SKILLS REQUIREMENTS FOR PATHWAYS ENTRY INTO CA ZAMBIA

Contents

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to specify the non-technical skills to be assessed (from the CA Zambia framework) and amended, as appropriate for a range of practical experiences, to allow for experience individuals to achieve CA Zambia designation.

Skills framework

Introduction

This document provides a summary of ZiCA's intentions with respect to assessing the skills for those individuals who wish to become CA Zambia members through the Pathways or experience route.

All professional qualifications require a skills framework – configured to their specific requirements - in order to determine the competencies that professionals must meet in order to become recognised members of the professional body.

It is important to appreciate that the skills requirements specified under the CA Zambia syllabus meet with the Initial Professional Development (IPD) requirements to become a CA. *They are not* intended to specify a set of requirements for individuals that have significant work experience and for whom the Pathways qualification is intended.

There is therefore an element of adaption required to ensure that those individuals who are applying for Pathways memberships can be appropriately benchmarked against an appropriate set of skills whilst ensuring that the IPD skills requirements are reflected

The skills requirements for CA Zambia are designed to meet

- Practical experience IFAC requirements
- Technical and non-technical competencies

The competency requirements developed by ZiCA for the CA Zambia have been referenced to the needs of Zambia to ensure that the CA Zambia meets with the highest standards to enable ZiCA to benchmark to international best practice, as adopted by the leading PAOs of the world.

Non-technical competencies for CA Zambia

The non-technical competencies requirements specified in the CA Zambia syllabus are:

1. Teamwork and leadership
2. Organisational skills
3. Analytical, research and evaluation
4. Intellectual skills
5. Exercising ethical and professional behaviour
6. Communication and interpersonal skills

The non-technical competencies specified in the CA Zambia syllabus are detailed in Appendix 1.

Skills required for Pathways applications

Introduction

The skills requirements for Pathways membership should recognised:

- The skills developed under the CA Zambia qualification to which a Pathways variant must pay attention to and, where relevant, recognise as being appropriate for Pathways membership, and
- Additional skills, based on experience, the Pathways candidates would reasonably expect to be considered as relevant criteria for Pathways membership of ZICA.

The following skills matrix recognises all the headings for skills expression that are identified for CA Zambia members qualified under the examination route.

Additionally, Pathways members would have had significant experience gained in their workplace, at senior levels, that would not ordinarily feature as part of the work experience gained for candidates under the examination route, largely because they would not have held the seniority that would be associated with a range of experiences.

The Pathways Skills Matrix (PSM) is shown on the following page.

Pathways skills matrix

Assessed skills	Challenges and issues	Actions to resolve	Resolution
Understanding the problem (UP)			
Understanding the subject matter and identifying issues	Candidates comprehend the challenge or issue from a scenario	Candidates determine problems and corresponding actions that address the challenges and issues	Candidates resolve the challenges or issues from the actions chosen and make recommendations and assess outcomes.
	Performance criteria: **UP1**	Performance criteria: **UP2**	Performance criteria: **UP3**
Accessing, evaluating and managing information	Candidates identify, categorise and summarise data or information to address challenges and issues	Candidates summarise and categorise information to address problems and are able to identify information gaps.	Candidates resolve the challenges or issues from the actions chosen, make recommendations and assess outcomes.
	Performance criteria: **UP4**	Performance criteria: **UP5**	Performance criteria: **UP6**
Providing a solution (PS)			
Using analytical tools	Candidates comprehend challenges and issues in using and selecting analytical approaches	Candidates determine the appropriate tools to employ and the corresponding actions that address the challenges and issues	Candidates resolve the challenges or issues from the actions chosen and make recommendations and assess outcomes.
	Performance criteria: **PS1**	Performance criteria: **PS2**	Performance criteria: **PS3**
Analysing and evaluating problems	The outcomes and limitations of analysis from employing specified tools are understood in a broader context, including ethical dimensions.	Candidates determine problems and corresponding actions that address the challenges and issues in analysing and evaluating problems	Candidates resolve the challenges or issues from the actions chosen and make recommendations and assess outcomes.
	Performance criteria: **PS4**	Performance criteria: **PS5**	Performance criteria: **PS6**

