

PRESENTATION & DISCLOSURES BASED ACCOUNTING STANDARDS



UNIT 1: ACCOUNTING STANDARD 1 DISCLOSURE OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this chapter, you would be able to Comprehend the-

- ◆ Fundamental Accounting Assumptions
- ◆ Nature of Accounting Policies
- ◆ Areas in Which Different Accounting Policies are Encountered.
- ◆ Considerations in the Selection of Accounting Policies.



1.1 INTRODUCTION

Irrespective of extent of standardization, diversity in accounting policies is unavoidable for two reasons. First, accounting standards cannot and do not cover all possible areas of accounting and enterprises have the freedom of adopting any reasonable accounting policy in areas not covered by a standard.

Second, since enterprises operate in diverse situations, it is impossible to develop a single set of policies applicable to all enterprises for all time.

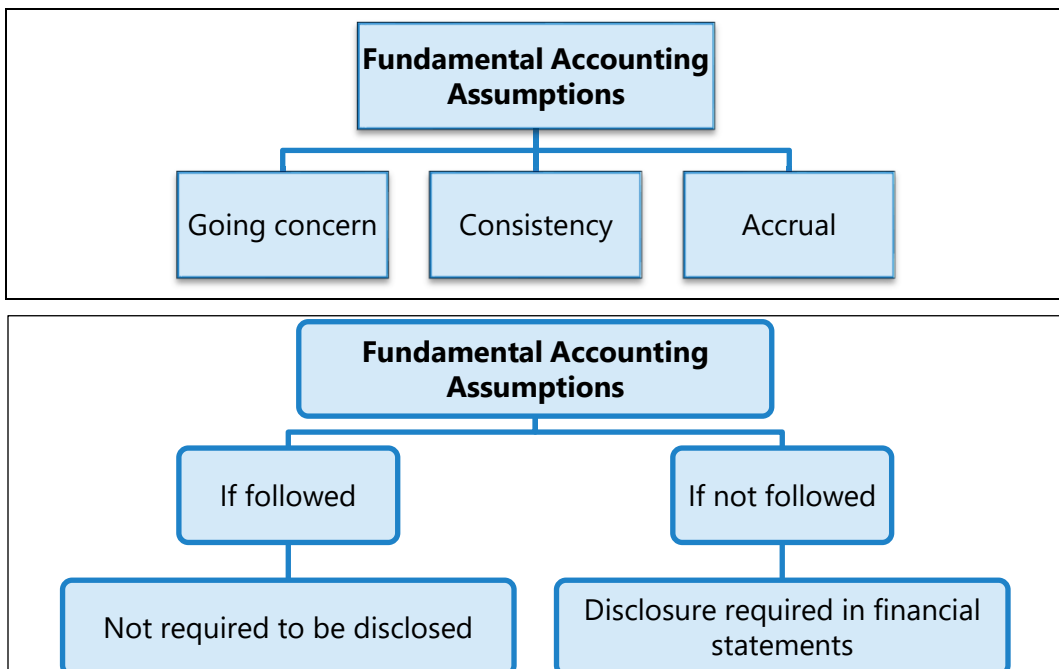
The accounting standards, therefore, permit more than one policy even in areas covered by it. Differences in accounting policies lead to differences in reported information even if underlying transactions are same. The qualitative characteristic of comparability of financial statements, therefore, suffers due to diversity of accounting policies. Since uniformity is impossible, and accounting standards permit more than one alternative in many cases, it is not enough to say that all standards have been complied with. For these reasons, Accounting Standard 1 requires enterprises to disclose significant accounting policies actually adopted by them in preparation of their financial statements. Such disclosures allow the users of financial statements to take the differences in accounting policies into consideration and to make necessary adjustments in their analysis of such financial statements.

The purpose of Accounting Standard 1, Disclosure of Accounting Policies, is to promote better understanding of financial statements by requiring disclosure of significant accounting policies in an orderly manner. As explained in the preceding paragraph, such disclosures facilitate more meaningful comparison between financial statements of different enterprises for same accounting period. The standard also requires disclosure of changes in accounting policies such that the users can compare financial statements of same enterprise for different accounting periods.

