



**UNIVERSITY
CENTRE**
SOUTH DEVON

PROGRAMME QUALITY HANDBOOK 2022-2023

AAT Level 4 Diploma in Professional Accounting (Apprenticeship)

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1. Welcome and Introduction to the AAT Level 4 Diploma in Professional Accounting.

1.1 Welcome statement

Welcome to your Programme Quality Handbook (PQH), this PQH is designed to provide you with programme related information both for before and during your studies. In addition to this PQH our UCSD interactive website contains our online Handbook to support you which studying at UCSD. A link is available here [Student Handbook | University Centre South Devon \(ucsd.ac.uk\)](http://www.ucsd.ac.uk). It can also be navigated by going to www.ucsd.ac.uk and searching for student handbook.

1.2 Programme Management

Role	Person	Email address
Personal Tutors	David Stephens Ross Young Paul O'Connell	davidstephens@southdevon.ac.uk rossyoung@southdevon.ac.uk pauloconnell@southdevon.ac.uk
Programme Coordinator	Jane Collins	janecollins@southdevon.ac.uk
Higher Education Coordinator	Andrew Faulkner	andrewfaulkner@southdevon.ac.uk
Curriculum Head	Chantelle Mashiter	chantellemashiter@southdevon.ac.uk
Assistant Principal	Steve Caunter	stevecaunter@southdevon.ac.uk

1.3 Personal Tutor

Your personal tutor's role is to support your personal and professional development, develop your academic skills, manage student expectations, achieve positive student-staff communications, provide pastoral support and signposting, and monitor your wellbeing. They should be your first port of call for advice and/or direction for further support on academic or pastoral matters.

1.4 Tutoring at UCSD

UCSD's aim is to facilitate and promote positive student engagement in learning, wellbeing, academic success, and progression. This is coordinated through an integrated tutorial model:

1. Personal and pastoral tutoring to monitor students' wellbeing and support their personal development
2. An academic tutoring curriculum to support in the development of academic and employability skills and monitor your academic and professional progress
3. Professional services including the Student Support Hub team, library services, employability, academic standards and quality
4. The integrated tutorial model ensures all students have a personal tutor and scheduled weekly group and/or one-to-one Tutorials, and are able to access professional study skills, wellbeing, disability and employability guidance from the HE Student Support Hub.

The tutorial curriculum and Personal Development is tailored for your programme including consideration of the size of programme, the hours that you are studying and the level of your programme. Details will be provided by your personal tutor

Your personal tutor's role is to support your personal and professional development, develop your academic skills, manage student expectations, achieve positive student-staff communications, provide pastoral support and signposting, and monitor your wellbeing. They should be your first port of call for advice and/or direction for further support on academic or pastoral matters. However, your tutor may refer you to members of the Student Support Hub to provide specialist advice and information. See section [Student Support Hub](#) below for more information.

1.5 Course Contact List

Details of your module leaders and how and when they can be contacted are below. You can also view the profile of the teaching team within the curriculum area that your programme is based via this [link](#)

If you have questions about a module, please contact the appropriate module leader.

If you have any questions about the programme or your pastoral needs please contact your personal tutor.

If you have any questions about fees, funding or support from the university please contact university@southdevon.ac.uk

Module Leader	Contact
David Stephens	davidstephens@southdevon.ac.uk
Ross Young	rossyoung@southdevon.ac.uk

1.6 Preparing for your programme

At UCSD, we understand that level 4 study is a big step up from previous studies. To help prepare you for the programme we recommend engaging with preparatory activities. Each year UCSD organise Stepping up to HE workshops, with a focus on supporting you to develop your research and writing skills, alongside academic techniques.

For more information on the workshops and resources available, please visit our website: <https://www.ucsd.ac.uk/the-first-year-at-university/>.

The Student Support Hub is available throughout the duration of your programme and offers a range of services, acting as a first port of call for academic, study, wellbeing, disability, fees/funding, employability and progression support. When progressing to the next level of study of your higher education, there are also workshops and activities available to support you with progressing your graduate skills.

1.7 Curriculum design principles

Programme Rationale (summary)

South Devon College has a long history of delivery of Accountancy programmes and currently delivers a number of professional accountancy qualifications within the Business, Law and Professional management section and has done so successfully for a number of years. The AAT Professional Diploma in Accounting offers technical training in accounting for anyone wishing to pursue or progress their career in accountancy and or finance. The purpose of the AAT Professional Diploma in Accounting is to enhance individual skills enabling students to maximise opportunities in their current or new employment. By studying for this qualification, students will acquire professional accountancy and finance skills that will be useful throughout their careers. The qualification once attained will enable the student to progress with additional vocational and academic qualifications in the sector and to complement their apprenticeship.

