

Guide to In-Depth Competency Fields

Competency Field: Financial Accounting

Level: In-depth

Requirement – Entry-level Certified Public Accountants in addition to attaining a ‘Professional Level’, must under direction, being experienced in **two** of the following **seven** areas:

- 1) Producing financial statements for partnerships, limited companies or other types of organisation in accordance with International or Irish GAAP and regulatory requirements as appropriate. Examples include:
 - a) Prepares interim financial statements and notes. *(TR 1.4, 1.5)*
 - b) Prepares year-end financial statements and notes. *(TR 1.4, 1.5)*
 - c) Prepares financial statements for not for profit organisations. *(TR 1.5)*
 - d) Prepares financial statements for specialist organisations, (e.g. government departments, local authorities, charities, credit unions, branch accounts, financial Services companies, trusts, pension funds, solicitors, co-operatives, hospitals, public utilities) *(TR 1.5)*
 - e) Recognises ethical issues, discusses, escalates or resolves these within the Institute’s ethical framework, demonstrating, integrity, objectivity, independence and professional scepticism. *(TR 1.3 to 1.5)*

- 2) Interpreting half-year and year-end financial statements for partnerships, limited companies or other types of organisation and making informed judgements.
 - a) Analyses trends. *(TR 1.3, 1.4)*
 - b) Prepares informed comments for senior management review. *(TR 1.3, 1.4)*
 - c) Reviews half-year and year- end performance with financial controller / finance director / chief financial officer and / or senior management. *(TR 1.3, 1.4)*

- 3) Supervising the maintenance of all basic accounting records, using standard accounting software.
 - a) Ensures compliance with internal controls so that all transactions are correctly recorded and processed efficiently. *(TR 1.1)*
 - a) Reviews the appropriateness of internal controls, recommends enhancements as and when weaknesses are identified. *(TR 1.1, 1.2)*
 - b) Ensures the reliability of financial information. *(TR 1.2)*
 - c) Maintains audit trails, files hard copies (or electronic copies where appropriate) of source documents securely and ensures regular back-ups are kept of computer files. *(TR 1.1, 1.2)*
 - d) Leads accounting team by example, commits self and team to achievement of goals. *(TR 1.1 to 1.5, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5)*

- 4) Preparing accounts from incomplete records
 - a) Produces financial statements from incomplete records, having correctly analysed the source documentation, reconciled receivables, payables, the bank account(s) and other control accounts in addition to

having obtained directors / management statements and explanations all necessary independent verifications. *(TR 1.2, 1.3)*

- 5) Preparing consolidated financial statements for organisations in accordance with International or Irish and UK GAAP and regulatory requirements as appropriate.
 - a) Producing consolidated financial statements, interim financial statements and notes thereto for limited companies or other types of organisation. *(TR 1.4, 1.5)*
 - b) Producing consolidated year-end financial statements and notes. *(TR 1.3, 1.4, 1.5)*

- 6) Contributing to the resolution of technical issues by researching the appropriate legislation / regulatory requirements.
 - a) Researches, evaluates and advises on legal requirements or technical standards. *(TR 1.3, 1.4, 1.5)*
 - b) Evaluates and advises on International Financial Reporting Standards, or Irish and UK accounting standards, policies and procedures. *(TR 1.4, 1.5)*
 - c) Researches, evaluates and advises on the appropriate accounting treatment of complex transactions, such as mergers, acquisitions, significant re-organisations and material disposals. *(TR 1.4, 1.5)*

- 7) Carrying out special financial reviews or investigations and formulating recommendations.
 - a) Conducts detailed special financial reviews or investigations to establish the accuracy/inaccuracy or omissions of financial data and other relevant information. *(TR 1.4, 1.5)*
 - b) Researches, identifies and evaluates compliance / non-compliance with any legal, accounting, auditing or other requirements. *(TR 1.4, 1.5)*
 - c) Advises on and formulates of recommendations following financial reviews or investigations. *(TR 1.4, 1.5)*
 - d) Undertakes a forensic review of accounting transactions to identify and report on the treatment of those transactions. *(TR 1.4, 1.5)*

Competency Field: Auditing & Statutory Compliance

Level: In-depth

Requirement - Entry-level Certified Public Accountants in addition to attaining a 'Professional Level', must under direction, being experienced in **two** of the following **six** areas:

