

Student Guidance Notes

Guide 14

Verbs, learning outcomes and syllabus content – general guidance notes for students on how to read and interpret the 2005 syllabus

This guide explains how you should interpret the detail of the 2005 syllabus, and how you should plan your study. It also contains a series of frequently asked questions relating to this guide, some of which were asked at the recent lecturer's conference.

If you have any further queries relating to this guide, please contact CIMA Student Services department on + 44 (0)208 849 2404, or email your query to cima.contact@cimaglobal.com

Reading the syllabus

Each topic within the syllabus contains a list of learning outcomes, which should be read in conjunction with the knowledge content for the syllabus. A learning outcome has two main purposes:

- ◆ to define the skill or ability that a well-prepared candidate should be able to exhibit in the examination;
- ◆ to demonstrate the approach likely to be taken by examiners in examination questions.

The learning outcomes are part of a hierarchy of learning objectives. The verbs used at the beginning of each learning outcome relate to a specific learning objective e.g.

“Evaluate alternative approaches to budgeting.”

The verb **‘evaluate’** indicates a high level learning objective. Because learning objectives are hierarchical, it is expected that at this level, students will have knowledge of different budgeting systems and methodologies and be able to apply them.

A list of the learning objectives and the verbs, that appear in the syllabus learning outcomes and examinations, follows:

Learning Objective	Verbs Used	Definition
1 Knowledge <i>What you are expected to know.</i>	List State Define	Make a list of Express, fully or clearly, the details of/facts of Give the exact meaning of
2 Comprehension <i>What you are expected to understand.</i>	Describe Distinguish Explain Identify Illustrate	Communicate the key features of Highlight the differences between Make clear or intelligible/State the meaning of Recognise, establish or select after consideration Use an example to describe or explain something
3 Application <i>How you are expected to apply your knowledge.</i>	Apply Calculate/ compute Demonstrate Prepare Reconcile Solve Tabulate	Put to practical use Ascertain or reckon mathematically Prove with certainty or to exhibit by practical means Make or get ready for use Make or prove consistent/compatible Find an answer to Arrange in a table
4 Analysis <i>How you are expected to analyse the detail of what you have learned.</i>	Analyse Categorise Compare and contrast Construct Discuss Interpret Produce	Examine in detail the structure of Place into a defined class or division Show the similarities and/or differences between Build up or compile Examine in detail by argument Translate into intelligible or familiar terms Create or bring into existence
5 Evaluation <i>How you are expected to use your learning to evaluate, make decisions or recommendations.</i>	Advise Evaluate Recommend	Counsel, inform or notify Appraise or assess the value of Advise on a course of action

When studying, you should first note the learning outcome(s) relating to the topic. You need to develop skills relating to that topic up to, but not exceeding, the level in the hierarchy at which the verb(s) are placed.

Every examination question will use one or other of the verbs from the hierarchy. Examiners will not use a verb in a question requirement that comes from a higher level than that of the verb in the learning outcome being tested.

The syllabus content is simply a suggestion of topic areas you should cover, in order to be able to satisfy the learning outcomes.

It is the learning outcomes that are examined, not the syllabus content.