



Training Contract Exemption Assessment (TCEA)

Guideline 1 – The Learning Outcomes

August 2025

1. Introduction

As part of the submission, applicants are required to provide evidence of how they demonstrated each of the 51 Professional Values Attitudes and Acumens learning outcomes. In order to provide appropriate evidence is important that applicants have a thorough understanding of these learning outcomes as well as how proficiency will be assessed (refer Guideline 2.)

The purpose of this guideline is to provide additional information about each learning outcome together with examples of how the learning outcomes might look in practice. The intention is to help applicants understand the type of evidence that could be provided.

It is important to note that the intention of this guide is to *explain* the learning outcomes. The examples are **not** written in a format that would constitute acceptable evidence in Template B - Demonstration of the Professional Values, Attitudes and Acumens Learning Outcomes. **Please do not copy from these examples and remember that the evidence needs to be provided in the format required in Template B.**

The examples in this document allow for a wide variety of experience, such as roles in Audit, Advisory, Commerce and Industry or Public Sector.

2. Documenting evidence in Template B

When documenting evidence in Template B, please:

- Address the whole learning outcome. Pay attention when the learning outcome says “including” or “and” as this indicates that more than one component needs to be addressed.
- Pay attention to the verbs used, for example, “Consider”, “Evaluate” and “Apply.” More than one verb may be relevant in each learning outcome, and your evidence should be tailored accordingly.
- Take note of the competency area to which the learning outcome belongs, Ethics, Citizenship, Life-long Learning, Business Acumen, Decision-making Acumen, Relational Acumen or Digital Acumen as this may impact on the emphasis required in the evidence.

Remember to provide evidence of how you demonstrated the learning outcome in the most **complex** contexts(s) relevant to your experience. You are applying for exemption from the SAICA training contract, so you need to show that you are proficient at the level expected of an entry-level professional (CA(SA) / AGA(SA)).

3. The learning outcomes in practice

The tables on the following pages provide information about how each learning outcome could look in practice and some specific examples. These examples are not prescriptive and are simply meant to spark thought about the kind of evidence that could be provided.

When reading this guidance, please remember that *Professional Values and Attitudes* are **behaviours** while *Acumens* are **skills/abilities**. This distinction is important and in Guideline 2 you will notice that these two types of learning outcomes are assessed differently.

3.1 Professional Values and Attitudes

I. ETHICS, VALUES AND ATTITUDES	
I1 Personal ethics: <i>refers to a personal value system applied by an individual to decision-making, conduct and interaction between the self and others.</i>	
(a) Act honestly and demonstrate personal integrity, accountability and trustworthiness INCLUDING while interacting with others	
What could this look like in practice?	Examples
This value and attitude can be demonstrated in any context. It speaks to acting with “integrity” – one of the fundamental principles of ethics in the Code of Professional Conduct. Personal ethics are the core values and beliefs that are embedded for each individual and the foundation of their behaviour. To address this learning outcome applicants could show how they are truthful, accountable for their actions, display a straightforward demeanor, ensure transparency and demonstrate a trustworthy nature. In documenting evidence applicants should take care to address each aspect of the learning outcome describing the relevant interactions with others and reflecting on how they acted honestly, with integrity, accountability and trustworthiness. It is important to remember the reference to “while interacting with others” in the learning outcome – this would need to be clearly reflected as part of the evidence.	• Taking responsibility when a mistake is made. Not laying blame elsewhere and being prepared to deal with the consequences of your actions, no matter how severe they may be. • Being honest when responding to work-related enquiries, e.g., when asked for feedback regarding the status of a task/assignment that is not going as well as expected. • Reporting and recording information of any sort, honestly. • Reporting inappropriate behaviour of colleagues even if it makes you unpopular. • Complying with laws, regulations and policies and standing up for this when induced to act differently. • Communicating openly and honestly when dealing with colleagues, superiors, sub-ordinates, manufacturers, suppliers, customers and clients even in difficult conversations.

