BCS LEVEL 5 DIPLOMA IN IT

PROFESSIONAL ISSUES IN INFORMATION SYSTEMS PRACTICE

SYLLABUS

bcs

The Chartered Institute for IT

CONTENTS

Introduction

The second stage within the BCS three-stage Higher Education Qualification programme, the Level 5 Diploma enables candidates who have already achieved the Level 4 Certificate in IT to progress to higher levels of knowledge and competency.

This internationally-recognised qualification introduces you to the business-related aspects of the IT industry, developing your technological expertise while also considering the potential challenges of the day-to-day running of an organisation, such as legal obligations and intellectual property.

Our modules have been created in-line with the latest developments in the industry, giving you a competitive edge in the IT job market. You will have the opportunity to learn about object-oriented programming, user experience, systems analysis and design, as well as to build upon knowledge and skills developed during the Level 4 Certificate.

To successfully achieve the qualification, candidates need to complete:

*   One core module
*   Three optional modules
*   One Professional Project in IT

Candidates who wish to progress onto the next stage will need to complete the Project at end of the Level 6 Professional Graduate Diploma in IT.

Professional Issues in Information Systems Practice Core Module

The PRISS module is a core module that forms part of the Level 5 Diploma in IT – the second stage within the BCS three-stage Higher Education Qualification programme.

This module is intended to broaden candidates' thinking and to encourage them to consider wider aspects of business, as well as technical knowledge, skills and experience. Its aim is to create well-rounded individuals who can make a strong contribution to the workplace and show sensitivity to business needs, as it is vital in the modern workplace for candidates to understand more than the software alone.

Qualification Suitability and Overview

Candidates must have achieved the Certificate in IT or have an appropriate exemption to be entered for the Diploma in IT. Candidates can study for this diploma by attending a training course provided by a BCS accredited Training Provider or through self-study, although it is strongly recommended that all candidates register with an approved centre. Studying with an approved centre will deliver significant benefits.

Candidates are required to become a member of BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, to sit and be awarded the qualifications. Candidates may apply for a four-year student membership that will support them throughout their studies.

The Level 5 Diploma is suitable for professionals wishing to gain a formal IT qualification, and this module may be particularly relevant for candidates who are planning to set up a small business or work as part of a company.

Total Qualification Time (Certificate)	Guided Learning Hours (Module)	Assessment Time (Exam)
1086 hours	225 hours	Two hours

SFIA Levels

This award provides candidates with the level of knowledge highlighted within the table, enabling candidates to develop the skills to operate successfully at the levels of responsibility indicated.

Level	Levels of Knowledge	Levels of Skill and Responsibility (SFIA)
K7		Set strategy, inspire and mobilise
K6	Evaluate	Initiate and influence
K5	Synthesise	Ensure and advise
K4	Analyse	Enable
K3	Apply	Apply
K2	Understand	Assist
K1	Remember	Follow

SFIA Plus

This syllabus has been linked to all SFIA knowledge skills and behaviours required at Level 5

Further detail around the SFIA Levels can be found at www.bcs.org/levels.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this module, candidates will be able to:

• demonstrate an understanding of the role of professional codes of conduct and apply them to specific situations.
• understand the nature and legal standing of a range of organisations.
• describe and discuss the range of functions that exist in an organisation, the need for organisational structure and the characteristics of various types of structure.
• interpret, at a basic level, a balance sheet, a profit and loss account, and a cash flow statement.
• calculate and interpret, in simple cases, the basic information needed for day-to-day financial management.
• identify the main pieces of legislation that apply to the profession and recognise situations to which they are relevant.
• explain the mechanisms used to protect computer software and the reasons for such protection.

Syllabus

1. Professional Institutions and Professional Codes of Conduct

Learners will be able to:

1.1 Explain the role of professional institutions.

Indicative content

a. The role of professional institutions and their characteristics, e.g. established by Royal Charter, self-governing, controlling entry to the profession and maintaining discipline
b. Reservation of title and reservation of function
c. Best-known professional institutions, e.g. those governing engineering

Guidance

Candidates should be able to appreciate the general idea of what a profession is and look at some examples of professions for engineering, law and medicine. Candidates are expected to discuss the activities and benefits that a professional body can provide to the computing industry.

1.2 Describe BCS, its structure and its status.

Indicative content

a. Charter and membership structure
b. Chartered status and CITP
c. Branches and specialist groups

Guidance

Candidates should be able to understand the general structure and aims of BCS, the Chartered Institute for IT. Candidates are expected to discuss the activities that BCS provides as part of being a professional body and the support it provides to its members.