Assessed skills	Challenges and issues	Actions to resolve	Resolution
Implementation (Im)			
Teamwork and leadership	Candidates understand when teamwork is required and leadership needed for the challenges and issues of implementing a plan, including ethical and professional matters Performance criteria: **Im1**	Candidates determine the teamwork and leadership actions to resolve the challenges and issues faced in implementing a plan, including ethical and professional matters Performance criteria: **Im2**	Candidates resolve the challenges or issues from the actions chosen to implement a plan and assess outcomes, including ethical and professional matters Performance criteria: **Im3**
Organising	Candidates understand the resourcing requirements needed to respond to the challenges and issues of implementing a plan, including issues where interpersonal and communication skills are needed Performance criteria: **Im4**	Candidates prepare a resourcing plan of action to resolve the challenges and issues faced in implementing a plan, including issues where interpersonal and communication skills are needed Performance criteria: **Im5**	Candidates resolve the challenges or issues from the actions chosen to implement a plan and assess outcomes, including issues where interpersonal and communication skills are needed Performance criteria: **Im6**

Pathways skills matrix rationale

The key expression of the PSM is that it identifies:

1. Key competencies, that are applied to
2. Key processes

Key competencies

The key **competencies** are specified as follows:

1. **Understanding the problem (UP)**
2. **Providing a solution (PS)**
3. **Implementation (Im)**

The competencies are problem- or task-based and represent the core activities that professional accountants would undertake in practice.

Understanding the problem

The identification and framing of a problem to be addressed is the initial step that a professional must take. It could represent a:

- Client requirement
- Work-based task, or
- Project

The essential characteristic is that it is necessary to understand the problem, which is a competency in itself, but steps are taken to address it.

Providing a solution

Following the identification and framing of the problem to be addressed, the professional will then take steps to address the task identified. This may involve a range of methods dependent on the task requirement.

Implementation

A key difference to members qualified under the examination route is that Pathways applicants will have significant experience, very likely at a senior level. Pathways applicants must have this experience recognised and considered as part of their membership application since it is implementation experience that differs significantly from the examination route and in which they have most to offer. In this section, also, we would expect applicants to demonstrate their ethical values and communication and interpersonal skills.

Key processes

The key **processes** represent the actions taken to undertake a task successfully and they are:

i. **Challenges and issues**
ii. **Actions to resolve**
iii. **Resolution**

Challenges and issues

The understanding and identification of the challenges and issues of a task represent the landscape within which the task is understood both in terms of what can be achieved but also in terms of the risk of the task. It is a first key step in what Pathways applicants might consider in addressed a work-based requirement, task or project.

Actions to resolve

Once the task landscape is understood, the necessary actions can be planned to address the requirements. This will vary, as will all the processes, according to how difficult the landscape is. Specifically, this might refer to technical difficulty, difficulties with respect to resources, or other difficulties that commonly feature in undertaking tasks.

Resolution

The key outcome for a practitioner is to reach a conclusion to a task by resolving the requirements. Normally, this will be done by achieving the task objectives, but it may also feature plans for further work.

A mapping of the key competencies to the skill areas under the CA Zambia

The additional skills requirements for Pathways applicants are recognised and assessed in two ways:

- The recognition of the seniority of an applicant's experience through the specification of appropriate activities identified in the **processes** (challenges and issues, actions to resolve, and resolution) categories above**,** and
- The emphasis on implementation activities that do not ordinarily feature as part of the work experience of examination route candidates.

These are essential differences that are incorporated in the examination and assessments plans for the Pathways scheme.

In terms of the skills already identified under the examination route, the following competencies are specifically also addressed under the Pathways route.

