

Ethics and Professional Skills Module Syllabus



ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM

Summative exercise – the learner is faced with a situation where they are expected to identify ethical dilemmas and take ethical decisions.

Syllabus structure

UNIT 1: ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM

This unit of the module introduces the student to broad ethical and professional values which underpin all the other professional skills and behaviours which are explored in this module. Ethical and professional values should provide a framework and a moral compass for the accountant to guide their behaviours in demonstrating the more specific professional skills as covered in this module.

Section 1: Ethics guide

- What is ethics
- Perspective on ethics
- Branches of ethics
- Ethics and gender test
- Ethics and morality
- Ethics and religion
- Ethics and maturity
- Ethics and professions
- Summary
- Ethics guide test

Section 2: Thinking about ethical decisions

- Thinking about ethical decisions
- Accountant's dilemma test
- Moral reasoning theory
- Academic references

Section 3: Rules v principles

- Rules v principles
- Some differences between rules and principles
- Rules v principles test

Section 4: Fundamental principles

- About ACCA's fundamental principles
- ACCA's five fundamental principles
- Fundamental principles test

Section 5: The framework

- The framework
- The 4-step process
- An ethical dilemma
- Further considerations
- Framework flowchart
- Code of ethics quiz

Section 6: Case study

- Introduction
- Overview of the case
- Meet the team
- Iain's story
- Gail's story

Section 7: The personal ethics diagnostic and reflective exercise

- Ethical perspective
- The personal ethics diagnostic and reflective exercise test

Section 8: Applying what you have learned

- Applying what you have learned

UNIT 2: PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The personal effectiveness unit is about maximising the quantity and quality of your work output and how you communicate and interact with others as you do so making the most of the resources that are available to you. The other key constraint that people face is the time that they have available to work within. The resources available to you are the mainly your own individual capacity to deliver your objectives at work and the amount and type of human and IT resources that you can use. The unit also helps you maintain professional competence and pursue life-long learning.

Section 1: Personal effectiveness

- Introduction

Section 2: Prioritising, organising and managing time effectively

- Introduction
- Managing your time
- Prioritising your time
- The urgent/important principle
- Ten ways to effectively manage your time

Section 3: Using technology effectively

- Using appropriate technology and IT
- Using email effectively
- How to manage email

Section 4: Organising meetings effectively

- Organising virtual meetings and managing diaries using appropriate software
- Arranging a meeting
- Organising meetings effectively test

Section 5: Using spreadsheets effectively

- Effective use of spreadsheets
- Virtual software

Section 6: Big data analytics

- Why is big data important?
- Data security
- Physical security
- Computer security
- Cyber security
- What's my role?
- Hidden object activity
- Security test
- Personal effectiveness test

Section 7: Maintaining professional competence and lifelong learning

- Continuing professional development
- Personal development plan
- How to craft your CV for the job of your dreams
- Your personal advertising campaign
- Key considerations in creating an effective CV
- Other top tips
- Tips to prepare for an interview
- Getting it wrong
- Getting it right
- Unit action plan

Section 8: April's story

- April's story



PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Summative assessment – the learner is faced with a challenging task or objective with insufficient resources and a tight deadline and has to develop tactics and strategies to ensure that the task can be completed.



INNOVATION AND SCEPTICISM

Summative assessment – where the learner is presented with a situation where there are clues or evidence of control weakness or other business risks such as potential internet fraud or 'cyber' crime where the learner has to identify what these are and offer innovative solutions to rectify the weakness or to help detect and prevent the situation being repeated.

UNIT 3: INNOVATION AND SCEPTICISM

This unit of the module is about encouraging open mindedness and innovative thinking. You will be able to suggest imaginative solutions to problems to create competitive advantage within the context of suitability, feasibility and acceptability, recognising the limitations of solutions and any problems with their implementation. The unit also introduces scepticism which is a personal quality required of accountants and those who need to think creatively and review the status quo to identify how things can be improved.