I. ETHICS, VALUES AND ATTITUDES

I2 Business ethics: *refers to the ethical principles and values applied by the organisation to decision-making, conduct and the relationship between the organisation, its stakeholders and society (King IV).*

(a) Consider the impact of ethics within a specific business environment (a client or your own business environment) **AND** evaluate how ethics is managed in that context

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
This value requires applicants to notice the business environments where they have gained experience and to consider the ethical principles and values that are being applied by the organisation(s). Knowledge and an understanding of the value creation process, King IV, applicable laws and regulations, codes of conduct and policies and the decision-making structures, and identification of stakeholders will influence the extent to which the impact of ethics can be evaluated. Any business environment will provide the opportunity for applicants to consider the impact of ethics and how it is managed - either the impact of ethics being applied or the lack of ethical structures and practices. This includes different business units, clients, organisations and teams. <u>Considering the <i>impact</i> of ethics:</u> How important is ethics for that specific business? What would the implications of ethical and / or unethical business behaviour be for the entity, its stakeholders and/ or the public? <u>Evaluating how ethics is managed:</u> How is ethics managed / encouraged in relation to the specific business/ environment considered in the first part of the learning outcome? What policies and procedures govern / direct ethical behaviour? Are there reporting and/or whistleblowing mechanisms to deal with unethical behaviour? In providing evidence applicants should reflect on: - the specific business environment they considered, - how they did the evaluation and - what they discovered about the impact of ethics and - how it is managed in that context	- This learning outcome could be demonstrated when dealing with potential clients, suppliers etc. and conducting research to understand their business operations, industry practices and values. This will assist in ensuring that the contracted services and solutions are aligned with ethical standards and requirements. Ethics can be managed through a variety of mechanisms including communication channels, approval processes, being transparent about services, pricing limitations or constraints and adhering to legal and regulatory requirements and maintaining integrity in the business' practices. - Considering the impact of ethics by understanding the vision and mission of the organisation and how the business' ethics impacts stakeholders and society. - Evaluating how ethics is managed through business processes, for example, risks that arise which include an ethical component and how these risks are mitigated, for example, how instructions are issued, approvals are done, the role of internal audit etc. - Engaging with relevant individuals to understand ethical concerns and the structures in place to address and discuss ethical concerns. - Applying/ drafting policies and procedures, codes of conduct, value statements that are applicable to the business and evaluating: - Whether they are ethical. - Whether they are being practiced/enforced/implemented within the environment. - The consistency of intention behind the application of the policies. - Consequence management. - What the resulting impact on the business, stakeholder or society could be. - Noticing something that has a positive or negative impact on the business, stakeholders or society and considering the practices that were in place to manage ethics in that context.

I. ETHICS, VALUES AND ATTITUDES

I2 Business ethics: *refers to the ethical principles and values applied by the organisation to decision-making, conduct and the relationship between the organisation, its stakeholders and society (King IV).*

(b) Demonstrate how you **contributed** to the ethical culture of your business environment

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
An organisational culture reflects “how we do things” in the specific business. It is a set of values, beliefs and standards that have developed over time, usually influenced by senior management as role models, for the way the organisation conducts its business activities. An ethical culture is the organisational culture with specific reference to the ethics of the business activities – what is allowed / accepted / regarded as ethically acceptable and what is not? Applicants will have contributed to the ethical culture of their business environments. Behaviour affects ethical culture. Every action and interaction provides an opportunity to be open, honest and demonstrate professionalism. Applicants should lead by example and contribute to the creation of a strong ethical culture within their business environment. Please note that it is not sufficient to show that the applicant <i>acted</i> ethically. They must be able to show how they <i>influenced</i> or <i>contributed</i> towards how things are done in that business environment.	Applicants could demonstrate this behaviour through: • Holding colleagues accountable. • Providing input into ethical conversations and decisions that drive the right behavior. • Debriefing a team after an ethical issue was discovered at a client. • Providing training or leading discussions on ethics. • Addressing unethical behaviour. This may be through a formal disciplinary process or informally. • Setting an example for staff by demonstrating the appropriate way to behave and noting the impact this has on the future actions of others. • Raising concerns and providing input to change inappropriate policies and practices. • Using the procedures and mechanisms in place to report unethical behaviour. Bringing matters/ethical issues to light even though there may be negative consequences/ personal/ business impact. In each instance the <i>action</i> taken as well as the <i>impact</i> on the culture needs to be documented as part of the evidence.