The AAT works across the globe with around 130,000 members in more than 90 countries. Their members are represented at every level of the finance and accounting world, including students studying for a career in finance, people already working in accountancy and self-employed business owners. AAT members are ambitious, focused accounting professionals. Many of our members occupy senior, well-rewarded positions with thousands of employers – from blue-chip corporate giants to public sector institutions. AAT qualifications are universally respected and internationally recognised. Organisations hire AAT qualified members for their knowledge, skills, diligence and enthusiasm because AAT represents the highest standards of professionalism.

In short, an AAT qualification is a route to some of the most in-demand skills in the world and provides our students and members with a professional status to be proud of.

Teaching and Learning Strategy

The AAT Professional Diploma in Accounting covers high-level accounting and finance topics and tasks. Students will look at and become comfortable with a wide range of financial management skills and applications, and gain competencies in: drafting financial statements for limited companies; recommending accounting systems strategy, and constructing and presenting complex management accounting reports. Students will also learn about specialist areas such as tax, auditing, credit management, and cash and treasury management.

This qualification comprises four mandatory units and two specialist units selected from a choice of five options (420 guided learning hours in total). These units have been pre-selected based on meeting with employers through our annual employer engagement events.

The programme is delivered as a face to face of study and on-programme learning will be provided for the duration of the apprenticeship until gateway is reached. Teaching and learning activities within the programme are not just restricted to tutorials and lectures but include a wide range of strategies including seminars, professional discussions, interactive group work, independent learning, research activities, and work-based learning which are all relevant in the field of accountancy and within the apprentice's relevant sector.

The programme can also be delivered via a blended model, with some face-to-face delivery and some online learning - the proportion and delivery pattern to be agreed with the employer.

Resources

Throughout the life of this qualification, AAT will make available a range of free materials and resources to support tutors and students in delivery and assessment.

Materials produced for this qualification will include:

- practice assessments for each unit
- one Sample Assessment and Mark Scheme (Applied Management Accounting)
- Qualification Technical Information (QTI)
- annual Chief Examiner reports.

Additional materials may also include:

- e-learning
- Green Light tests
- webinars
- tutor-to-tutor sessions at network meetings.

All AAT study support resources can be accessed via the [AAT Lifelong Learning Portal](#)

1.8 Knowledge, skills and behaviours developed on the programme

Throughout your apprenticeship, you will need to keep a summary of your practical work experience to demonstrate that you have met the requirements set out in the Professional Accounting Technician standard. This document contains the Skills Log, which is where you record and have verified by your workplace mentor and training provider, the demonstration of the required competences: [Microsoft Word - EPAL4EvidenceTemplateV0.2 \(aat.org.uk\)](https://www.aat.org.uk/evidence-template)

1.9 Assessment and feedback strategy

Assessment of your learning is an essential part of attaining your qualification. Your assessments will be design in accordance with the UCSD Assessment Policy <https://www.ucsd.ac.uk/student-life/essential-information/academic-regulations-and-procedures-and-policies/> and the assessment guidance on the UCSD website <https://www.ucsd.ac.uk/student-life/support/assessment-guidance/>

Your module leaders will support you to develop the skills to succeed in your assessments. But you can also use the self-directed guidance on <https://www.ucsd.ac.uk/student-life/support/assessment-guidance/> and receive one-to-one support from the HE Study team by contacting HEstudy@southdevon.ac.uk

Your assessment timetable will be available on Moodle at the start of your course.

The assessments in this qualification are computer based with a time restriction. Students will be presented with a range of question types and formats in the assessment. These may include multiple-choice questions, numeric gap-fill questions, or question tools that replicate work place activities such as making entries in a journal. In some assessments, questions will require a written answer, and this is particularly so in the synoptic assessments. While tasks generally do not have to be completed in a specific order, students are encouraged to proceed through them in the order in which they are presented.