Competencies assessed under the two admission routes	
Pathways route	**Examination route**
1. **Understanding the problem (UP)**	Analytical, research and evaluation Intellectual skills
2. **Providing a solution (PS)**	Analytical, research and evaluation Intellectual skills
3. **Implementation (Im)**	*Not directly assessed under the examinations route* Exercising ethical and professional behaviour Communication and interpersonal skills Teamwork and leadership Organisational skills

The role of performance criteria

Performance criteria

Competencies are assessed against detailed performance criteria. The assessment rewards competencies demonstrated by allowing candidates to express their level of involvement over a range of difficulty of tasks. This allows assessors to identify *what experience is gained in terms of key activities to support tasks* and the level of task difficulty which will indicate *the depth of experience and achievement.*

The detailed specification of assessment of Pathways applications is addressed in a companion document *4b Mark scheme and performance criteria.*

A mapping of the key competencies to the skill areas under the CA Zambia

The additional skills requirements for Pathways applicants are recognised and assessed in two ways:

- The recognition of the seniority of an applicant's experience through the specification of appropriate activities identified in the **processes** (challenges and issues, actions to resolve, and resolution) categories above, and
- The emphasis on implementation activities that do not ordinarily feature as part of the work experience of examination route candidates.

These are essential differences that are incorporated in the examination and assessments plans for the Pathways scheme.

In terms of the skills already identified under the examination route, the following competencies are specifically also addressed under the Pathways route.

How the pathways skills matrix works

There are three areas of **competency** to be assessed under the Pathways scheme:

1. **Understanding the problem (UP)**
2. **Providing a solution (PS)**
3. **Implementation (Im)**

Each **competency** is subdivided into two identifiable **competency areas** where assessments are made:

1. **Understanding the problem (UP)**
    a. **Understanding the subject matter and identifying issues**
    b. **Accessing, evaluating and managing information**
2. **Providing a solution (PS)**
    a. **Using analytical tools**
    b. **Analysing and evaluating problems**
3. **Implementation (Im)**
    a. **Teamwork and leadership, including ethics and professionalism**
    b. **Organising, including communication and interpersonal skills**

Each **competency area** is then assessed over 3 **processes** that describe what tasks are typically undertaken:

1. **Understanding the problem (UP)**
    a. **Understanding the subject matter and identifying issues**
        i. **Challenges and issues**
        ii. **Actions to resolve**
        iii. **Resolution**
    b. **Accessing, evaluating and managing information**
        i. **Challenges and issues**
        ii. **Actions to resolve**
        iii. **Resolution**
2. **Providing a solution (PS)**
    a. **Using analytical tools**
        i. **Challenges and issues**
        ii. **Actions to resolve**
        iii. **Resolution**
    b. **Analysing and evaluating problems**
        i. **Challenges and issues**
        ii. **Actions to resolve**
        iii. **Resolution**
3. **Implementation (Im)**
    a. **Teamwork and leadership, including ethics and professionalism**
        i. **Challenges and issues**
        ii. **Actions to resolve**
        iii. **Resolution**
    b. **Organising, including communication and interpersonal skills**
        i. **Challenges and issues**
        ii. **Actions to resolve**
        iii. **Resolution**

The processes described the key stages that identify how a task is resolved from problem identification, to actions to resolve, to resolution where an assessment is made of the outcome.

Understanding the problem and providing a solution are what we would expect of candidates for the CA Zambia as part of their Initial Professional Development (IPD) but this is extended for Pathways purposes by allowing candidates to detail their experience in implementation.

Appendix 1 CA Zambia non-technical skills

TEAMWORK AND LEADERSHIP
Trainees are required to perform the prescribed tasks to level 2 proficiency, i.e. they should be capable of performing tasks that are characterized by moderate levels of ambiguity, complexity, and uncertainty.