Section 1: Innovation and scepticism

- Innovation and scepticism

Section 2: Innovation

- Innovation

Section 3: Linear v lateral thinking

- Introduction
- Rules of thumb
- Systematic thinking
- Lateral thinking
- Summary
- Do you think laterally?
- Numbers exercise

Section 4: The four P's of innovation

- The four P's and the accountancy profession activity

Section 5: Great innovators

- Great innovators

Section 6: Innovation and competitive advantage

- Competitive advantage
- Benefits of being a fast second
- Pre-requisites for being a fast second

Section 7: Promoting creativity in the workplace

- Introduction
- Workplace innovation activity
- Momentum v inertia
- Group think
- How prepared are you to think creatively and innovatively
- Some contemporary thoughts on creativity and proactivity at work

Section 8: Professional scepticism and how to demonstrate it

- What do we mean by scepticism?
- Email exercise

Section 9: The importance of scepticism as an attitude

- Why is scepticism important
- Scepticism continuum
- Scepticism in practice
- Investment decision
- Last day of audit
- Skills relevant to scepticism
- Best practice

Section 10: The innovation and scepticism 'maze'

- The innovation and scepticism 'maze'

UNIT 4: COMMERCIAL AWARENESS

This unit of the module introduces the concept of commercial awareness as the ability to view situations from a commercial or business perspective, considering factors that influence the success of a business and an understanding the business processes, relationships, risks and costs. Commercial awareness requires an ability to analyse the business environment, externally and internally, to evaluate available data and information from a variety of sources, some of which may not be relevant. You then will be able to identify opportunities, problems and observe trends and make suitable recommendations based on these.

Section 1: Introduction

- Commercial awareness

Section 2: Commercial awareness and business acumen

- Introduction
- Commercial awareness
- How to enhance your commercial awareness
- PESTEL analysis
- Business acumen test

Section 3: Planning ahead and future proofing

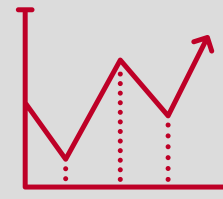
- Introduction
- Importance of planning ahead for business
- Big business failures
- Future proofing an organisation
- Suitability, acceptability, feasibility (SAF) model

Section 4: Professional self-awareness

- Introduction
- SWOT analysis
- Deciding when to seek the help of experts
- Professional self-awareness
- Unit action plan

Section 5: Data analysis and manipulation

- Introduction
- The importance of data analysis
- Your role in data analysis
- Ratio analysis – test
- Data analysis and manipulation – test



COMMERCIAL AWARENESS, ANALYSIS, EVALUATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Summative assessment – where the learner is presented with a large and diverse amount of data/information and must decide which data to use, how to analyse and evaluate it to make a recommendation to senior management.



LEADERSHIP AND TEAM-WORKING

Summative assessment – where the learner is a leader who is trying to manage a diverse group of individuals to achieve a task within a team and the learner must identify the type of manager they are and the style they are adopting and the potential issues with their approach to achieving the task. The tasks will involve tracking the progress of the leader in making and communicating decisions to the team and advising on whether the decisions and behaviour adopted were appropriate at each stage.

UNIT 5: LEADERSHIP AND TEAM WORKING

This unit of the module introduces leadership and working in teams. The unit explores different type of leadership approaches and traits which can be adopted or adapted at any level of the organisation. This unit also demonstrates how effective leadership involves inspiring, motivating and supporting teams to work effectively and efficiently, making the most of the individuals within them.

Section 1: Introduction

- Leadership and working in teams

Section 2: Leadership and management

- Introduction
- The nature of leadership
- Situational leadership
- Leadership in action

Section 3: Leadership styles

- Leadership styles
- Blake and Mouton grid
- What type of leader are you

Section 4: Putting effective leadership into practice

- Introduction

Section 5: Examples of outstanding leaders

- Outstanding leaders

Section 6: Teams

- Introduction
- Team roles
- Team development

Section 7: Motivation

- Introduction
- The nature of motivation
- Motivation based on needs
- Motivational forces
- Motivators and dissatisfiers
- The expectancy approach to motivation
- Summary