- 1) Carrying out, under direction, the statutory audit of the financial statements for limited companies.
 - a) Applies audit testing techniques and procedures in the practical application of International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK and Ireland), International Standards on Quality Control (ISQCs) (UK and Ireland), the Institute's Code of Ethics and other technical pronouncements to auditing and assurance situations. *(TR 2.2)*
 - b) Supervises and reviews various stages of the audit process. *(TR 2.2)*
 - c) Carries out analytical procedures, analyses, records and communicates the implications of the outcome. *(TR 2.2)*
 - d) Explains to clients or management the nature, purpose and scope of the audit and defends the role of the auditor. *(TR 2.1)*
 - e) Recognises ethical issues, discusses, escalates or resolves these within the Institute's ethical framework, demonstrating, integrity, objectivity, independence and professional scepticism. *(TR 2.2, 2.3)*

- 2) Reviewing and assessing, under direction, internal control strengths and weaknesses of own or other organisation and making recommendations thereon for improvement.
 - a) Evaluates and reports on the internal control systems for effectiveness and efficiency, to include, documenting the system for completeness, accuracy, authorisation, separation of duties, classification of transactions and timeliness. *(TR 2.2)*
 - b) Makes an informed judgement on the degree of reliance that may be placed on an entity's internal controls. *(TR 2.2)*
 - c) Prepares a report on findings, to include recommendations to address control weaknesses identified, if any, and communicates to partner, client and or management. *(TR 2.3)*
 - d) Designs and ensures the implementation of new internal controls, procedures and systems. *(TR 2.2, 2.3)*

- 3) Carrying out, under direction, special investigations or audits such as: fraud identification, analysis and assessment, environmental, health & safety and operational audits. Reporting findings and defending as may be necessary.
 - a) Reviews the engagement letter. Clarifies with the client / management any ambiguities and has the engagement letter rewritten by client to ensure that all the parties are in agreement on all aspects of the engagement. *(TR 2.1)*

- b) Determines the scope of the engagement, the internal and external resources required, and the capacity to undertake the assignment. *(TR 2.1)*
 - c) Plans and / or executes a work programme appropriate to the engagement in accordance with best practice and developments in Corporate Governance with relation to the client's processes. *(TR 2.1, 2.2)*
 - d) Prepares a report on investigation or audit, reviews this with partner for communication to client. *(TR 2.3)*
- 4) Planning or assisting with the planning of a statutory or internal audit.
- a) Confirms knowledge and understanding of the entity, its environment, business, risks, management and accounting systems. *(TR 2.1)*
 - b) Evaluates risks to determine the impact on the scope and conduct of the audit. *(TR 2.1)*
 - c) Devises an overall audit strategy. *(TR 2.1)*
 - d) Designs and applies the appropriate audit tests to include in the audit programme, incorporating those for the audit of computer information systems. *(TR 2.1, 2.2)*
- 5) Carrying out internal audits, under direction as appropriate, and reporting on findings.
- a) Supervises and reviews the various stages of the audit. *(TR 2.2)*
 - b) Ensure audit is conducted as planned, escalating issues as appropriate. *(TR 2.2)*
 - c) Conducts analytical reviews and assesses the implications of the outcomes. *(TR 2.2)*
 - d) Draws appropriate conclusions and includes them in the audit report for communication to management and or the Audit Committee. *(TR 2.3)*
- 6) Carrying out Value for Money reviews. Reporting findings and defending as may be necessary.
- a) Reviews the engagement letter. In conjunction with the client ensures that the engagement letter accurately reflects all aspects of the proposed engagement. *(TR 2.1)*
 - b) Determines the scope of the engagement, the internal and external resources required, and the capacity to undertake the assignment. *(TR 2.1)*
 - c) Plans and / or executes a work programme appropriate to the engagement in accordance with best practice. *(TR 2.1, 2.2)*
 - d) Draws up reports on the review for consideration by the partner and for communication to client. *(TR 2.3)*

Competency Field: Corporate Planning, Control and Treasury Management

Level: In-depth

Requirement – Entry-level Certified Public Accountants in addition to attaining a 'Professional Level', must under direction, being experienced in **two** of the following **seven** areas:

- 1) Applying marginal costing and break-even analysis, Activity Based Costing, job, process, operation and batch costing and service costing to business areas in own organisation.
 - a) Identifies all costs; labour, materials and overheads. *(TR 3.2)*
 - b) Reviews cost trends on the basis of historical data and latest forecast. *(TR 3.2)*
 - c) Carries out costing exercises for pricing, planning or control purposes, identifies all costs; labour, material and overheads. Reviews cost trends on the basis of historical data and latest forecast.
 - d) Selects and applies the most appropriate costing method to a product or service to assist with pricing or cost control. *(TR 3.1, 3.2)*
 - e) Presents results, commentaries and or recommendations to client or management. *(TR 31., 3.2)*

- 2) Carrying out and reporting on cost/profit centre analyses in own organisation.
 - a) Analyses period / quarterly / half yearly / annual performance on cost/profit centre, compares actual revenue, cost of sales, current and capital expenditure against budget. *(TR 3.2)*
 - b) Compares actual activity to budget activity, e.g. sales orders received, sales orders completed, wastage, raw material usage, units of production completed. *(TR 3.3)*
 - c) Conducts variance analysis, breaking down variances into underlying drivers, e.g. price, volume etc. *(TR 3.2)*
 - d) Obtains explanations from cost centre/profit centre managers and includes in commentary presented to directors / management or client. *(TR 3.2)*

- 3) Calculating the value of stock and work-in-progress.
 - a) Identifies period end cut off point. *(TR 3.2)*
 - b) Quantifies volume of raw materials, work in progress and finished goods. *(TR 3.2)*
 - c) Verifies condition of stock, degree of completion of work in progress and market value of stock. *(TR 3.2)*
 - d) Decides on method of stock valuation, LIFO, FIFO weighted average etc. e.g. LIFO may be used for management accounting purposes. *(TR 3.2)*

- 4) Producing functional, master budgets and cash flow projections in own organisation.
 - a) Prepares and circulates the budget manual. *(TR 3.3)*
 - b) Receives budget inputs from cost/profit centre, functional area managers. *(TR 3.3)*
 - c) Reviews budget inputs received with budget process manager. As directed requests additional explanations and or modifications. *(TR 3.3)*
 - d) Consolidates inputs received into master budget, to produce income statement, balance sheet, statement of cashflows and capital budget. Reviews with budget manager and / or present master budget and commentary to management. *(TR 3.3)*

- 5) Introducing, modifying and applying budgetary control procedures.
 - a) Reviews entity's budget planning and controlling process with reference to the business environment. *(TR 3.2, 3.3)*
 - b) Enquires from key stakeholders as to what they perceive to be key weaknesses / defects in the current process and seeks suggestions to improve / enhance the systems. *(TR 3.2)*
 - c) Proposes modifications to process to ensure that relevant, timely and sufficiently accurate management control information can be produced and communicated to key management. Presents recommendation to management. *(TR 3.2)*
 - d) Implements new and or modified process. Liaises with management post implementation. Monitors actual performance improvements against planned performance improvements. *(TR 3.3)*

- 6) Contributing to and interpreting strategic plans for own organisation.
 - a) Conducts or contributes to a situation analysis, applies appropriately relevant tools such as, PESTLE Analysis, Porters Five Forces, Lifecycle Analysis, Porters Values Chain, McKinsey's 7s. *(TR 3.4)*
 - b) Reports or contributes to report to management on outcomes of situation analysis. *(TR 3.4)*
 - c) Considers strategic options for the organisation using tools such as Ansoff's matrix. Evaluates same and contributes to presentation of options to management. *(TR 3.4)*
 - d) Interprets strategic plan and assists though leadership and planning in the alignment of own department's resources to it. *(TR 3.4)*

- 7) Installing, maintaining and monitoring the effectiveness of control procedures for working capital, including credit control and inventory control in own organisation.
 - a) Reviews working capital ratio and acid test ratios. Investigates variances, takes control action and recommends policy changes as appropriate. *(TR 3.2, 3.5)*

- b) Reviews debtors ratios and debtors aged analysis regularly. Investigates variances, takes control action and recommends policy changes as appropriate. *(TR 3.2, 3.5)*
- c) Reviews bank and loan balances to ensure optimisation of interest receivable / payable. Investigates unusual transactions / balances, takes control action and recommends policy changes as appropriate. *(TR 3.2, TR 3.5)*
- d) Designs, modifies and or implements inventory system. *(TR 3.5)*