I. ETHICS, VALUES AND ATTITUDES

I2 Business ethics: *refers to the ethical principles and values applied by the organisation to decision-making, conduct and the relationship between the organisation, its stakeholders and society (King IV).*

(c) In the context of ethical dilemmas that arise relating to organisational ethics and corporate culture or when rendering professional services, use an ethical reasoning process (based on professional values and attitudes and the code of professional conduct) to -

- (i) Identify threats to ethical principles, **AND**
- (ii) Analyse all courses of potentially unethical action as well as the consequences of each, **AND**
- (iii) Choose the appropriate course of action to solve the dilemma, **AND**

Report ethical issues to higher levels of management, SAICA, legal or regulatory authorities, or others **WHEN NECESSARY**

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Applicants are expected to resolve ethical dilemmas in a professional manner by applying the principles set out in the IESBA, IRBA and SAICA Codes of Professional Conduct, as applicable. An ethical dilemma is a complex moral situation in which individuals must choose between conflicting ethical principles or values, often with no clear right or wrong solution. This could for example involve a situation where there is a threat to one of the fundamental principles in the Code of Professional Conduct. When facing a dilemma there is a choice to be made between (at least) two options, where both options have negative consequences. The person experiencing the dilemma is faced with the task of choosing the better of the two options. In documenting evidence, applicants should show how they systematically work through the steps in the learning outcome to resolve the ethical dilemmas encountered: (i) Identify the specific <i>threat</i>. Which ethical principle is at risk in the situation being encountered? (ii) What are the available options / choices of behaviour in that situation and what are the possible consequences / implications to each choice. (iii) Having set out the options, which option was chosen (explaining the thinking behind this decision). Where necessary, consider the need to report the situation to the appropriate higher authority in terms of external regulatory requirements and internal policies.	Examples of ethical dilemmas: • Lost productivity during the day and the choice of either billing time dishonestly or working in the time after hours. • Completing work to the required level of accuracy despite it taking longer than the budget allows for (dilemma is therefore to meet the budget, but with lower quality work or completing high quality work but exceeding the budget). • Knowing of a colleague who did not comply with firm policies or the code of conduct and deciding whether to raise this and or report the behaviour. • Knowing of a situation where a client did not comply with a law/ regulation or conducted business in an unethical manner and deciding on the appropriate course of action. • Being tempted to do other work or attend to personal matters while completing online training. • Potential misuse of website user data, which contradicts the agreed privacy policy and POPIA regulations posing a threat to privacy and confidentiality.

I3 Professional ethics: *refers to the fundamental ethical principles and values applied by a professional accountant to*

I. ETHICS, VALUES AND ATTITUDES

decision-making, conduct and the relationship between the professional, its stakeholders and society.

(a) Apply the Code of Professional Conduct (COPC) fundamental ethical principle of **integrity** by way of general conduct, **INCLUDING** when rendering professional services.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Per the SAICA Code of Professional Conduct, acting with integrity requires an applicant to be straightforward and honest in all their professional and business relationships. Integrity involves fair dealing, truthfulness and having the strength of character to act appropriately, even when facing pressure to do otherwise or when doing so might create potential adverse personal or organisational consequences. Acting appropriately involves: (a) Standing one's ground when confronted by dilemmas and difficult situations; or (b) Challenging others as and when circumstances warrant, in a manner appropriate to the circumstances. Further to this, an applicant must not knowingly be associated with reports, returns, communications or other information where they believe that the information: (a) Contains a materially false or misleading statement; (b) Contains statements or information provided recklessly; or (c) Omits or obscures required information where such omission or obscurity would be misleading. Please note that in terms of the last part of the learning outcome, the evidence should reflect instances of how this fundamental principle was demonstrated when rendering professional services.	• Being truthful in interactions, for example: - Providing honest feedback on the status of work assignments, even when they are not going according to plan. - Being honest when responding to enquiries, even if this means telling people things they do not want to hear. • Identifying potential ethical threats/dilemmas in their daily work and addressing those appropriately (including but not limited to threat analysis (both perceived and actual) from accepting an engagement and identifying appropriate safeguards). • Identifying and challenging (questioning) the behaviour of others where such behaviour may be potentially regarded as being unethical. • Taking care to ensure that any information provided by them to others is factually accurate by performing the appropriate checks on that information before it is disseminated. • Not withholding information unnecessarily where that omission might result in information provided being potentially misleading. Display integrity by proving the full picture (the good and bad, and not just the good) to ensure recipients can make an informed decision. • Communicating openly and transparently with clients, customers, suppliers, regulators, and other stakeholders. • Reporting truthfully and disassociating with information that is known to be false or misleading. • Being mindful when engaging in social media to not bring the organisation and/or the profession's reputation into disrepute.