Students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the CBA environment and some of the question styles that they might encounter in the exam by using the sample assessment materials provided by

AAT. Registered students may access Study Support and sample assessment materials through MyAAT at: www.aat.org.uk/training/study-support/search

AAT's feedback service provides a simple summary of students' performance in each assessment. The feedback statement confirms their overall result and a breakdown of performance by task. Students will also be able to see marks available and marks achieved against each task position. Feedback statements are automatically generated and are designed to help students identify their strengths and any topic areas requiring further study. The student is presented with a short descriptor for each task to describe their performance in that task against the topics assessed. There are four feedback descriptors. Each descriptor provides an indication of how the student has performed in that task and includes generic advice on how to proceed with their studies or continuing professional development (CPD)

1.10 Student Support Hub

The University Centre South Devon (UCSD) is committed to an ethos of equality and inclusivity. How we will support you is set out in the Student Development Policy, available on the UCSD website <https://www.ucsd.ac.uk/student-life/essential-information/academic-regulations-and-procedures-and-policies/> By becoming a UCSD student you enter a partnership with us, committing yourself to positively engaging and actively taking part in scheduled learning activities, self-directed learning and alerting your teaching team and/or the Student Support Hub to any additional needs you have. In return we commit to support you to achieve your potential. This relationship is set out in our Student Charter <https://www.ucsd.ac.uk/student-life/essential-information/academic-regulations-and-procedures-and-policies/>

The UCSD Student Support Hub <https://www.ucsd.ac.uk/student-life/support/> is based on the ground floor of the University Centre. Many students think that the Support Hub is only for when they have exhausted all other avenues of support. But we encourage you to seek us out as soon as you think that you are struggling, because it is much easier to solve issues when they emerge. Also, students may feel that they are expected or should be able to manage any difficulty, but it is better to contact us to discuss what we can support, rather than make that decision yourself. Therefore, all students are encouraged to contact the Hub team early in their student journey, the service is available year-round except for closure days (normally around Christmas, so that you can be supported to thrive:

- **HE Study Team**

The HE Study Team's role is to support you to develop your study and academic skills. You may have just progressed from a Level 3 course such as A' Levels, Access to HE, BTEC, or a Level 3 Diploma, or not have studied for many years, but everyone will find the step up to Higher Education learning a challenge and for some it will be more challenging we are here to support everyone. The team are here to support you to enjoy and make the most of your academic studies, that includes students who are doing well and want to do better and those for whom learning is more challenging. There is a wealth of resources on the UCSD website <https://www.ucsd.ac.uk/student-life/support/study-skills/> and you can book one-to-one sessions by emailing HEstudy@southdevon.ac.uk sessions can be held face to face or on MS Teams.

- **HE Disability Team**

If you have a disability or difficulty, whether that is physical, mental health or a learning difficulty, rest assured you will receive the support and assistance you need to study. You can contact us even if you are unsure that you might have a disability or difficulty as we are happy to have a chat about how you feel. Our team will guide and assist you from the initial enquiry, through the application and assessment process, and signpost you to additional resources and services where required. Find out more information on our website <https://www.ucsd.ac.uk/student-life/support/disability-support/> or visit the Government's website about Disabled Students' Allowance <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa> If you are an apprentice student, you are entitled to the same support, but

the application process is slightly different. The earlier you contact the team, the quicker the support can be in place, please contact HEdisability@southdevon.ac.uk

- **HE Wellbeing Team**

The Wellbeing team can provide support to students experiencing wellbeing challenges that impact on their studies we understand that studies can face many difficulties so, don't be afraid to speak to us. The team offers urgent and regular support to help you adjust to and manage student life, stay positive and motivated, encourage you to continue with your studies, and manage the unexpected. Students who have mental health difficulties can apply for disability support to provide regular and specialist support. For more information see <https://www.ucsd.ac.uk/student-life/support/wellbeing-support/> or contact HEwellbeing@southdevon.ac.uk

- **HE Employability**

The Employability team are available to support you as your career plans develop. They can offer placement opportunities and help you to find appropriate work while you are studying. You can discuss your ideas, gain support researching opportunities, have feedback on your CV, personal statement or job application, and practice your interview skills. For more information see <https://www.ucsd.ac.uk/employability-and-next-steps/> or contact HEemploy@southdevon.ac.uk

Before you start your programme, you should engage with the Stepping up to Higher Education resources on our website <https://www.ucsd.ac.uk/stepping-up-to-higher-education/> and attend the workshops held by the HE Study team as these provide a detailed and useful introduction to your new academic life. There will also be a course induction by the programme team a week before teaching starts.

UCSD encourages all students to actively engage with their tutor and the HE Student Support Hub to access study skills, wellbeing, disability, and employability support throughout their studies. Make the most of the support available to you, so that you can gain the best degree.

