BCS International Diploma in Consultancy Syllabus & Guidelines

Version 1.2
December 2016

This qualification is not regulated by the following United Kingdom Regulators - Ofqual, Qualification in Wales, CCEA or SQA

Contents

Change History

Any changes made to the syllabus shall be clearly documented with a change history log. This shall include the latest version number, date of the amendment and changes made. The purpose is to identify quickly what changes have been made.

Version Number	Changes Made
V1.2 December 2016	Strapline regarding regulated statement has been added
V1.1 March 2015	Updated with the standard template – no changes to the detail contained within the syllabus
V1.0 November 2013	Syllabus created

Introduction

The International Diploma in Consultancy is for those who have technical or business expertise and offer consultancy services that include providing expert advice and guidance to customers. The customers may be internal customers who are from the same organisation as the consultant or may be external customers who are subject to a commercial arrangement. The Diploma brings together the important skills and techniques that a professional consultant will need in order to offer consultancy services.

The structure of the Diploma is shown below:

Core module	Knowledge-based specialism 1 to be selected	Practitioner specialism 1 to be selected
BCS Practitioner in Consultancy	A BCS Foundation Certificate: for example, Foundation in Service Management	A BCS Practitioner Certificate, for example, Business Analysis Practice
	Microsoft Certified Professional (MTA level)	Microsoft Certified Professional (MCSA level)
	Oracle Certification - Associate level	Oracle Certification - specialist level
	Other Certifications at Foundation level	Other Practitioner Certifications, for example, APM Practitioner

Each candidate will need to demonstrate the following:

- Consultancy expertise through passing the two-hour written Consultancy Practice examination.
- Specialist expertise through holding certifications relevant to a recognised professional discipline.
- Personal skills through passing an oral examination in consultancy which will last up to forty-five minutes. It is recommended that a candidate sits the oral examination within a year of completing their set of written examinations.

Candidates must have passed the written examination in Consultancy Practice and the appropriate optional certificates in order to attend the oral examination. Candidates who hold the superseded IS Consultancy Practice (Oral) certification will be able to follow an alternative route subject to discussion with BCS.

Aim of the Oral Examination

The purpose of the oral examination assessment is to ensure that Diploma holders are competent in the range of skills required to deliver effective consultancy. These skills are defined in the syllabus shown below.

Candidates must demonstrate sufficient understanding of both the syllabus topics and the practical issues that arise during consultancy assignments. They should be able to apply their knowledge and experience to a range of scenarios presented to them during the oral examination.

Format of the Oral Examination

Candidates will be required to deliver a presentation of no longer than 10 minutes duration. The candidate can **either** choose to present on a work related assignment, giving consideration to how consultancy skills were or could be employed in conducting the assignment **or** they can present on a specific topic of relevance to the world of consultancy.

Candidates are expected to be familiar with the oral syllabus content and may be questioned on any of the topics included in the syllabus; the focus will be on the practical application of topics. In addition to the topics discussed during the oral examination, candidates are expected to demonstrate, and will be assessed on, consultancy skills such as building rapport, logical reasoning, listening, problem solving, handling challenging questions and accepting criticism.

Structure of the Oral Examination

Introductions	5 minutes
Presentation by the candidate	10 minutes
Q&A on the presentation	10 minutes
Scenario and responses	20 minutes

Introductions

It is usual for the first few minutes to be spent on welcoming the candidate and discussing his/her immediate work experiences. The candidate will also be reminded of the programme proposed for the oral examination and in particular the ground rules for the delivery of their prepared presentation. Every effort will be made to put him/her at ease.

A few minutes may also be spent discussing the circumstances which have led to the candidate's presence at the oral examination, e.g. the course taken, written examination, use of course material in post-course circumstances. The aim of this part of the examination

is to put the candidate at their ease and to prepare the ground for the main body of questions which is to follow.

Presentation by Candidate

The candidate will deliver a prepared presentation on either a work project / assignment they are / were involved in or a topic selected from a list of five which they will have received with their invitation to the oral examination.

The aim of the presentation is to give the candidate an opportunity to demonstrate his or her skill in presenting as this is considered to be a key attribute for anyone involved in consulting work. Candidates will be assessed on their ability to communicate on their feet in a succinct and focused manner. The candidate's presentation will be assessed on its structure, clarity, fluency and credibility.

The presentation must be no longer than 10 minutes duration, and may be as short as the candidate deems sufficient. A visible 10-minute timer will be used to enable candidates to pace their presentation and a 'one-minute-to-go' bleep will warn candidates that they need to bring their presentation to a close. If the candidate has not completed their presentation when the 10 minutes is up they will be asked to stop.

Q&A on the Presentation

The candidate will be asked questions for 10 minutes about their presentation by the examiners. The questions will relate to the subject matter of the presentation and will aim to elicit further analysis of the topic, alternative solutions or further recommendations. The candidate should expect to be challenged on some aspects of their presentation. The questions will also aim to relate the content of the presentation to aspects of the oral examination syllabus.

Scenarios

The remaining 20 minutes of the oral will consist of questions based on a series of scenarios which the examiners will present to the candidate. The candidate will then discuss the issues raised by the scenarios, either by suggesting an approach to the situation concerned or by reflecting on the potential problems that could be anticipated depending on the nature of the scenario. The examiners will then ask follow up questions as needed to ensure that the points made by the candidate are clearly understood. It is usual for the examiners to share the questioning, but this is not necessarily in two halves. Although based on the specific scenarios, the questions will all relate to aspects of the oral syllabus.

Syllabus

1. Principles of Consultancy

1.1 The context for consultancy
1.2 Types of customer
1.3 Types of consultancy assignments
1.4 The role and competencies of a consultant
1.5 Consulting models
1.6 The management of change

2. Conducting a Consultancy Assignment

2.1 The life cycle of a consultancy assignment
2.2 The consulting services portfolio
2.3 Data collection and investigation
2.4 Qualification of opportunities
2.5 Terms of reference for a consultancy assignment
2.6 Assignment termination

3. Managing Relationships

3.1 Stakeholder relationship management
3.2 Building rapport and maintaining client relationships
3.3 Handling negotiations and conflicts
3.4 Managing expectations
3.5 Selling consultancy services
3.6 Handling intellectual property rights

4. Assignment Management

4.1 Scoping a consultancy assignment
4.2 Progress monitoring and control
4.3 Quality Management Systems
4.4 Change control
4.5 The economics of consulting
4.6 Benefits management

5. Knowledge and Practitioner Based Specialisms

5.1 Relevance of the specialist modules to consultancy
5.2 Professionalism and ethics in consultancy
5.3 The candidate's specialist discipline: scope, services and issues

6. Consultancy Behaviours

6.1 Accepting criticism
6.2 Responding to challenging questions
6.3 Logical reasoning
6.4 Communication
6.5 Demonstrating professionalism