I. ETHICS, VALUES AND ATTITUDES

I3 Professional ethics: *refers to the fundamental ethical principles and values applied by a professional accountant to decision-making, conduct and the relationship between the professional, its stakeholders and society.*

b) Apply the COPC fundamental ethical principle of **objectivity** by way of general conduct, **INCLUDING** when rendering professional services.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Per the SAICA Code of Professional Conduct, acting with objectivity requires the applicant to exercise professional or business judgement without being compromised by: (a) Avoiding Bias Conscious or unconscious bias affects the exercise of professional judgement when identifying, evaluating and addressing threats to compliance with the fundamental principles. Examples of potential biases to be aware of when exercising professional judgment include Anchoring bias, Automation bias, Availability bias, Confirmation bias, Groupthink, Overconfidence bias, Representation bias, Selective perception. (b) Avoiding Conflicts of interest Conflicts of interest have the potential to arise when: • Undertaking a professional activity related to a particular matter for two or more parties whose interests with respect to that matter are in conflict, or • When the interests of the applicant and the interests of a party for whom they undertake a professional activity are in conflict). (c) Avoiding undue influence of, or undue reliance on, individuals, organisations, technology or other factors. Applicants shall not undertake a professional activity if a circumstance or relationship unduly influences their professional judgement regarding that activity. Please note that in terms of the last part of the learning outcome, the evidence should reflect instances of how this fundamental principle was demonstrated when rendering professional services.	• Eliminating conflicts of interest by noticing bias and subjectivity so as to remain objective. This includes refraining from engaging in activities that could compromise actual or perceived objectivity and disclosing any potential conflicts of interest to relevant parties. [Please note that signing a declaration of interest is not in itself sufficient evidence. The applicant must reflect on their thought process as part of the evidence.] • Avoiding financial interest in a client or loan to or from an assurance client. • Being alert to potential conflicts of interest when liaising with suppliers/ potential suppliers, for example, refusing offers of personal inducements during a procurement process. • Reporting information objectively. • Raising a finding/ asking a question when a client/ supervisor/ manager/ partner is seen to be a "difficult". • Questioning / challenging information or assumptions for potential bias behind received and discovered information. • Standing up to pressure from a superior or someone who is in an influential position. • Mitigating the effect of bias by: - Seeking advice from experts to obtain additional input; or - Consulting with others to ensure information is appropriate challenged as part of the evaluation process.

I. ETHICS, VALUES AND ATTITUDES

I3 Professional ethics: *refers to the fundamental ethical principles and values applied by a professional accountant to decision-making, conduct and the relationship between the professional, its stakeholders and society.*

- c) Apply the COPC fundamental ethical principle of **professional competence and due care** by way of general conduct, **INCLUDING** when rendering professional services.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Per the SAICA Code of Professional Conduct, complying with the principle of professional competence and due care requires the applicant to: (a) Attain and maintain professional knowledge and skill at the level required to ensure that a client or employing organisation receives competent professional services, based on current technical and professional standards and relevant legislation; and (b) Act diligently and in accordance with applicable technical and professional standards. This encompasses the responsibility to act in accordance with the requirements of an assignment, carefully, thoroughly and on a timely basis. Applicants should exercise due care and diligence in performing their work. They should comply with professional standards and guidelines, perform their work with a high degree of professional scepticism and ensure a high quality of work, and delivering as promised. Maintaining professional knowledge and skill and disclosing and working within the limitations of that competence, i.e. refraining from doing work that they are not competent to perform. Please note that in terms of the last part of the learning outcome, the evidence should reflect instances of how this fundamental principle was demonstrated when rendering professional services.	• Producing complete working papers and reports of the required quality. • Making specific reference to, and applying the latest legislation, standards or other requirements when performing work. • When not able to perform a task yourself, obtaining advice and assistance to ensure that the task is performed satisfactorily. • Making sure that the necessary research is done and upskilling is completed to provide the necessary standard of work. • Self-review of working papers, reports or correspondence before finalising/ submitting for review/ sending including spell-checking documents and e-mails. • Applicants could demonstrate this value through the manner in which they: - prepare/review reconciliations, - make payments, - prepare financial statements, - prepare management accounts, - conduct internal audits, - clear queries, or - complete any day-to-day work.