Section 8: Accountability, responsibility and authority

- What can go wrong?
- Accountability, responsibility and authority
- What do these concepts mean?
- Delegation of authority

Section 9: End of unit assessment

- Introduction
- Question 1
- Three years later
- Question 2
- Final accounts preparation
- Question 3
- Question 4

UNIT 6: COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

This unit is specifically about how we communicate effectively with others in a business environment, including clients, customers, colleagues and external authorities. This unit covers patterns and channels of communication and how effective these are in different contexts and the associated methods and skills involved in advising, supporting, motivating and influencing others.



Section 1: Introduction

- Introduction

Section 2: The communication process

- Introduction
- What can go wrong?
- Observations
- Barriers and distortions to the communications process
- How good are you at communicating?
- Formal and informal communication

Section 3: Effective communication

- Introduction

Section 4: Communicating in the workplace

- Introduction
- Errors
- Solutions

Section 5: Meetings

- The basic rules of meetings
- Running a meeting
- Responsibilities of the chairman
- Communication and interpersonal skills

Section 6: Emails

- Introduction
- Good practice with email
- Do's and don'ts of business emails

Section 7: Report Writing

- Purpose of reports
- Best practices in report writing

Section 8: Telephone

- Introduction
- Making a call
- Receiving a call
- Best practices in using a phone

Section 9: Presentations

- The basics of presentations
- The presentation process
- Planning a presentation
- Presenting for the first time
- The presentation
- Audio-visual aids
- Reviewing the presentation

Section 10: Interpersonal skills

- Introduction
- Interpersonal skills
- Personal qualities
- Verbal communication
- Non-verbal communication
- Using interpersonal skills to the full

Section 11: Networking

- Introduction
- Networking
- Bonding and bridging
- Building networks effectively
- Tips for networking

Section 12: End of unit assessment

- The story
- Part A
- Part B
- Part C

COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Summative assessment – where the learner has to coordinate a specific task with several colleagues with different skills, where there are resource and personality issues and where potential conflicts exist. The team must be persuaded to achieve the objectives using a suitable approach, or in such a way as to motivate the individuals to successfully achieve the task collectively.



DATA ANALYTICS

Summative assessment

The learner is given data about a railway network and factors which influence ticket sales. They are required to carry out statistical regression to analyse these to predict ticket sales for a given set of factors. They are also required to evaluate the effect of changes in variables on overall ticket sales, applying professional scepticism.

UNIT 7: DATA ANALYTICS

This unit explains how students should use commercial awareness to articulate business questions, identify and manipulate relevant data and deeply analyse such data by applying appropriate techniques. Following sceptical analysis of the data, valid conclusions can be drawn and recommendations made. The unit also explains how findings from analysis can and should be visualised and communicated, which enables relevant stakeholders to make sound business decisions and covers ethical and security issues around data analytics.

Section 1: Introduction

Section 2: CRISP – DM a framework for data mining:

Sub sections:

- Business understanding
- Data Understanding
- Data Preparation
- Modelling
- Evaluation
- Deployment

Section 3: Sources of data

Sub sections:

- Internal sources
- External sources

Section 4: Big Data and data analytics

Sub sections:

- What is Big Data?
- The 3 Vs of Big Data (Volume, Velocity and Variety)
- Value and lessons to be learned from Big Data
- Platforms for Big Data Storage and Processing

Section 5: Self-test on CRISP-DM and Big Data

Section 6: Types of analytics

Sub sections:

- Descriptive Analytics + Practical examples
- Predictive Analytics + Practical examples
- Prescriptive Analytics + Practical examples

Section 7: Data Analytics Methodologies

Sub sections:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Robotics
- Machine Learning

Section 8: Mainstream tools and key applications for data analytics

Sub sections

- Tools and applications for Descriptive Analytics
- Tools and applications for Predictive Analytics
- Tools and applications for Prescriptive Analytics

Section 9: Self-test on AI, Machine Learning and data analytics tools

Section 10: Data visualisation and communication

Sub sections:

- What is data visualisation? - Purpose and benefits
- The history of data visualisation
- Types of data visualisation - Comparison
- Types of data visualisation - Composition
- Types of data visualisation – Relationship
- What makes good visualisation?

