

# **PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANCY QUALIFICATION DETAILED SYLLABUS**

## **DIPLOMA STAGE GOVERNANCE & PUBLIC POLICY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE**

CIPFA's Statement of Expertise identifies the key areas of competence and standards of performance expected of a CPFA within 5 years of initial qualification. The CIPFA Professional Accountancy Qualification is designed to provide the professional education element of CIPFA's qualification scheme, equipping newly-qualified CPFAs with the technical and managerial knowledge and skills which underpin the competences described in the Statement of Expertise. Each module of the Professional Accountancy Qualification contributes to the attainment of a range of these competences.

This module is part of the Diploma Stage of the CIPFA scheme. The module will deliver a series of objectives (see below) which represent the standard of attainment expected of a newly-qualified CPFA. This level of attainment, coupled with initial professional development activities, will enable the CPFA to perform to the standards specified in areas of the Statement of Expertise as described below.

### **2. LINKAGES**

This module directly underpins the work to be undertaken in the Audit and Assurance and the Financial and Performance Reporting modules. It also links closely to the Public Finance module.

The CPFA requires a sound working knowledge of strategic decision making processes and actors in the public sector in order to make sense of their working environment and to work effectively within it. CPFAs also need to be reflexive practitioners, aware of their role and influence in such systems. Those CPFAs who do not work in the public or not-for-profit sector will still need close understanding of how these sectors work if they are to manage within the increasingly fluid boundaries between the public and private sectors in the UK.

Specifically, this module provides understanding and knowledge in the areas of professional values, analytical thinking and decision-making and organisational awareness.

### **3. OBJECTIVES**

On completion of the module, a successful candidate will be able to:

- A) Describe and apply the various definitions and theoretical models of public policy making and differentiate public and not-for-profit decision**

**making from that of the private sector.** (SOE: LSM2, LSM4, LSM5, CRPM2)<sup>1</sup> (15%)

- B) Describe and analyse the key elements in the structure of public policy making in the UK and the connections and power relations between them.** (SOE: LSM4, LSM5, CRPM1) (15%)
- C) Analyse the key actors in the public policy making structures in the UK and evaluate their relative power and influence.** (SOE: PSR1, PSR3, PSR4, LSM4, LSM5, CRPM1) (15%)
- D) Evaluate the environment in which policy making takes place with particular emphasis on factors that significantly impinge on policy making.** (SOE: LSM3, CRPM1) (20%)
- E) Appraise the impact of actors, structures and environments on public policy decision making processes.** (SOE: LSM3, LSM4, CRPM4) (20%)
- F) Apply the principles of good governance and ethical behaviour within the public and not-for-profit sectors, including the notions of *accountability, transparency, integrity and the public good*.** (SOE: FPR1, GEV3, A&A1, A&A2, CRPM2) (15%)

#### **4. LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- A) Describe and apply the various definitions and theoretical models of public policy making and differentiate public and not-for-profit decision making from that of the private sector.**

*The successful candidate will be able to:*

- A1) Describe and compare the competing modes of public sector action/decision-making, distinguishing the differences between the public, not-for-profit and private sectors:

Command-style economies/states

Free market economies

Neo-liberal classical democracies

State-failure theories (critiques of regulatory states)

Neo-liberal economic arguments for state minimisation and the Third Way

- A2) Apply the various different theoretical approaches that purport to model the public policy decision-making process in western liberal democracies.

- B) Describe and analyse the key elements in the structure of public policy making in the UK and the connections and power relations between them.**

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<sup>1</sup> Note that these references link to specific areas of expertise described in the Statement of Expertise

*The successful candidate will be able to:*

- B1) Explain the various model constitutional forms and apply to the UK constitution and the role it plays in public policy making.
  - B2) Identify what constitutes a public service organisation and analyse the implications of the various definitions for public policy making
  - B3) Describe the structure and workings of UK central government, including: Parliament, the Prime Minister/Cabinet and Ministers and Departments. Analyse the source, nature, functioning and wider impact of the power relationships between them.
  - B4) Describe the structure and workings of government outside of central government, including: local government, regional government and the European Union. Analyse the source, nature, functioning and wider impact of the power relationships between them and central government.
  - B5) Describe judicial structures and functioning and the legislative process (insofar as they relate to public policy). Analyse the source, nature, functioning and wider impact of the power relationships with central government.
- C) Analyse the key actors in the public policy making structures in the UK and evaluate their relative power and influence.**

*The successful candidate will be able to:*

- C1) Analyse the nature, function and workings of the Civil Service, pressure groups, non-governmental organisations, and political parties.
  - C2) Evaluate the relative resources, power and influence of the Civil Service, pressure groups, non-governmental organisations, and political parties.
- D) Evaluate the environment in which policy making takes place with particular emphasis on factors that significantly impinge on policy making.**

*The successful candidate will be able to:*

- D1) Evaluate the impact of general socio-economic concepts and factors (specifically including sustainability) on public policy making, as mediated through structures and actors.
- D2) Evaluate the impact of influences such as internationalisation, supra-national bodies (such as the European Union), and globalisation on national policy making.

**E) Appraise the impact of actors, structures and environments on public policy decision making processes.**

*The successful candidate will be able to:*

- E1) Appraise the dynamic nature of the boundaries and relationships between the public, private and not-for-profit sectors:
  - New public management
  - Executive agencies
  - Matters such as privatisation, contracting and outsourcing.
- E2) Discuss contemporary major policy issues in relation to the examination pre-seen material.
- E3) Describe the role of the accounting professional in the public policy making process as an actor who influences strategic decision-making.

*Related learning from other modules:*

- E2) Content of the Public Finance module.

**F) Apply the principles of good governance and ethical behaviour within the public and not-for-profit sectors, including the notions of *accountability, transparency, integrity and the public good.***

*The successful candidate will be able to:*

- F1) Define the general principles of *accountability, transparency, integrity and public good.*
- F2) Describe different models of corporate governance, including international comparisons.
- F3) Analyse developing events and debates concerning governance and ethics in the private, public and not for profit sectors:
  - The nature of corporate social responsibility
  - Social and environmental issues in corporate governance
  - Ethical concepts and issues in corporate governance
- F4) Explain the key recommendations, reports and bodies relating to governance and ethics:
  - Cadbury
  - Hampel
  - Greenbury
  - Turnbull
  - The Combined Code
  - The Committee on Standards in Public Life

- F5) Describe the CIPFA code of professional ethics and individual ethical responsibility within governance processes, including the duty of disclosure.
- F6) Apply theoretical issues, governance practices, processes for dealing with ethics and the relevant professional ethical code to demonstrate an understanding of the ethical role of the CPFA in achieving good governance.