1.11 Preparation for Employment, further academic study and personal development

The intent of the programme is to maximise opportunities for employment within a wider accountancy context. By studying for this qualification, students will acquire professional accountancy and finance skills that will be useful throughout their careers, including:

- drafting financial statements for limited companies
- knowledge and skills in complex management accounting techniques
- the ability to analyse accounting systems and their associated controls
- knowledge and skills in specialist accountancy and finance subjects.

The AAT Professional Diploma in Accounting qualification will suit those who:

- have completed the AAT Advanced Diploma in Accounting and who would like to continue to build their accounting skills
- are already working in finance and would like a formal recognition of their skills
- would like to go on to become an AAT full member and/or study for chartered accountant status
- would like to start their own business through the AAT-licensed member in practice (MIP) scheme.

Once qualified, students automatically become AAT affiliate members and, with relevant work experience, will qualify for full AAT membership, which will allow them to use the designatory letters MAAT after their name. However, the primary and most important outcome of the AAT Professional Diploma in Accounting is that it can lead to a Chartered Accountancy or equivalent qualification.

2. Programme Specification

2.1 Programme Details

Final award title: Level 4 Professional Diploma in Accounting

Awarding organisation or Institution: AAT

Delivery institution(s): UCSD

Accrediting or regulating body: AAT

Exception to regulations: None

2.2 Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

Qualification Number: **603/6339/3**

By the end of this programme the student will be able to:

Applied Management Accounting	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand and implement the organisational planning process2. Use internal processes to enhance operational control3. Use techniques to aid short-term and long-term decision making4. Analyse and report on business performance
Drafting and Interpreting Financial Statements	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand the reporting frameworks that underpin financial reporting2. Draft statutory financial statements for limited companies3. Draft consolidated financial statements4. Interpret financial statements using ratio analysis
Internal Accounting Systems and Controls	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand the role and responsibilities of the accounting function within an organisation2. Evaluate internal control systems3. Evaluate an organisation's accounting system and underpinning procedures4. Understand the impact of technology on accounting systems5. Recommend improvements to an organisation's accounting system
Business Tax	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prepare tax computations for sole traders and partnerships2. Prepare tax computations for limited companies3. Prepare tax computations for the sale of capital assets by limited companies4. Understand administrative requirements of the UK's tax regime5. Understand the tax implications of business disposals6. Understand tax reliefs, tax planning opportunities and agent's responsibilities in reporting taxation to HM Revenue & Customs

Personal Tax	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand principles and rules that underpin taxation systems 2. Calculate UK taxpayers' total income 3. Calculate income tax and National Insurance contributions (NICs) payable by UK taxpayers 4. Calculate capital gains tax payable by UK taxpayers 5. Understand the principles of inheritance tax
Audit and Assurance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate an understanding of the audit and assurance framework 2. Demonstrate the importance of professional ethics 3. Evaluate the planning process for audit and assurance 4. Evaluate procedures for obtaining sufficient and appropriate evidence 5. Review and report findings
Cash and Financial Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare forecasts for cash receipts and payments 2. Prepare cash budgets and monitor cash flows 3. Understand the importance of managing finance and liquidity 4. Understand ways of raising finance and investing funds 5. Understand regulations and organisational policies that influence decisions in managing cash and finance
Credit and Debt Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand relevant legislation and contract law that impacts the credit control environment 2. Understand how information is used to assess credit risk and grant credit in compliance with organisational policies and procedures 3. Understand the organisation's credit control processes for managing and collecting debts 4. Understand different techniques available to collect debts

2.3 Progression Route(s) – what can you do next

Once qualified, students automatically become AAT affiliate members and, with relevant work experience, will qualify for full AAT membership, which will allow them to use the designatory letters MAAT after their name.

However, the primary and most important outcome of the AAT Professional Diploma in Accounting is that it can lead to a Chartered Accountancy or equivalent qualification. AAT Qualifications are recognised by employers as practical and technical qualifications that prepare students for the world of work and for working specifically in accountancy and finance roles.

The Professional Diploma in Accounting can lead to employment as:

- Accounts Payable and Expenses Supervisor
- Assistant Financial Accountant
- Commercial Analyst
- Cost Accountant
- Fixed Asset Accountant
- Indirect Tax Manager
- Payments and Billing Manager
- Payroll Manager
- Senior Bookkeeper

- Senior Finance Officer
- Senior Fund Accountant
- Senior Insolvency Administrator
- Tax Supervisor
- VAT Accountant

2.4 End Point Assessment arrangements

The EPA, which is taken by the apprentices after the OPL, and once it has been confirmed that they meet all Gateway requirements. All apprentices will attempt the same EPA.