Section 11: Self-test on data visualisation

Section 12: Scepticism in data analytics

Section 13: Ethical considerations in the use of data

Section 14: End of unit assessment

UNIT 8: CASE STUDY

In this unit, the professional skills developed in the previous six units will be tested. You will be put in the position of a qualified accountant applying for a role as the head of accounting at another organisation. That organisation faces a range of new environmental threats, which you as head of accounting have to analyse and evaluate. In the unit you will undertake a series of tasks including analysing your workload to ensure you can achieve your objectives, you should prepare calculations and a report to the board of directors outlining the financial and business implications of the new situation that your business finds itself. You also have to recommend how to reorganise your department to save costs and to manage the people retained within the department in the most effective way. You are also given the responsibility of chairing a strategy development sub-committee, formed to evaluate possible strategies to take the business forward successfully.

Section 1: Introduction

Sub sections:

- Introduction
- Jamie Roberts
- Telford Engineering

Section 2: Vacancy at Telford Engineering

Sub sections:

- A vacancy arises
- Review LinkedIn advert
- Review your CV
- Assessment on improving CV
- Invitation for interview

Section 3: Breaking news

Sub sections:

- Announcement of MEXIT
- Emergency board meeting
- TV Interview

Section 4: Meeting with CFO

Sub sections:

- Impact of MEXIT
- Organising your tasks

Section 5: Financial forecasting

Sub sections:

- Financial information on Telford Engineering
- Creating the report

Section 6: Organisational restructure

Sub sections:

- Re-organisation of accounting department
- Meeting with the CFO to discuss options
- Calculating the accountancy department costs per year
- Creating the report

Section 7 – Human resource planning

Sub sections:

- Redundancy planning
- Deciding on who to retain
- Redundancies within the accountancy department

Section 8: Strategic planning

Sub sections:

- Formulation of the strategy development sub-committee
- Prepare presentation slides
- Analysing the strategic options
- Suitable strategic options

Section 9: How did you do?

Sub section:

- My results

UNIT 9: STRATEGIC PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

This unit is about explaining the links between EPSM and SBL and other Strategic Professional exams and how EPSM supports learning at Strategic Professional. The unit explains what the Strategic Business Leader and other Strategic Professional exams require in terms of professionalism and how EPSM helps students prepare for these exams. The unit highlights the knowledge and skills in EPSM which most closely link to the content in the SP exams, particularly SBL, but also other strategic professional exams and how to demonstrate general professional skills while demonstrating technical skills.

Section 1: Unit Introduction

Section 2: Strategic Business Leader (SBL)

Sub sections:

- Introduction
- Syllabus
- Professional skills
- EPSM knowledge in the SBL exam

Section 3: Strategic Business Reporting (SBR)

Sub sections:

- Introduction
- Syllabus
- EPSM knowledge in the SBR exam

Section 4: Options exams

Sub section:

- Introduction

Section 5: Advanced Financial Management (AFM)

Sub sections:

- Introduction
- Syllabus
- EPSM knowledge in the AFM exam

Section 6: Advanced Performance Management (APM)

Sub sections:

- Introduction
- Syllabus
- EPSM knowledge of the APM exam

Section 7: Advanced Taxation (ATX-UK)

Sub sections:

- Introduction
- Syllabus
- EPSM knowledge of the ATX-UK exam

Section 8: Advanced Audit and Assurance (AAA-INT)

Sub sections:

- Introduction
- Syllabus
- EPSM knowledge of the AAA-INT exam

Unit 10: End of module assessment

Dynamic question bank

14 questions – two objective test questions from each of the first seven units. Pass mark 50%

UNIT 10: END OF MODULE ASSESSMENT

Dynamic question bank

14 questions – two objective test questions from each of the first seven units.

Pass mark 50%

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