors.

5. Intangible assets and goodwill

- Discuss the nature and possible accounting treatments of both internally generated and purchased goodwill.
- Distinguish between goodwill and other intangible assets.

- Define the criteria for the initial recognition and measurement of intangible assets.
- Explain the principle of impairment tests in relation to purchased goodwill.
- Identify the circumstances in which a gain on a bargain purchase (negative goodwill) arises, and its subsequent accounting treatment.
- Describe and apply the requirements of IFRS Standards to internally generated assets other than goodwill (e.g. research and development).
- Describe the method of accounting specified by the IASB for the exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources.

6. Inventories

- Measure and value inventories.

7. Financial instruments

- Explain the definition of a financial instrument.
- Determine the appropriate classification of a financial instrument, including those instruments that are subject to 'split classification' – e.g. convertible loans.
- Discuss and account for the initial and subsequent measurement (including impairment in the case of financial assets) of financial assets and financial liabilities in accordance with applicable IFRS Standards and the finance costs associated with them.
- Discuss the conditions that are required for a financial asset or liability to be de-recognised.
- Explain the conditions that are required for hedge accounting to be used.
- Prepare financial information for hedge accounting purposes, including the impact of treating hedging arrangements as fair value hedges or cash flow hedges.
- Describe the financial instrument disclosures required in the notes to the financial statements.

8. Provisions, contingent assets and liabilities

- Explain why an accounting standard on provisions is necessary – give examples of previous abuses in this area.
- Define provisions, legal and constructive obligations, past events and the transfer of economic benefits.
- State when provisions may and may not be made, and how they should be accounted for.
- Explain how provisions should be measured.
- Define contingent assets and liabilities – give examples and describe their accounting treatment.
- Identify and account for:
 - Onerous contracts
 - Environmental and similar provisions.

9. Employment and post-employment benefit costs

- Describe the nature of defined contribution, and defined benefits schemes.
- Explain the recognition and measurement of defined benefit schemes in the financial statements of contributing employers.
- Account for defined benefit schemes in the financial statements of contributing employers.

10. Tax in financial statements

- Account for current tax liabilities and assets in accordance IFRS Standards.
- Describe the general principles of government sales taxes (e.g. VAT or GST).
- Outline the principles of accounting for deferred tax.
- Explain the effect of taxable and deductible temporary differences on accounting and taxable profits.
- Identify and account for the requirements

relating to deferred tax assets and liabilities in accordance with the IFRS Standards.

- Calculate and record deferred tax amounts in the financial statements.

11. The effects of changes in foreign currency exchange rates

- Distinguish between reporting and functional currencies.
- Determine an entity's functional currency.
- Discuss the recording of transactions and translation of monetary/non-monetary items at the reporting date for individual entities in accordance with IFRS Standards.

12. Agriculture

- Recognise the scope of IFRS Standards for agriculture.
- Discuss the recognition and measurement criteria including the treatment of gains and losses, and the inability to measure fair value reliably.
- Identify and explain the treatment of government grants, and the presentation and disclosure of information relating to agriculture.
- Report on the transformation of biological assets and agricultural produce at the point of harvest and account for agriculture related government grants.

13. Share-based payment

- Understand the term 'share-based payment'.
- Discuss the key issue that measurement of the transaction should be based on fair value.
- Explain the difference between cash settled share based payment transactions and equity settled share based payment transactions.
- Identify the principles applied to measuring both cash and equity settled share-based payment transactions.

- Compute the amounts that need to be recorded in the financial statements when an entity carries out a transaction where the payment is share based.

14. Exploration and evaluation expenditures

- Outline the need for an accounting standard in this area and clarify its scope.
- Give examples of elements of cost that might be included in the initial measurement of exploration and evaluation assets.
- Describe how exploration and evaluation assets should be classified and reclassified.
- Explain when and how exploration and evaluation assets should be tested for impairment.

15. Fair value

- Explain the principle under which fair value is measured according to IFRS Standards.
- Identify an appropriate fair value measurement for an asset or liability in a given set of circumstances.

C PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES

1. Presentation of the statement of financial position and the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income and the statement of changes in equity

- State the objectives of IFRS Standards governing the presentation of financial statements.
- Describe the structure and content of statements of financial position and statements of profit or loss and other comprehensive income including continuing operations.
- Discuss the importance of identifying and reporting the results of discontinued operations.
- Define and account for non-current assets held for sale and discontinued operations.

- Discuss 'fair presentation' and the accounting concepts/principles.

2. Earnings per share

- Recognise the importance of comparability in relation to the calculation of earnings per share (EPS) and its importance as a stock market indicator.
- Explain why the trend of EPS may be a more accurate indicator of performance than a company's profit trend.
- Define earnings for EPS purposes.
- Calculate the EPS in the following circumstances:
 - where the number of issued ordinary shares is constant throughout the year.
 - where there has been an issue of ordinary shares at fair value during the year.
 - where there has been a bonus issue of ordinary shares/stock split during the year,
 - where there has been a rights issue of ordinary shares during the year.
 - where there has been more than one change in the number of issued ordinary shares during the year

- Explain the relevance to existing shareholders of the diluted EPS, and describe the circumstances that will give rise to a future dilution of the EPS.

- Compute the diluted EPS in the following circumstances:
 - where convertible debt or preference shares are in issue
 - where share options and warrants exist.
- Identify anti-dilutive circumstances.