This Accounting Standard applies to all enterprises.



1.2 FUNDAMENTAL ACCOUNTING ASSUMPTIONS



Going Concern: The financial statements are normally prepared on the assumption that an enterprise will continue its operations in the foreseeable future and neither there is intention, nor there is need to materially curtail the scale of operations. Financial statements prepared on going concern basis recognise among other things the need for sufficient retention of profit to replace assets consumed in operation and for making adequate provision for settlement of its liabilities.

Consistency: The principle of consistency refers to the practice of using same accounting policies for similar transactions in all accounting periods. The consistency improves comparability of financial statements through time. An accounting policy can be changed if the change is required (i) by a statute (ii) by an accounting standard (iii) for more appropriate presentation of financial statements.

Accrual basis of accounting: Under this basis of accounting, transactions are recognised as soon as they occur, whether or not cash or cash equivalent is actually received or paid. Accrual basis ensures better matching between revenue and cost

and profit/loss obtained on this basis reflects activities of the enterprise during an accounting period, rather than cash flows generated by it.

While accrual basis is a more logical approach to profit determination than the cash basis of accounting, it exposes an enterprise to the risk of recognising an income before actual receipt. The accrual basis can, therefore, overstate the divisible profits and dividend decisions based on such overstated profit lead to erosion of capital. For this reason, accounting standards require that no revenue should be recognised unless the amount of consideration and actual realisation of the consideration is reasonably certain.

Despite the possibility of distribution of profit not actually earned, accrual basis of accounting is generally followed because of its logical superiority over cash basis of accounting. Section 128(1) of the Companies Act, 2013 makes it mandatory for companies to maintain accounts on accrual basis only. It is not necessary to expressly state that accrual basis of accounting has been followed in preparation of a financial statement. In case, any income/expense is recognised on cash basis, the fact should be stated.

1.3 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The accounting policies refer to the specific accounting principles and the methods of applying those principles adopted by the enterprise in the preparation and presentation of financial statements.

Accountant has to make decisions from various options for recording or disclosing items in the books of accounts e.g.

Items to be disclosed	Method of disclosure or valuation
Inventories	FIFO, Weighted Average etc.
Cash Flow Statement	Direct Method, Indirect Method

This list is not exhaustive i.e. endless. For every item right from valuation of assets and liabilities to recognition of revenue, providing for expected losses, for each event, accountant need to form principles and evolve a method to adopt those principles. This method of forming and applying accounting principles is known as accounting policies.

As we say that accounts is both science and art, it's a science because we have some tested accounting principles, which are applicable universally, but simultaneously the application of these principles depends on the personal ability of each accountant. Since different accountants may have different approach, we generally find that in different enterprises under same industry, different accounting policies are followed. Though ICAI along with Government is trying to reduce the number of accounting policies followed in India but still it cannot be reduced to one. Accounting policy adopted will have considerable effect on the financial results disclosed by the financial statements; it makes it almost difficult to compare two financial statements.



1.4 SELECTION OF ACCOUNTING POLICY

Financial Statements are prepared to portray a true and fair view of the performance and state of affairs of an enterprise. In selecting a policy, alternative accounting policies should be evaluated in that light. In particular, major considerations that govern selection of a particular policy are:

Prudence: In view of uncertainty associated with future events, profits are not anticipated, but losses are provided for as a matter of conservatism. Provision should be created for all known liabilities and losses even though the amount cannot be determined with certainty and represents only a best estimate in the light of available information. The exercise of prudence in selection of accounting policies ensure that (i) profits are not overstated (ii) losses are not understated (iii) assets are not overstated and (iv) liabilities are not understated.

Example 1

The most common example of exercise of prudence in selection of accounting policy is the policy of valuing inventory at lower of cost and net realisable value.