The EPA has two elements:

- an online assessment, where you will tackle a series of business-related tasks through simulation in line with typical role activities
- submission of a portfolio of evidence gathered from the workplace. Students must then reflect on the portfolio through a written statement or professional discussion.

The synoptic assessment will ask students to apply knowledge and skills gained across the qualification in an integrated way, within a workplace context. Scenarios will change over time to ensure the validity of the assessment. The synoptic and the Discussion take place when the portfolio is complete. This is the criteria for Gateway.

2.5 Admissions Criteria

The AAT does not set any prerequisites for the study of the AAT Professional Diploma in Accounting. However, for the best chance of success, the AAT do recommend that students begin their studies with a good standard of English and maths.

If students do have any other relevant school or college qualifications, a degree or some accounting experience, these are seen to better equip the applicant in their understanding.

They may in certain circumstances entitle students to claim exemptions. If a student can demonstrate that they already have the knowledge and skills to meet the requirements for a unit assessment, they may be eligible for RPL. This must be arranged through a registered AAT training provider and mapping of the student's skills and knowledge must be uploaded to AAT's assessment platform. There are restrictions regarding which units may be claimed under exemptions or RPL, and restrictions on the number of units that may be claimed.

Applicants must also complete a Pre course questionnaire followed by phone interview from a member of the programme team.

Entry Requirements for AAT Level 4 Diploma in Professional Accounting	
A-level/AS-level	N/A
BTEC National Diploma/QCF Extended Diploma	N/A

Access to Higher Education at level 3	N/A
Welsh Bacculaureate	N/A
Scottish Qualifications Authority	N/A
Irish Leaving Certificate	N/A
International Bacculaureate	N/A
Work Experience	Previous experience within an accountancy setting is essential prior to being accepted onto the programme.
Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	If a student can demonstrate that they already have the knowledge and skills to meet the requirements for a unit assessment, they may be eligible for RPL. This must be arranged through a registered AAT training provider and mapping of the student's skills and knowledge must be uploaded to AAT's assessment platform. There are restrictions regarding which units may be claimed under exemptions or RPL, and restrictions on the number of units that may be claimed
Interviews	All applicants will be interviewed by the AAT Team (Face-to-face or over the telephone). Applicants are required to demonstrate the necessary motivation, potential, experience and/or knowledge to follow their chosen programme successfully. All Higher Apprentices will be interviewed, assessed and offered a position by an employer before being admitted to the course.
Admissions Criteria for Higher Level Apprentices if applicable (including skills scan requirements)	AAT recommends that students use AAT Skillcheck to ensure that they are ready to start on a particular qualification.

2.6 Applicable Policy, Procedures and Regulations

Policy/Procedure/Regulation	Provision	Comments
Regulations	AAT/UCSD	AAT awarding body
Terms and Conditions	AAT/UCSD	
Fee Policy	AAT/UCSD	
Admission Policy	AAT/UCSD	
Academic Complaints Policy	AAT/UCSD	
Service Complaints Policy	UCSD	
Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy	UCSD	
Fitness to Study/Study and Wellbeing Review Policy	UCSD	
Academic Offences Policy	AAT/UCSD	
Extenuating Circumstances Policy	AAT/UCSD	
Academic Appeals	AAT/UCSD	
Assessment Policy	AAT/UCSD	
Other – please stipulate		

3. Units

Applied Management Accounting

Unit level	GLH value	Unit reference number	Assessment
4	120	F/618/3591	Unit assessment

Introduction

In today's world, management accountants are not only required to interpret and analyse data to produce reports. They are also required to have the requisite skills to be able to relate their findings to the organisation and provide insightful feedback that will help the business to move forward and achieve its objectives. This unit focuses on the three fundamental areas of management accounting: planning, control and decision making. All organisations rely on the provision of accurate, business-focused information in order to make sound business judgements.

This unit will allow students to understand how the budgetary process is undertaken. Students will be able to construct budgets and then identify and report both on areas of success and on areas that should be of concern to key stakeholders. Students will also gain the skills required to critically evaluate organisational performance.

Students will be equipped with the knowledge and skills across a range of systems that will help to enhance the control environment of the organisation. Appreciating that there are many methods, and understanding how and when it is appropriate to use each of them, will allow students to advise a business in a range of situations.

Students will also gain an appreciation of the methods used to deal with the issues surrounding both short-term and long-term decision making. It is vitally important to understand the different challenges and uncertainties between the two types of decision making. Only by appreciating and incorporating those differences into the analysis produced can a management accountant consider themselves to be an integral part of the decision-making process.