Competencies		Tasks	
TL 1	Work with others and in teams	TL 1.1	Collaborates with colleagues and/or clients from diverse backgrounds and works effectively as a team member
		TL 1.2	Effectively participates in meetings
TL 2	Demonstrate leadership	TL 2.1	Manages and supervises others effectively
		TL 2.2	Leads effective meetings
		TL 2.3	Resolves conflict or differences and negotiates appropriate solutions

ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS
Trainees are required to perform the prescribed tasks to level 2 proficiency, i.e. they should be capable of performing tasks that are characterized by moderate levels of ambiguity, complexity, and uncertainty.

Competencies		Tasks	
TL 1	Plan, organise and monitor activities	TL 1.1	Plans and manages projects
		TL 1.2	Respects deadlines, manages time and organises tasks logically
		TL 1.3	Monitors activities
TL 2	Delegate tasks	TL 2.1	Delegates tasks effectively
TL 3	Use information technology effectively	TL 3.1	Uses IT applications, including spreadsheets, word processing, presentations and e-mail, effectively
		TL 3.2	Effectively uses the internet as a source of information
		TL 3.3	Applies procedures and controls to ensure integrity and security of personal IT resources, for example password protection, backup procedures, distribution of confidential information,

ANALYTICAL, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Trainees are required to perform the prescribed tasks to level 2 proficiency, i.e. they should be capable of performing tasks that are characterized by moderate levels of ambiguity, complexity, and uncertainty.

Competencies		Tasks	
ARE 1	Research, analyse and evaluate information	ARE 1.1	Identifies problems or situations
		ARE 1.2	Obtains required information by asking appropriate and probing questions
		ARE 1.3	Apply mathematical ideas and techniques to assess problems
		ARE 1.4	Recommends appropriate solutions
ARE 2	Maintain a current awareness of the legal, regulatory and economic environment of business.	ARE 2.1	Identifies and evaluates critical factors in the economic, social, legislative, regulatory and political environment that impact on business and the financial decisions of an entity

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

Trainees are required to perform the prescribed tasks to level 2 proficiency, i.e. they should be capable of performing tasks that are characterized by moderate levels of ambiguity, complexity, and uncertainty.

Competencies		Tasks	
IS 1	Solve problems, propose solutions and make decisions	IS 1.1	Obtains, locates, organises and understands information
		IS 1.2	Critically analyses information
		IS 1.3	Identifies and recommends solution to unstructured problems
		IS 1.4	Makes decisions
IS 2	Exercise appropriate professional judgement.	IS 2.1	Exercises good judgement in complex organisational situations

ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR
Trainees are required to perform the prescribed tasks to level 2 proficiency, i.e. they should be capable of performing tasks that are characterized by moderate levels of ambiguity, complexity, and uncertainty.

Competencies		Tasks	
EPB 1	Consistently demonstrate personal integrity, professional values, and ethical conduct	EPB 1.1	Displays honesty and integrity in all business and professional relationships
		EPB 1.2	Exercises due care in carrying out the work
		EPB 1.3	Avoids conflict of interest and maintains objectivity and independence so as not to override professional or business judgement
		EPB 1.4	Protects the confidentiality of information
		EPB 1.5	Enhances profession's reputation
EPB 2	Adhere to the fundamental principles of the Code of Ethics	EPB 2.1	Adheres to the rules of professional conduct, including the ZICA code of professional Conduct
		EPB 2.2	Responds to potential ethical dilemmas

COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS
Trainees are required to perform the prescribed tasks to level 2 proficiency, i.e. they should be capable of performing tasks that are characterized by moderate levels of ambiguity, complexity, and uncertainty.

Competencies		Tasks	
CIS 1	Communicate ideas and information effectively and efficiently, verbally and in writing	CIS 1.1	Communicates effectively verbally in the correct tone and manner
		CIS 1.2	Communicates effectively in written format
CIS 2	Demonstrate effective negotiation skills	CIS 2.1	Discusses and reaches agreements in a professional manner
CIS 3	Identify and meet the needs of internal and external clients or stakeholders.	CIS 3.1	Listens attentively and processes information correctly
		CIS 3.2	Interacts well with both internal and external clients