Suppose a trader has purchased 500 units of certain article @ ₹ 10 per unit. He sold 400 articles @ ₹ 15 per unit. If the net realisable value per unit of the unsold article is ₹ 15, the trader should value his stock at ₹ 10 per unit and thus ignoring the profit ₹ 500 that he may earn in next accounting period by selling 100 units of unsold articles. If the net realisable value per unit of the unsold article is ₹ 8, the trader should value his stock at ₹ 8 per unit and thus recognising possible loss ₹ 200 that he

may incur in next accounting period by selling 100 units of unsold articles.

Profit of the trader if net realisable value of unsold article is ₹ 15

$$= \text{Sale} - \text{Cost of goods sold} = (400 \times ₹ 15) - (500 \times ₹ 10 - 100 \times ₹ 10) = ₹ 2,000$$

Profit of the trader if net realisable value of unsold article is ₹ 8

$$= \text{Sale} - \text{Cost of goods sold} = (400 \times ₹ 15) - (500 \times ₹ 10 - 100 \times ₹ 8) = ₹ 1,800$$

Example 2

Exercise of prudence does not permit creation of hidden reserve by understating profits and assets or by overstating liabilities and losses. Suppose a company is facing a damage suit. No provision for damages should be recognised by a charge against profit, unless the probability of losing the suit is more than the probability of not losing it.

Substance over form: Transactions and other events should be accounted for and presented in accordance with their substance and financial reality and not merely by their legal form.

Materiality: Financial statements should disclose all 'material items, i.e. the items the knowledge of which might influence the decisions of the user of the financial statement. Materiality is not always a matter of relative size. For example a small amount lost by fraudulent practices of certain employees can indicate a serious flaw in the enterprise's internal control system requiring immediate attention to avoid greater losses in future. In certain cases quantitative limits of materiality is specified. A few of such cases are given below:

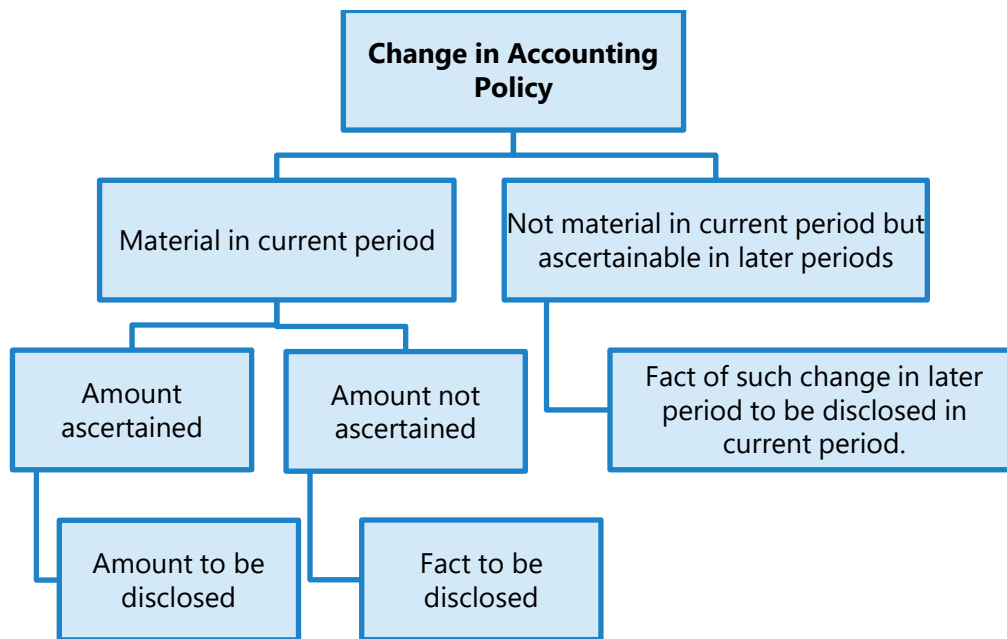
- (a) A company should disclose by way of notes additional information regarding any item of income or expenditure which exceeds 1% of the revenue from operations or ₹1,00,000 whichever is higher (Refer general Instructions for preparation of Statement of Profit and Loss in Schedule III to the Companies Act, 2013).
- (b) A company should disclose in Notes to Accounts, shares in the company held by each shareholder holding more than 5 per cent shares specifying the number of shares held. (Refer general Instructions for Balance Sheet in Schedule III to the Companies Act, 2013).