3. Events after the reporting period

- Distinguish between and account for adjusting and non-adjusting events after the reporting period.

4. Accounting policies, changes in accounting estimates and errors

- Identify items requiring separate disclosure, including their accounting treatment and required disclosures.
- Recognise the circumstances where a change in accounting policy is justified.
- Define prior period errors.
- Account for the correction of errors and changes in accounting policies.

5. Related party disclosures

- Define and apply the definition of related parties in accordance with IFRS Standards.
- Describe the potential to mislead users when related party relationships and transactions are not disclosed appropriately
- Explain the disclosure requirements for related party transactions.

6. Operating segments

- Discuss the usefulness and problems associated with the provision of segment information.
- Define an operating segment.
- Identify reportable segments (including applying the aggregation criteria and quantitative thresholds).

7. Reporting requirements of small and medium-sized entities (SMEs)

- Outline the principal considerations in developing a set of financial reporting standards for SMEs.
- Discuss solutions to the problem of differential financial reporting.
- Discuss reasons why the IFRS for SMEs Standard does not address certain topics.

D PREPARATION OF EXTERNAL REPORTS FOR COMBINED ENTITIES AND JOINT ARRANGEMENTS

1. Preparation of group consolidated external reports

- Explain the concept of a group and the purpose of preparing consolidated financial statements.
- Explain and apply the definition of a subsidiary.
- Prepare a consolidated statement of financial position for a simple group (one or more subsidiaries) dealing with pre and post-acquisition profits, non-controlling interests and goodwill.
- Explain the need for using coterminous year-ends and uniform accounting policies when preparing consolidated financial statements and describe how it is achieved in practice.
- Prepare a consolidated statement of profit or loss, statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income and statement of changes in equity for a simple group (one or more subsidiaries), including an example where an acquisition or disposal of an entire interest occurs during the year and there is a non-controlling interest.

2. Business combinations – intra-group adjustments

- Explain why intra-group transactions should be eliminated on consolidation.
- Report the effects of intra-group trading and other transactions including:
 - unsettled intra-group balances at the year-end
 - unrealised profits in inventory and non current assets
 - intra-group loans and interest and other intra-group charges, and
 - intra-group dividends.

3. Business combinations – fair value adjustments

- Explain why it is necessary for both the consideration paid for a subsidiary and the subsidiary's identifiable assets and liabilities to be accounted for at their fair values when preparing consolidated financial statements.

- Compute the fair value of the consideration given including the following elements:
 - Cash
 - Share exchanges
 - Deferred consideration
 - Contingent consideration.
- Prepare consolidated financial statements dealing with fair value adjustments (including their effect on consolidated goodwill) in respect of:
 - Depreciating and non-deprecating non-current assets
 - Inventory
 - Deferred tax
 - Liabilities
 - Assets and liabilities (including contingencies), not included in the subsidiary's own statement of financial position.

4. Business combinations – associates and joint arrangements

- Define associates and joint arrangements.
- Distinguish between joint operations and joint ventures.
- Prepare consolidated financial statements to include a single subsidiary and an associate or a joint arrangement.

5. Complete disposal of shares in subsidiaries

- Calculate the gain or loss on the complete disposal of shares in a subsidiary in the financial statements of the parent and the subsidiary.
- Explain and illustrate the effect of the complete disposal of a parent's investment in a subsidiary in the parent's individual financial statements and/or those of the group.

7. SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO DIPLOMA IN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING

ACCA periodically reviews its qualification syllabuses so that they meet the needs of stakeholders such as employers, students, regulatory and advisory bodies and learning providers. There were no significant changes to the syllabus in the current period but minor changes are identified in table 1.

Note of changes to study guide Paper DipIFR

The main areas to be added or deleted or changed are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Changes to DipIFR

Structure of Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The exam will comprise four compulsory questions, each worth 25 marks. Question 1 will continue to require the preparation of one or more consolidated financial statements as covered by the syllabus. 	Clarification on the change from 1 x 40 mark question and 3 x 20 marks question to 4 x 25 mark questions.
Excluded topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of interim financial statements 	For clarification as IAS 34 Interim Financial Reporting is not an examinable documents
B2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the way in which the treatment of investment properties can differ from other properties. 	Clarification by inserting 'can' to ensure both cost and fair value models are considered
C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of the statement of financial position, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income and the statement of changes in equity 	Added statement of changes in equity for clarification
C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define earnings for EPS purposes. Calculate the EPS in the following circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -where the number of issued ordinary shares is constant throughout the year. -where there has been an issue of ordinary shares at fair value during the year. -where there has been a bonus issue of ordinary shares/stock split during the year. -where there has been a rights issue of ordinary shares during the year. -where there has been more than one change in the number of issued ordinary shares during the year 	Expanded for clarification
C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the potential to mislead users when related party relationships and transactions are not disclosed appropriately 	Expanded for clarification

D1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a consolidated statement of profit or loss, statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income and statement of changes in equity for a simple group (one or more subsidiaries), including an example where an acquisition or disposal of an entire interest occurs during the year and there is a non-controlling interest. 	Added 'or a disposal' for clarification that a disposal can include non-controlling interest
D2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report the effects of intra-group trading and other transactions including: unsettled intra-group balances at the year-end 	For clarification that unsettled intra-group balances are examinable