1.3 Discuss the use of professional codes of conduct.

Indicative content

a. Professional Codes of Conduct, their strengths and weaknesses
b. The BCS Code of Conduct and its application in practice
c. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Guidance

Candidates should have an understanding of what a Code of Conduct is, with particular consideration of the BCS Code of Conduct. There should be an understanding of the different sections and an ability to consider how these can apply to professionals. They should also be aware of the Public Interest Disclosure Act regarding whistleblowing and how that can be relevant regarding some aspects of a Code of Conduct.

2. Organisations and their structure

Learners will be able to:

2.1 Discuss company structures and the role of directors.

Indicative content

a. Roles of directors and members
b. The advantages of limited company status for commercial organisations
c. Other legal forms of organisation, including partnerships
d. Takeovers, mergers, management buyouts and outsourcing

Guidance

This is about exploring the issues of how organisations are formed and general legal issues about their structure. Knowledge of issues about company formation, e.g. private limited company and the articles of association, are useful. Candidates should have an understanding of directors, and their duties for private limited companies. While private limited companies are a common type of company in the UK, candidates should also be aware of other types such as sole traders and partnerships.

2.2 Describe concepts for management structures, delegation and specialisation.

Indicative content

a. Management structures: structure by function, by product, by market sector, and by region
b. Levels of management (senior, middle, junior, etc.)
c. The concept of delegation and specialisation

Guidance

Candidates should demonstrate an understanding of different ways of structuring an organisation to ease management.

3. Finance

Learners will be able to:

3.1 Describe financial statements used by companies.

Indicative content

a. The requirements for financial disclosure imposed by statute and by stock exchanges
b. Capital items and depreciation
c. Balance sheets, profit and loss accounts, and cash flow statements

Guidance

Candidates should show an understanding of common terms in finance and how they relate to each other. Candidates should be able to prepare example statements, including balance sheets, profit and loss, and to demonstrate the ability to apply different mechanisms for depreciation, including straight-line depreciation and a reducing balance method.

4. Management accounting

Learners will be able to:

4.1 Explain costing methods.

Indicative content

a. Direct and indirect costs
b. Fixed and variable costs
c. Overheads, corporate and divisional
d. Treatment of overheads in costing
e. Costing of labour
f. Costing (as opposed to estimating) of IT projects
g. The effect of cost and other factors on the pricing of software

Guidance

Candidates should demonstrate an understanding of definitions of these terms and how they relate to preparing a budget. Candidates should be able to discuss how these costs are used to determine the possible sale price of computing solutions, such as software, hardware, consultancy or as a combination of these.

4.2 Explain what a cash flow is and how to use it in accounting practices.

Indicative content

a. Cash flow forecasts
b. The need for working capital
c. Discounted cash flow analysis and its use in the assessment of capital projects
d. Simple budgeting

Guidance

Candidates should be aware of discounted cash flows as a way to assess investment proposals. Candidates should be prepared to describe the term as well as discuss an example scenario.

5. Legal obligations

Learners will be able to:

5.1 Discuss legislation about data protection, computer access and equality.

Indicative content

a. The Data Protection Act 2018, including GDPR 2016
b. The Computer Misuse Act 1990 and subsequent changes
c. The Equality Act 2010 as it applies to information systems

Guidance

This section is about understanding the laws that cover the protection of personal information, dealing with unauthorised access to computer systems and handling discrimination. Candidates should be able to discuss the main points of the legislation and what the law means for businesses in different scenarios.

5.2 Discuss wider set of UK legislation and the obligations of companies.

Indicative content

a. Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and the related Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992
b. Consumer Rights Act 2015 and subsequent changes
c. Consumer Contracts Regulations 2013 and subsequent changes
d. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
e. Freedom of Information Act 2000
f. Digital Economy Act 2017

Guidance

This section is about a wider set of UK legislation that covers Information Systems in some way, including legislation that businesses need to understand in relation to employees, legislation relating to activities such as e-commerce, and regulations that public bodies or communications providers need to comply with. Candidates should be aware of the general principles of each piece of legislation and how they apply to Information Systems in given situations. For example, what aspects of the Consumer Rights Act must companies comply with if they are selling products through their website?

6. Intellectual property

Learners will be able to:

6.1 Discuss the meaning of intellectual property for computer systems and the legal protections available.

Indicative content

a. Concept of intellectual property
b. Software, documentation and designs as intellectual property
c. Mechanisms available to protect intellectual property
d. Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and Trademarks Act 1994
e. EC directive on the Legal Protection of Computer Programs, 2009/24/EC
f. Digital Economy Act 2017

Guidance

Candidates should be able to explain what intellectual property is and how it can be used to protect aspects of work in computing, such as copyright protection of software. Candidates should be able to discuss the protections avaiable for computer systems and any limitations regarding what can be protected.