Manner of disclosure: All significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation and presentation of financial statements should be disclosed

The disclosure of the significant accounting policies as such should form part of the financial statements and the significant accounting policies should normally be disclosed in one place.

1.5 DISCLOSURE OF CHANGES IN ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Any change in the accounting policies which has a material effect in the current period or which is reasonably expected to have a material effect in a later period should be disclosed. In the case of a change in accounting policies, which has a material effect in the current period, the amount by which any item in the financial statements is affected by such change should also be disclosed to the extent ascertainable. Where such amount is not ascertainable, wholly or in part, the fact should be indicated.



Example 3

A simple disclosure that an accounting policy has been changed is not of much use for a reader of a financial statement. The effect of change should, therefore, be disclosed wherever ascertainable. Suppose a company has switched over to weighted average formula for ascertaining cost of inventory, from the earlier practice of using

FIFO. If the closing inventory using FIFO method is ₹2 lakhs and that by weighted average method is ₹1.8 lakhs, the change in accounting policy pulls down profit and value of inventory by ₹20,000. The company may disclose the change in accounting policy in the following manner:

'The company values its inventory at lower of cost or net realisable value. Since net realisable value of all items of inventory in the current year was greater than respective costs, the company valued its inventory at cost. In the present year, the company has changed to weighted average method, which better reflects the consumption pattern of inventory, for ascertaining inventory costs from the earlier practice of using FIFO method for the purpose. The change in policy has reduced profit for the year and value of inventory as at the year end by ₹20,000.

A change in accounting policy is to be disclosed if the change is reasonably expected to have material effect in future accounting periods, even if the change has no material effect in the current accounting period.

The above requirement ensures that all important changes in accounting policies are actually disclosed.



1.6 DISCLOSURE OF DEVIATIONS FROM FUNDAMENTAL ACCOUNTING ASSUMPTIONS

If the fundamental accounting assumptions, viz. Going concern, Consistency and Accrual are followed in financial statements, specific disclosure is not required. If a fundamental accounting assumption is not followed, the fact should be disclosed.

The principle of consistency refers to the practice of using same accounting policies for similar transactions in all accounting periods.

Illustration 1

In the books of M/s Prashant Ltd., closing inventory as at 31.03.20X2 amounts to ₹ 1,63,000 (on the basis of FIFO method).

The company decides to change from FIFO method to weighted average method for ascertaining the cost of inventory from the year 20X1-X2. On the basis of weighted average method, closing inventory as on 31.03.20X2 amounts to ₹ 1,47,000. Realisable value of the inventory as on 31.03.20X2 amounts to ₹ 1,95,000.

Discuss disclosure requirement of change in accounting policy as per AS-1.

Solution

As per AS 1 "Disclosure of Accounting Policies", any change in an accounting policy which has a material effect should be disclosed in the financial statements. The amount by which any item in the financial statements is affected by such change should also be disclosed to the extent ascertainable. Where such amount is not ascertainable, wholly or in part, the fact should be indicated. Thus Prashant Ltd. should disclose the change in valuation method of inventory and its effect on financial statements. The company may disclose the change in accounting policy in the following manner:

'The company values its inventory at lower of cost and net realizable value. Since net realizable value of all items of inventory in the current year was greater than respective costs, the company valued its inventory at cost. In the present year i.e. 20X1-X2, the company has changed to weighted average method, which better reflects the consumption pattern of inventory, for ascertaining inventory costs from the earlier practice of using FIFO for the purpose. The change in policy has reduced current profit and value of inventory by ₹ 16,000.

Illustration 2

Jagannath Ltd. had made a rights issue of shares in 20X2. In the offer document to its members, it had projected a surplus of ₹40 crores during the accounting year to end on 31st March, 20X2. The draft results for the year, prepared on the hitherto followed accounting policies and presented for perusal of the board of directors showed a deficit of ₹10 crores. The board in consultation with the managing director, decided on the following:

- (i) *Value year-end inventory at works cost (₹ 50 crores) instead of the hitherto method of valuation of inventory at prime cost (₹ 30 crores).*
- (ii) *Provide for permanent diminution in the value of investments, which had taken place over the past five years, the amount of provision being ₹10 crores.*

As chief accountant of the company, you are asked by the managing director to draft the notes on accounts for inclusion in the annual report for 20X1-20X2.

