



Clear Path to Cash Professional



Foundation Design Standards

February 2024

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to specify the structure and format of the Clear Path to Cash Foundation examination. It shows the profile of syllabus topics that is used in each examination paper. This profile is applied to all papers to ensure the assessment is consistent across all papers.

The Examination Design also provides information on the examination timings and the requirements for test administration.

It will be used:

- To communicate the qualification's examination design with the training community
- As an input to the configuration of the APMG examination system for this qualification
- As an input to the development of questions and examination papers.

The OTE Foundation Design is under formal change control and any changes required should be raised with the Design Architect.

For explanation of OTE examination terms see the *OTE Glossary*.

2 Foundation Examination Structure

2.1 Examination Structure

The Clear Path to Cash examination is an open-book examination and is intended to address the knowledge and skills that demonstrate proficiency in the Clear Path to Cash and Pathfinder course materials.

The knowledge and skills required at Foundation level are identified in the Clear Path to Cash syllabus.

The Foundation design is based on testing the breadth of the syllabus using random generation of papers. There is no hidden importance to the topics. All topics are of equal importance, with an equal chance of appearing in the examination. A candidate is expected to meet the requirements of all the syllabus topics, although each examination will not necessarily examine all syllabus topics.

Each examination consists of 25 questions covering all syllabus areas. The number of questions per syllabus area in each examination is in proportion to the number of topics within that syllabus area.

In any one paper, the default design is no more than 1 question for each syllabus topic.

The basis on which the number of questions is selected for each syllabus area is given in Appendix A. Out of the total number of questions in the examination, 3 (12%) will test Learning level 1, 17 (68%) will test Learning level 2 and 5 (20%) will test Learning Level 3. All syllabus topics are tested in every paper.

Questions appear in any order on the examination paper, they are not grouped according to syllabus area.

2.2 Timings

The Foundation examination will be 90 minutes duration.

2.3 Pass Mark

The pass mark is 80% or more of the marks, i.e. 20 or more marks out of 25.

3 Examination Content

3.1 Test Types Used

Only one test type is used – the Classic test type which presents four options from which one option is selected. Distracters or wrong answers are options that candidates with incomplete knowledge or skill would be likely to choose. These should be generally plausible responses relating to the syllabus area being examined.

3.2 Question Styles

Several question styles will be adopted, as per the following table:

Question Style	Format	Constraints
Standard	The most commonly used style. A standard question usually beginning with “What,” “Who”, “In which process”, “Why”, “How often” or “When”. E.g.: When is the..? Which is a characteristic of...? How often does..? What role	Four options are presented. The answers can be presented in any order. Note: an alphabetic order is not maintained when translated and a logical order may give clues to the answer.
Negative	This uses a negative word in the question stem which is in bold and capitals to emphasize the meaning and make it less likely the candidate will overlook these words e.g.: Which statement is NOT a..? Which statement is FALSE ?	Do not use more than 10% in any one paper.

Table A: Question Styles to be used in the Foundation Examination

Examples of these styles and the information held about them within the database are at Appendix C.

3.3 Formats and International Considerations

The following formats are supported by the database and are to be used in Word templates.

- Arial 10pt for all text.
- Two character spaces between number for question stem and text of question stem.
- One character space between sentences.
- Options to align with beginning of the question stem
- Italics for certain qualification specific terms
- One line space between question stem and options
- 3pt spacing before and after each option

- No full stops to be used for the options
- Certain words may be presented in capitals and/or bold.

The APMG OTE Style Guide details specific guidance on use of italics and bold.

3.4 *Difficulty Assessment Model*

All questions are initially assigned a difficulty category of Medium. Papers are balanced by ensuring that papers are generated on the basis of a certain number of questions per syllabus area, learning level and question style. Question performance in live use is monitored and a question's difficulty category may then be revised in light of performance statistics.

3.5 *Profile of Content*

All examination papers are assembled or generated to a standard profile of content. This is detailed at Appendix A.

Each examination paper contains the same number of questions for each syllabus area by learning level and also contains the same profile of question styles.

The learning outcomes for each syllabus area are therefore given the same weighting across all examination papers, helping to ensure comparability of examination scores and fairness of the examination.

4 Scoring System

4.1 *Scoring Model*

All questions gain one mark for a correct answer. There is no negative marking.

4.2 *Scoring Correction Procedure*

Questions are pre-tested through rigorous quality reviews. Where exceptionally there is a need for a score correction, the question(s) involved will be removed from the paper and the total marks and required pass mark adjusted accordingly.

APPENDIX A: ANALYSIS OF SYLLABUS TOPIC AND QUESTION STYLES

Analysis of Syllabus Topics

Ref	Syllabus Area	No of Foundation Syllabus Topics				No of questions in a paper			
Learning Level		1	2	3	Total	No LL1 per paper	No LL2 per paper	No LL3 per paper	No per paper
HR	The Home Run Financial System	1	3	2	6	1	3	2	6
FM	Hidden Cash and the Fast Money Formula	0	3	3	6	0	3	3	6
FF	Forecasting the Future	2	6	0	8	2	6	0	8
PS	Pathfinder Steps	0	5	0	5	0	5	0	5
	Total Number of topics	3	17	5	25	3	17	5	25

Profile of Question Styles

All numbers are the **actual standard number** for inclusion in every paper and not a permissible maximum.

Question Style	Number of each style
Standard	24
Negative	1
Missing Word	0
Select - List	0
Select - Evaluate	0
Total	25

APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE FOUNDATION QUESTION STYLES

Standard:

Question: When Mining Your Business For Hidden Cash, which action is a cash-generating activity?

Option A: Collecting customer payments faster

Option B: Paying supplier invoices less promptly

Option C: Reducing the level of inventory held

Option D: Removing high sales price reductions

Negative:

Question: Which area is **NOT** in the Home Run Financial System?

Option A: Expense Control

Option B: EBITDA

Option C: Inventory Management

Option D: Debt To Equity Ratio