This unit is **mandatory** in the Level 4 Diploma in Professional Accounting.

Learning outcomes

1. Understand and implement the organisational planning process
2. Use internal processes to enhance operational control
3. Use techniques to aid short-term and long-term decision making
4. Analyse and report on business performance

Drafting and Interpreting Financial Statements

Unit level	GLH value	Unit reference number	Assessment
4	90	L/618/3593	Unit assessment

Introduction

This unit provides students with the skills and knowledge for drafting the financial statements of single limited companies and consolidated financial statements for groups of companies. It ensures that students will have a proficient level of knowledge and understanding of international accounting standards, which will then be applied when drafting the financial statements. Students will also have a sound appreciation of the regulatory and conceptual frameworks that underpin the preparation of limited company financial statements.

On successful completion of this unit, students would be expected to draft the financial statements of single limited companies and groups of companies with little supervision. Students will also acquire the tools and techniques required to analyse and interpret financial statements of limited companies by means of ratio analysis for the purposes of assisting outside user groups in their decision making, thereby fulfilling a useful role within an accounting team.

This unit is **mandatory** in the Level 4 Diploma in Professional Accounting.

Learning outcomes

1. Understand the reporting frameworks that underpin financial reporting
2. Draft statutory financial statements for limited companies
3. Draft consolidated financial statements
4. Interpret financial statements using ratio analysis

Internal Accounting Systems and Controls

Unit level	GLH value	Unit reference number	Assessment
4	60	R/618/3594	Unit assessment

Introduction

All organisations must guard against fraud through good control systems. However, many businesses underestimate both the probability and impact of employee fraud. Those working within the accounts department play a pivotal role in guarding against misuse of resources, and the key aim of this unit is to provide students with the tools to evaluate internal controls and to recommend improvements.

The unit teaches student to consider the role and responsibilities of the accounting function, including the needs of key stakeholders who use financial reports to make decisions. Students will review accounting systems to identify weaknesses and will make recommendations to mitigate identified weaknesses in future operations. Students will apply several analytical methods to evaluate the implications of any changes to operating procedures.

The structure of the accounting function, which varies depending on the size of the organisation, must comply with statutory requirements. Students will learn to identify appropriate controls, assess their impact in terms of cost-effectiveness, reliability and timeliness, and ensure that all functions adapt their working practices to meet new requirements in an ethical and sustainable way.

Technology is changing the way that accountancy information is processed, and this unit requires knowledge of the fundamental principles of data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI), which may be used as an alternative way to gather and analyse information. Cloud accounting is changing the way accountants work and visualisation, including dashboards, is increasingly used to present information in a way that is easier for stakeholders to understand. Data security and breaches are regularly reported in the press, and therefore it is imperative that students are aware of the importance of keeping all data secure and consider the confidential nature of the data that they will be processing as part of their everyday role.

Finally, students will evaluate the impact of changes on the system and its users, identifying different methods of support that can be given to users of the accounting system to assist them in adapting to the recommended improvements.

This unit is **mandatory** in the Level 4 Diploma in Professional Accounting.

Learning outcomes

1. Understand the role and responsibilities of the accounting function within an organisation
2. Evaluate internal control systems
3. Evaluate an organisation's accounting system and underpinning procedures
4. Understand the impact of technology on accounting systems
5. Recommend improvements to an organisation's accounting system

Business Tax

Unit level	GLH value	Unit reference number	Assessment
4	60	Y/618/3595	Unit assessment

Introduction

This unit introduces students to UK taxation relevant to businesses. Students will understand how to compute business taxes for sole traders, partnerships and limited companies. They will also be able to identify tax planning opportunities while understanding the importance of maintaining ethical standards.

In learning how to prepare tax computations, students will gain the skills required to apply the tax treatment of capital expenditure and the adjustment of accounting profits for tax purposes. Students will allocate profits to tax years for ongoing businesses as well as in opening and closing years. In addition, students will allocate profits between partners in a partnership and will calculate National Insurance (NI) contributions for the self-employed, advising clients on the tax implications of making losses.

Students will understand the administrative requirements of UK tax law, including the implications of errors in tax returns, late filing of returns, late payment of tax and not retaining records for the required period. Students will compute tax on the sale of capital assets by companies and will understand the capital gains implications of the sale of a business and the tax reliefs available to businesses.

Tax advice is an important part of many accountancy roles in recognising tax planning opportunities for businesses. Students will discuss the ethical issues facing business owners and managers in reporting their business tax and the responsibilities that an agent has in giving advice on tax issues to business clients.