Competency Field: Information & Financial Systems

Level: In-depth

Requirement – Entry-level Certified Public Accountants in addition to attaining a ‘Professional Level’, must under direction, being experienced in **two** of the following **six** areas:

- 1) Managing and advising on the implementation of a financial accounting system.
 - a) Analyses an entity’s existing financial accounting / management information systems within the context of current and future business requirements. *(TR 4.4)*
 - b) Researches the main “off the shelf” financial analysis software for an entity, including the documentation of requirements, the undertaking of a feasibility study using the appropriate methodologies to analyse, evaluate, and select appropriate system(s) and supplier(s). *(TR 4.4, 4.5)*
 - c) Identifies and recommends to the client or management an appropriate financial accounting / management information system to meet the current and future business needs and requirements. *(TR 4.3)*
 - d) Prepares a systems implementation plan. *(TR 4.3)*
 - e) Manages the successful implementation of, or significant element of, a financial / management information system with a robust internal control process that satisfies the business needs and requirements. *(TR 4.4)*
 - f) Ensures robust security back up with systems documentation prepared and maintained. *(TR 4.6, 4.8)*

- 2) Managing and carrying out detailed system analysis of a system and advising on any of the key weaknesses.
 - a) Uses structured analysis and design methodologies, e.g. questionnaires, interviews, document analysis, data flow diagrams, decision tables / trees and observation to analyse a system, (the above are not a complete list). *(TR 4.2)*
 - b) Identifies, documents and reports on key weaknesses. *(TR 4.4, 2.2, 2.3)*
 - c) Proposes systems or process modifications or improvements to remove weaknesses identified. *(TR 4.4)*

- 3) Reviewing and documenting the financial accounting / management information systems of an organisation.
 - a) Develops a plan to evaluate an entity’s financial accounting / management information systems. *(TR 4.4)*
 - b) Collaborates with colleagues, clients and it specialists to execute evaluation a plan. *(TR 4.4)*
 - c) Evaluates general I.T. controls, application controls and relationship between user controls / application controls and general IT controls. *(TR 4.5, 2.2, 2.3)*

- d) Documents procedures and findings and presents to partner and or management. *(TR 4.6)*
- 4) Advising on the financial accounting / management information systems requirements of an organisation.
 - a) Develops an understanding of the entity, its strategy, the business environment and the relationship of its IT strategy with the business strategy. Demonstrates the ability to work with the data stored within a system to produce meaningful and useful management information for the business. *(TR 4.3, 4.4)*
 - b) Understands the alignment of the entity's IT strategy with its business strategy. *(TR 4.3)*
 - c) Recommends fit for purpose and cost effective IT solutions appropriate to the entity's business strategy and IT strategy. *(TR 4.4)*
 - d) Shortlists and recommends expert external providers for consideration by the entity to manage and / or deliver fit for purpose and cost effective IT solutions appropriate to the entity's business strategy and IT strategy. *(TR 4.4, 4.5)*
- 5) Project management of financial accounting / management information systems software / system installation.
 - a) Prepares (or supervises the preparation of) an implementation plan, that for example covers the following; change management, user training, user acceptance, roll-out, data conversion, risk management, operation and recovery procedures, software / systems documentation. *(TR 4.5)*
 - b) Installs / deploys (or supervises the installation / deployment of) software / systems. *(TR 4.5)*
 - c) Supervises or undertakes the software / system changeover, to include; data conversion, pilot / parallel running / go-live - testing, risk management, resource management, assurance that data transfer is authorised, complete and accurate. *(TR 4.5)*
 - d) Undertakes a post implementation review to measure; outcomes against the business needs, impact on users, benefits realisation, resources used versus budget, and document improvement opportunities. *(TR 4.5)*
- 6) Selecting and advising on suitable control criteria in order to evaluate and analyse controls.
 - a) Documents the control activities of an entity, to include, levels of authorisation, performance reviews, information processing, physical controls, security and segregation of duties. *(TR 4.5, 4.6, 2.2, 2.3)*
 - b) Identifies and documents gaps / weaknesses in the control activities. *(TR 4.4, 2.2, 2.3)*