7. Online working

Learners will be able to:

7.1 Explain the application of law when using the internet.

Indicative content

a. Privacy
b. Defamation

Guidance

Candidates should be able to consider obligations on companies regarding privacy and defamation.

7.2 Discuss legislation for use of the internet.

Indicative content

a. Consumer Rights Act 2015
b. Consumer Contracts Regulations 2013
c. Electronic Commerce (EC Directive) Regulations 2002
d. Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive Regulations 2003)
e. Communications Act 2003

Guidance

Candidates should be able discuss how consumer rights affect what companies do regarding e-commerce, including regulations regarding marketing emails and cookies. Candidates should also be able to discuss the regulations that apply to Internet Service Providers.

7.3 Describe cross-border jurisdiction on the internet.

Indicative content

a. Cross-border jurisdiction and law enforcement
b. Spam
c. Malware
d. Obscene material

Guidance

Candidates should be familiar with the issue of legal jurisdiction across national legal boundaries, with relation to computing and information systems.

8. Human Resources Management

Learners will be able to:

8.1 Explain the statutory framework of employment.

Indicative content

a. Statuatory framework of employment
b. Contracts of employment.
c. Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE).
d. Redundancy, dismissal and grievance procedures

Guidance

Candidates should have an understanding of the issues that organisations need to follow for employment, including contracts and having fair procedures to handle disputes and takeovers.

8.2 Explain the process of professional development.

Indicative content

a. Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) model and SFIAplus
b. Continuing professional development

Guidance

This section aims to cover the framework used by BCS for continuing professional development. Candidates should be able to understand SFIAplus and its relationship with SFIA, as well as general motivations for professional development.

8.3 Describe recruitment processes.

Indicative content

a. Human resources planning
b. Techniques for selection

Guidance

Candidates should be able to show an appreciation of ways in which organisations can recruit people. In the exam, they should be able to discuss this in context and provide examples.

8.4 Explain the equality act.

Indicative content

a. Equality Act 2010 as it applies to employment practices

Guidance

Candidates should be able to show an understanding of the key provisions of the Equality Act, including definitions of discrimination, and why this is relevant for employment practices in companies.

8.5 Discuss the management of staff, their development and assessing performance.

Indicative content

a. Job design: specialisation, rotation, enlargement and enrichment
b. Management by objectives
c. Appraisals
d. Job evaluation and remuneration

Guidance

This section is about working with employees to manage skills and review performance. Candidates should be able to understand why an organsation undertakes these activities. In addition to considering job design, there are implications for IT professionals when they design new IT systems. Candidates should be able to appreciate how introducing IT systems may require job design to be considered for system users.

8.6 Discuss performance management methods and staff reward schemes.

Indicative content

a. Appraisals and Management by Objectives
b. Job evaluation and remuneration

Guidance

Candidates should be able to discuss how an organisation can manage growth and set objectives for its employees. Organisations can also set up procedures to establish remuneration structures. This section also links to the idea of continuing professional development in 9.2.

Examination Format

This module is assessed through completion of an invigilated written exam.

Type	Four written questions from a choice of six, each with equal marks
Duration	Two hours
Supervised	Yes
Open Book	No (no materials can be taken into the examination room)
Passmark	10/25 (40%)
Delivery	Paper format only

Adjustments and/or additional time can be requested in line with the [BCS reasonable adjustments policy](#) for candidates with a disability or other special considerations.

Question Weighting

Candidates will choose four questions from a choice of six. All questions are equally weighted and worth 25 marks.

Recommended Reading

Primary texts

Title:	Professional Issues in Information Technology (Second edition)
Author:	M. F. Bott
Publisher:	BCS
Date:	2014
ISBN:	978-1780171807

Additional texts

Title:	Accounting and Finance for Non- Specialists (11th edition)
Author:	P. Atrill and E. McLaney
Publisher:	Pearson Education
Date:	2018
ISBN:	978-1292244013

Title:	A Manager's Guide to IT Law (Second edition)
Author:	J. Holt and J. Newton
Publisher:	BCS
Date:	2011
ISBN:	978-1906124755

Title:	Data Protection and Compliance in Context
Author:	S. Room
Publisher:	BCS
Date:	2006
ISBN:	978-1902505787

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Document 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
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