This unit is **optional** in the Level 4 Diploma in Professional Accounting.

Learning outcomes

1. Prepare tax computations for sole traders and partnerships
2. Prepare tax computations for limited companies
3. Prepare tax computations for the sale of capital assets by limited companies
4. Understand administrative requirements of the UK's tax regime
5. Understand the tax implications of business disposals
6. Understand tax reliefs, tax planning opportunities and agent's responsibilities in reporting taxation to HM Revenue & Customs

Personal Tax

Unit level	GLH value	Unit reference number	Assessment
4	60	D/618/3596	Unit assessment

Introduction

This unit provides students with the fundamental knowledge of the three most common taxes that affect taxpayers in the United Kingdom (UK): income tax, capital gains tax and inheritance tax. With this knowledge, students will be equipped to prepare not only the computational aspects where appropriate of these taxes, but also appreciate how taxpayers can legally minimise their overall taxation liability.

Students will study the underpinning theory of taxation and will gain knowledge of taxes that affect every taxpayer in the UK. Within income tax, students will cover employment income, income from investments and income from property. Deductions and reliefs that apply to income tax are covered so that students can compute the net income tax liability for a UK taxpayer. National Insurance completes this topic area.

Students will also study capital gains tax and inheritance tax. The fundamental principles of these taxes will be covered so that students can appreciate how they may affect UK taxpayers.

With their knowledge of these three taxes, students will then understand the taxation implications of decisions made by clients, and understand that advice and guidance may be offered to ensure that the taxpayer is complying with tax legislation.

The overall learning aim of the unit is to equip students with a knowledge of taxation as it applies to UK taxpayers so that accurate and fair taxation liabilities can be computed. It also enables students to appreciate the theory behind taxation, including the ethical aspects as it specifically applies to a taxation practitioner.

This unit is **optional** in the Level 4 Diploma in Professional Accounting.

Learning outcomes

1. Understand principles and rules that underpin taxation systems
2. Calculate UK taxpayers' total income
3. Calculate income tax and National Insurance contributions (NICs) payable by UK taxpayers
4. Calculate capital gains tax payable by UK taxpayers
5. Understand the principles of inheritance tax

Audit and Assurance

Unit level	GLH value	Unit reference number	Assessment
4	60	H/618/3597	Unit assessment

Introduction

As many organisations and businesses now operate in the global marketplace, the role of audit and assurance is becoming increasingly important as it is seen as providing a measure of confidence in the rapidly changing accounting and business environment. This is as a result of their impact upon the overall success of a business and achievement of strategic objectives. Audit and assurance services have also come under increased scrutiny from the profession following high-profile corporate failures.

This unit aims to develop a wider understanding of the principles and concepts, including the legal and professional rules of audit and assurance services. The unit will provide students with an awareness of the audit process from planning and risk assessment to the final completion and production of the audit report. The unit also aims to provide a practical perspective on audit and assurance, with an emphasis on the application of audit and assurance techniques to current systems. Students will be equipped with the skills required to undertake an audit under supervision and will gain an understanding of relevant regulatory frameworks and ethical requirements.

Students will explore issues such as independence as well as the audit process, from the initial planning process, including risk assessments and gathering evidence, through to completion and reporting findings. The unit places an emphasis upon the application of techniques to current situations and as such, offers a practical as well as a theoretical perspective. Throughout the unit, the concept of professional scepticism is explored and challenged.

This unit is **optional** in the Level 4 Diploma in Professional Accounting. Students will require an understanding of financial accounting, as this knowledge will be used during the practical application of audit techniques.

Learning outcomes

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the audit and assurance framework
2. Demonstrate the importance of professional ethics
3. Evaluate the planning process for audit and assurance
4. Evaluate procedures for obtaining sufficient and appropriate evidence
5. Review and report findings

Cash and Financial Management

Unit level	GLH value	Unit reference number	Assessment
4	60	K/618/3598	Unit assessment

Introduction

This unit focuses on the importance of managing cash within organisations and covers the knowledge and skills required to make informed decisions on financing and investment in accordance with organisational policies and external regulations.

Students will identify current and future cash transactions from a range of sources. They will learn how to eliminate non-cash items in the financial information provided. Using various techniques, students will prepare cash budgets considering the timing of transactions required to monitor the flow of cash into and out of organisations.

Understanding the importance of cash management is key to the sustainability of organisations, therefore students will identify shortfalls and surpluses in cash budgets and take appropriate action to deal with them. Students will understand how to reforecast cash budgets and reasons for deviations from budget.