Solution

As per AS 1, any change in the accounting policies which has a material effect in the current period or which is reasonably expected to have a material effect in later periods should be disclosed. In the case of a change in accounting policies which has a material effect in the current period, the amount by which any item in the financial statements is affected by such change should also be disclosed to the extent ascertainable. Where such amount is not ascertainable, wholly or in part, the fact should be indicated. Accordingly, the notes on accounts should properly disclose the change and its effect.

Notes on Accounts:

- (i) During the year inventory has been valued at factory cost, against the practice of valuing it at prime cost as was the practice till last year. This has been done to take cognizance of the more capital intensive method of production on account of heavy capital expenditure during the year. As a result of this change, the year-end inventory has been valued at ₹ 50 crores and the profit for the year has increased by ₹ 20 crores. (ii) The company has decided to provide ₹10 crores for the permanent diminution in the value of investments which has taken place over the period of past five years. The provision so made has reduced the profit disclosed in the accounts by ₹10 crores.

Illustration 3

XYZ Company is engaged in the business of financial services and is undergoing tight liquidity position, since most of the assets of the company are blocked in various claims/petitions in a Special Court. XYZ has accepted Inter-Corporate Deposits (ICDs) and it is making its best efforts to settle the dues. There were claims at varied rates of interest, from lenders, from the due date of ICDs to the date of repayment. The company has provided interest, as per the terms of the contract till the due date and a note for non-provision of interest on the due date to date of repayment was affected in the financial statements. On account of uncertainties existing regarding the determination of the amount and in the absence of any specific legal obligation at present as per the terms of contracts, the company considers that these claims are in the nature of "claims against the company not acknowledged as debt", and the same has been disclosed by way of a note in the accounts instead of making a provision in the statement of profit and loss. State whether the treatment done by the Company is correct or not.

Solution

AS 1 'Disclosure of Accounting Policies' recognises 'prudence' as one of the major considerations governing the selection and application of accounting policies. In view of the uncertainty attached to future events, profits are not anticipated but recognised only when realised though not necessarily in cash. Provision is made for all known liabilities and losses even though the amount cannot be determined with certainty and represents only a best estimate in the light of available information.

Also as per AS 1, 'accrual' is one of the fundamental accounting assumptions. Irrespective of the terms of the contract, so long as the principal amount of a loan is not repaid, the lender cannot be replaced in a disadvantageous position for non-payment of interest in respect of overdue amount. From the aforesaid, it is apparent that the company has an obligation on account of the overdue interest. In this situation, the company should provide for the liability (since it is not waived by the lenders) at an amount estimated or on reasonable basis based on facts and circumstances of each case. However, in respect of the overdue interest amounts, which are settled, the liability should be accrued to the extent of amounts settled. Non-provision of the overdue interest liability amounts to violation of accrual basis of accounting. Therefore, the treatment, done by the company, of not providing the interest amount from due date to the date of repayment is not correct.

Reference: The students are advised to refer the full text of AS 1 "Disclosure of Accounting Policies".

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

MCQ

1. Which of the following is NOT a major consideration in selection and application of accounting policies?
 - (a) Prudence
 - (b) Comparability
 - (c) Materiality
 - (d) Substance over form
2. Adoption of different accounting policies by different companies operating in the same industry affects which of the qualitative characteristics the most?
 - (a) Comparability
 - (b) Relevance
 - (c) Faithful representation
 - (d) Reliability
3. Which of the following statement would not be correct in relation to disclosures to be made in the financial statements after making any change in an accounting policy?
 - (a) Any change in an accounting policy which has a material effect should be disclosed.
 - (b) The amount by which any item in the financial statements is affected by such change should be disclosed to the extent ascertainable. Where such amount is not ascertainable, wholly or in part, the fact should be indicated.
 - (c) If a change is made in the accounting policies which has no material effect on the financial statements for the current period but which is reasonably expected to have a material effect in later periods, the fact of such change

should be appropriately disclosed in the period in which the change is adopted.