- c) Proposes appropriate process and or systems modifications to the client or management to address the control weaknesses identified. (TR 4.4)

Competency Field: General Management

Requirement – Entry-level Certified Public Accountants in addition to attaining a ‘Professional Level’, must under direction, being experienced in **two** of the following **six** areas:

- 1) Reviewing organisation structure, culture, organisational behaviour.
 - a) Reviews, publicly available and internal documents, interviews key management and staff to obtain an understanding of organisation structure, culture and organisation. *(TR 5.1, 5.2)*
 - b) Obtains an understanding of the current issues facing an organisation, the likely future issues and areas of duplication and / or conflict within an organisation. *(TR 5.1)*
 - c) Presents report to the client / management on findings of review. *(TR 5.5)*
 - d) Identifies and presents recommendations to the client / management. *(TR 5.5)*

- 2) Contributing to and interpreting strategic plans.
 - a) Conducts or participates in an environmental analysis. Communicates the results of this analysis to management to provide an understanding of the external market place and internal organisation. *(TR 5.1)*
 - b) Uses techniques such as scenario analysis to challenge / test assumptions underpinning plans. *(TR 3.4)*
 - c) Prepares and presents to the client / management costings of strategic options identified in the planning process. *(TR 5.1, 5.5, 3.4)*
 - d) Ensures that budgets are aligned to the agreed strategy and that inter business unit conflicts are minimised to ensure goal congruence. *(TR 5.5, 3.3)*
 - e) Interprets and communicates implications of strategy for organisational unit and advises on application of unit’s resources to ensure alignment with the agreed strategy. *(TR 5.5)*
 - f) Adopts a leadership role, takes responsibility for part of strategy implementation, monitors performance to ensure delivery. *(TR 5.4)*

- 3) Participating in HR management and operating performance management system.
 - a) Has responsibility for a team, sets performance targets, reviews performance, provides feedback and coaching to team members. *(TR 5.2)*
 - b) Provides financial and operational data input into a performance payment process. *(TR 5.2, 3.2)*
 - c) Provides advice on best practice into corporate governance and business ethics. *(TR 5.3)*
 - d) Keeps up to date with employment law and advises on best practice. *(TR 5.3)*

- 4) Presenting and explaining finance-related information persuasively and relating it to the activities of own organisation.

- a) Prepares or is involved in the preparation of business plans. *(TR 5.1, 3.4)*
 - b) Presents and defends business plans to management. *(TR 5.1, 3.4)*
 - c) Explains complex financial issues coherently to non finance stakeholders. *(TR 5.5)*
 - d) Challenges aspects of financial plans to ensure alignment to the organisation's goals. *(TR 5.5, 3.3, 3.4)*
- 5) Managing complex projects.
- a) Confirms with stakeholders scope and objective of project. *(TR 5.4)*
 - b) Assembles project team, identifies resources, communicates responsibilities, timelines and milestones. *(TR 5.4)*
 - c) Clearly communicates project progress to key stake-holders in accordance with agreed timelines. *(TR 5.4, 5.5)*
 - d) Undertakes post project implementation review to measure if planned outcomes are / have been realised. *(TR 5.4)*
- 6) Leading cross-functional teams or transformational change programmes.
- a) Leads or represents the finance team on a cross functional team introducing an enterprise reporting system. *(TR 5.4)*
 - b) Leads or represents the finance team on a cross functional team reviewing an organisation's structure and / or resource allocation. Undertakes costings and savings for a staff exit scheme. *(TR 5.4, 5.3, 3.1)*
 - c) Reports to project sponsor and management on the progress of a project undertaken by a cross functional team. *(TR 5.4, 5.5)*
 - d) Resolves issues with keys stakeholders that arise during the implementation phase of a cross functional project. *(TR 5.4, 5.5)*

Competency Field: Taxation

Level: In-depth

Requirement – Entry-level Certified Public Accountants in addition to attaining a ‘Professional Level’, must under direction, being experienced in **two** of the following **six** areas:

- 1) Advising on Income Tax and / or Corporation Tax.
 - a) Advises clients or management as to how to minimise their exposure to income tax and or corporation tax liabilities whilst being compliant with the taxation legislation. *(TR 6.1, 6.2)*
 - b) Makes representations with clients or management to the Revenue Commissioners to resolve and agree settlements of disputed liabilities or refunds. *(TR 6.1, 6.2)*
 - c) Liaises with taxation authorities in other jurisdictions on behalf of clients or management. *(TR 6.1, 6.2)*
 - d) Advises clients or management so as they may file their returns and payments to the Revenue Commissioners in compliance with the required methods and timelines. *(TR 6.1, 6.2)*
 - e) Advises clients on the structuring of their affairs in a tax efficient manner so as to optimise the use of available reliefs and measures whilst being compliant with the taxation legislation. *(TR 6.1, 6.2)*
 - f) Defends or makes representations on behalf of clients or management in negotiations with the Revenue Commissioners arising from ethical tax planning.

- 2) Advising on Value Added Tax (VAT) and PAYE/PRSI and or submit VAT and PAYE/PRSI returns.
 - a) Advises clients or management as to how to minimise their exposure to VAT and or /PAYE/PRSI liabilities whilst being compliant with taxation legislation. *(TR 6.1, 6.4)*
 - b) Makes representations with clients or management to the Revenue Commissioners to resolve and agree settlements of disputed liabilities or refunds. *(TR 6.1, 6.4)*
 - c) Liaises with taxation authorities in other jurisdictions on behalf of clients or management with possible exposure to taxation outside this jurisdiction. *(TR 6.1, 6.4)*
 - d) Advises clients or management so as they may file their returns and payments to the Revenue Commissioners in compliance with the required methods and timelines. *(TR 6.1, 6.4)*

- 3) Applying Double Taxation agreements.
 - a) Researches double taxation agreements and advises clients or management on compliance and ethical tax planning. *(TR 6.4)*
 - b) Engages relevant taxation experts from other jurisdictions as required. *(TR 6.4)*

- c) Liaises with the taxation authorities in other jurisdictions, on behalf of clients or management with possible exposure to taxation in another jurisdiction, that has a double taxation agreement with this jurisdiction. *(TR 6.4)*
 - d) Advises clients or management so as they may file their returns and payments to the relevant Revenue / Taxation authorities in compliance with the required methods and timelines. *(TR 6.4)*
- 4) Advising on Capital Gains Tax and submit Capital Gains Tax returns.
- a) Advises clients or management on ethical tax planning with regard to capital gains tax. *(TR 6.3)*
 - b) Computes clients or management's capital gains tax liabilities. *(TR 6.3)*
 - c) Represents clients or management in negotiations with Revenue Commissioners to resolve and agree settlements of disputed liabilities or refunds. *(TR 6.3)*
 - d) Advises clients or management so as they may file their Capital Gains Tax returns and payments to the Revenue Commissioners in compliance with the required methods and timelines. *(TR 6.3)*
- 5) Attending and concluding a Revenue Audit.
- a) Understands and advises clients or management on how to meet the requirements of a Revenue audit. *(TR 6.4)*
 - b) Understands and advises clients or management on the powers of the Revenue authorities to ensure compliance. *(TR 6.4)*
 - c) Understands and advises clients or management on the appeals process in the Irish tax system. *(TR 6.1 to 6.4)*
 - d) Liaises on behalf of clients or management during a Revenue audit. *(TR 6.4)*
 - e) Represents clients or management in negotiations with Revenue Commissioners to resolve issues arising from a Revenue audit. *(TR 6.4)*
- 6) Producing Income Tax and Corporation Tax computations
- a) Calculates complex income and corporation tax returns, optimising the reliefs available to the client or management *(TR 6.1, 6.2)*
 - b) Defends or makes representations on behalf of clients or management in negotiations with the Revenue Commissioners arising from income tax and or corporation tax computations. *(TR 6.1, 6.2)*

Sample Form

Use: This form is used to describe how an In-Depth Competence, from the CPA Competency Profile for Newly Qualified CPA's, has been demonstrated by a CPA trainee in the workplace prior to admission to membership.

Student's Name: _____ Student's ID
Number _____

Registered Private
Address: _____

Competence Field	
In Depth Competence	
Description:	

<p>Signed: _____ Student</p>	<p>Signed: _____ Supervisor</p> <p>Position: _____</p> <p>Company: _____</p>	<p>Date: / /</p>
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