Students will appreciate how an organisation needs to meet its financial obligations to avoid the risk of financial failure and the different methods of financing available to meet short- and long-term financing requirements, along with the types of investments available for surplus funds.

Students will gain an understanding of the external regulations and considerations that relate to cash and finance, including any financing and investment decisions, to comply with an organisation's policies and principles, which may not be purely focused on maximising wealth.

This unit is **optional** in the Level 4 Diploma in Professional Accounting.

Learning outcomes

1. Prepare forecasts for cash receipts and payments
2. Prepare cash budgets and monitor cash flows
3. Understand the importance of managing finance and liquidity
4. Understand ways of raising finance and investing funds
5. Understand regulations and organisational policies that influence decisions in managing cash and finance

Credit and Debt Management

Unit level	GLH value	Unit reference number	Assessment
4	60	M/618/3599	Unit assessment

Introduction

This unit provides an understanding and application of the principles of effective credit control systems, including appropriate debt management systems. Organisations will usually offer credit terms to its customers, which could lead to financial difficulties if customers pay late or do not pay at all. It is therefore important to determine that potential credit customers can honour any credit terms agreed.

This unit will consider the techniques that can be used to assess credit risks in line with policies, relevant legislation and ethical principles. Equally, once the credit decision has been approved, it will be important to ensure that any debts due from the customer are paid within the terms agreed. Students will also consider what techniques are used to enable the collection of any overdue debts, following organisational policies, legal procedures and methods for collecting debts.

Knowledge and use of performance measures relating to liquidity, profitability and gearing are fundamental to this unit. Students will also develop their understanding of liquidity management, bankruptcies and insolvencies, as well as the mechanisms of invoice discounting, factoring and credit insurance.

This unit is **optional** in the Level 4 Diploma in Professional Accounting.

Learning outcomes

1. Understand relevant legislation and contract law that impacts the credit control environment
2. Understand how information is used to assess credit risk and grant credit in compliance with organisational policies and procedures
3. Understand the organisation's credit control processes for managing and collecting debts
4. Understand different techniques available to collect debts

Appendix: Grading descriptors

Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>Demonstrates understanding of the legal and ethical frameworks, duties, and appropriate planning and control systems which apply to the accounting function in a limited company.</p> <p>Refers to these in supporting the actions that they would take in a given context.</p>	<p>Demonstrates good understanding of the legal and ethical frameworks, duties, and appropriate planning and control systems which apply to the accounting function in a limited company.</p> <p>Applies these successfully in range of contexts.</p>	<p>Demonstrates sound understanding of the legal and ethical frameworks, duties, and appropriate planning and control systems which apply to the accounting function in a limited company, supported by evidence of breadth and depth of reading and/or experience.</p> <p>Synthesises and applies these successfully in a wide range of contexts.</p>
<p>Demonstrates understanding of theories and concepts in accounting, including professional ethics.</p>	<p>Demonstrates good understanding of a range of theories and concepts in accounting, including professional ethics.</p>	<p>Demonstrates sound understanding of a wide range of theories and concepts in accounting, including professional ethics.</p>
<p>Selects and appraises a range of appropriate statistical, management and financial accounting tools and techniques to prepare financial statements and limited company accounts.</p>	<p>Selects and appraises a wide range of appropriate statistical, management and financial accounting tools and techniques to prepare financial statements and limited company accounts with a high degree of accuracy.</p>	<p>Selects and provides a detailed appraisal of a wide range of appropriate statistical, management and financial accounting tools and techniques to prepare financial statements and limited company accounts with a high degree of accuracy.</p>
<p>Performs complex calculations for tax, financial and management accounting purposes and records these in a range of financial statements and forecasts.</p>	<p>Performs a range of complex calculations for tax, financial and management accounting purposes and records these with a high degree of accuracy in a range of financial statements and forecasts.</p>	<p>Performs a wide range of complex calculations for tax, financial and management accounting purposes, justifies their selection and records these with a high degree of accuracy in a range of financial statements and forecasts.</p>
<p>Uses statistical techniques to analyse and evaluate complex data and information to arrive at conclusions that support management decision making and performance management.</p>	<p>Uses a range of statistical techniques to analyse and evaluate complex data and information to arrive at justified conclusions that support management decision making and performance management.</p>	<p>Uses a wide range of statistical techniques to analyse and evaluate complex data and information to arrive at justified conclusions that fully support management decision making and performance management.</p>