- (d) *If a change is made in an accounting policy which has material effect on the financial statements for the current period and is reasonably expected to have a material effect in later periods, the fact of such change should be appropriately disclosed only in the later periods i.e. year(s) next to the year in which the change is adopted.*

Theoretical Questions

4. *What are the three fundamental accounting assumptions recognised by Accounting Standard (AS) 1? Briefly describe each one of them.*
5. *Has Accounting Standard 1 prescribed the manner in which the accounting policies followed by the entity should be disclosed?*

Practical Questions

6. *State whether the following statements are 'True' or 'False'. Also give reason for your answer.*
 - (i) *Certain fundamental accounting assumptions underline the preparation and presentation of financial statements. They are usually specifically stated because their acceptance and use are not assumed.*
 - (ii) *If fundamental accounting assumptions are not followed in presentation and preparation of financial statements, a specific disclosure is not required.*
 - (iii) *All significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation and presentation of financial statements should form part of the financial statements.*
 - (iv) *Any change in an accounting policy, which has a material effect should be disclosed. Where the amount by which any item in the financial statements is affected by such change is not ascertainable, wholly or in part, the fact need not to be indicated.*

7. Give examples of areas where accounting policies adopted could be different for different enterprises. Would there be any adverse impact due to the adoption of different policies, and if yes, how does Accounting Standard 1 seek to address such issue?

ANSWERS/HINTS

MCQs

1	(b)	2	(a)	3	(d)
---	-----	---	-----	---	-----

Theoretical Questions

4. Accounting Standard (AS) 1 recognises three fundamental accounting assumptions. These are: (i) Going Concern; (ii) Consistency; and (iii) Accrual basis of accounting.
5. Paras 18-20 of Accounting Standard 1, Disclosure of Accounting Policies, lay down the manner in which accounting policies have to be disclosed, which is stated as under:
- To ensure proper understanding of financial statements, it is necessary that all significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation and presentation of financial statements should be disclosed.
 - Such disclosure should form part of the financial statements.
 - All the disclosures should be made at one place instead of being scattered over several statements, schedules and notes.

Practical Questions

6. (i) False; As per AS 1 "Disclosure of Accounting Policies", certain fundamental accounting assumptions underlie the preparation and presentation of financial statements. They are usually not specifically stated because their acceptance and use are assumed. Disclosure is necessary if they are not followed.
- (ii) False; As per AS 1, if the fundamental accounting assumptions, viz. Going Concern, Consistency and Accrual are followed in financial statements,

specific disclosure is not required. If a fundamental accounting assumption is not followed, the fact should be disclosed.

- (iii) True; To ensure proper understanding of financial statements, it is necessary that all significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation and presentation of financial statements should be disclosed. The disclosure of the significant accounting policies as such should form part of the financial statements and they should be disclosed in one place.
 - (iv) False; Any change in the accounting policies which has a material effect in the current period or which is reasonably expected to have a material effect in later periods should be disclosed. Where such amount is not ascertainable, wholly or in part, the fact should be indicated.
- 7.** There are various areas where different accounting policies could be adopted by different entities within the same industry. An entity may choose to value its inventories using FIFO method, whereas another entity may choose to value the same using Weighted Average method.

While an entity is free to choose its accounting policy as long as in the financial statements reflect a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the enterprise as at the balance sheet date and of the profit or loss for the period ended, the application of different accounting policies by different entities affects the comparability of the financial statements of such different entities by stakeholders, analysts, investors etc. To mitigate the loss of comparability, Accounting Standard 1, Disclosure of Accounting Policies requires disclosure of significant accounting policies as a part of the financial statements. This would help users of the financial statements to understand the policies followed by different entities, particularly if they belong to the same industry, and make a correct analysis of each entity resulting in more informed decision-making.