I. ETHICS, VALUES AND ATTITUDES

I3 Professional ethics: *refers to the fundamental ethical principles and values applied by a professional accountant to decision-making, conduct and the relationship between the professional, its stakeholders and society.*

d) Apply the COPC fundamental ethical principle of **confidentiality** by way of general conduct, **INCLUDING** when rendering professional services.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Per the SAICA Code of Professional Conduct, applicants must respect the confidentiality of information acquired as a result of professional and business relationships and should: (a) Be alert to the possibility of inadvertent disclosure, including in a social environment, and particularly to a close business associate or an immediate or a close family member; (b) Maintain confidentiality of information within the firm or employing organisation; (c) Maintain confidentiality of information disclosed by a prospective client or employing organisation; (d) Not disclose confidential information acquired as a result of professional and business relationships outside the firm or employing organisation without proper and specific authority, unless there is a legal or professional duty or right to disclose; (e) Not use confidential information acquired as a result of professional and business relationships for their own personal advantage or for the advantage of a third party; (f) Not use or disclose any confidential information, either acquired or received as a result of a professional or business relationship, after that relationship has ended; and (g) Take reasonable steps to ensure that personnel under the applicant's supervision, and individuals from whom advice and assistance are obtained, respect the duty of confidentiality. Please note that in terms of the last part of the learning outcome, the evidence should reflect instances of how this fundamental principle was demonstrated when rendering professional services.	• Consciously restricting communication of confidential information or expressing frustration with a client/ stakeholder/ work environment on social media; demonstrating an awareness of the public nature of the platform and its access by various parties to information that is potentially confidential. • Demonstrating an appreciation of the confidentiality of information, i.e., by not leaving client documentation lying around the boardroom/workspace and taking documentation/reports back to the client once that documentation has been used and is no longer needed. • Handling sensitive information (such as when working with payroll information) with care, such that others do not gain inappropriate sight of it, for example, by: - Keeping workroom doors locked or secured against inadvertent entry. - Positioning computer screens such that they are not visible from doorways or entry points. - Working on documentation in the department that "owns" the documentation – not removing it and working with it elsewhere. - Returning sensitive documentation to the client at the end of each day, despite not being finished with it. • Maintaining integrity while managing confidential information such as trade secrets and NDA-related data. • Vetting suppliers during a tender process. • Demonstrating an appreciation of the confidentiality of personal information when communicating with customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. • Ensuring that confidential conversations cannot be heard by unauthorised people when working remotely.

I. ETHICS, VALUES AND ATTITUDES

I3 Professional ethics: *refers to the fundamental ethical principles and values applied by a professional accountant to decision-making, conduct and the relationship between the professional, its stakeholders and society.*

e) Apply the COPC fundamental ethical principle of **professional behaviour** (for example, in personal branding, business etiquette, the use of communication channels such as social media and the ability to control and express emotions appropriately) by way of general conduct, **INCLUDING** when rendering professional services.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Per the SAICA Code of Professional Conduct, the principle of professional behaviour requires an applicant to: (a) Comply with relevant laws and regulations; (b) Behave in a manner consistent with the profession's responsibility to act in the public interest in all professional activities and business relationships; and (c) Avoid any conduct that the professional accountant knows or should know might discredit the profession. An applicant must not knowingly engage in any business, occupation or activity that impairs or might impair the integrity, objectivity or good reputation of the profession, and as a result would be incompatible with the fundamental principles. Conduct that might discredit the profession includes conduct that a reasonable and informed third party would be likely to conclude adversely affects the good reputation of the profession. When undertaking any marketing or promotional activities, an applicant must not bring the profession into disrepute. They must be honest and truthful and must not make: (a) Exaggerated claims for the services offered by them, or regarding their qualifications or experience; or (b) Disparaging references or unsubstantiated comparisons to the work of others. Please note the additional guidance provided in brackets. Please note that in terms of the last part of the learning outcome, the evidence should reflect instances of how this fundamental principle was demonstrated when rendering professional services.	• Appropriately communicating (e-mails, verbal communication etc.) with the client and colleagues, demonstrating appropriate business etiquette and appropriate expression of emotions, particularly in instances of disagreements, confrontational or difficult situations (professional behaviour). • Being polite with colleagues and clients even when this might be difficult. • When leaving a working space at the client's premises, ensure it is tidied up and left behind neatly. • Being punctual and communicating to the appropriate people (and in the appropriate manner) if there is likely to be a delay. • Dialing in on time for online meetings. • Being suitably dressed for in-person interactions and to appear on camera, as appropriate. • Ensuring that backgrounds are appropriate for online meetings and that background noise levels are kept at a minimum. • When in office, being mindful of the open plan environment and behaving accordingly.

II. CITIZENSHIP, VALUES AND ATTITUDES

II1 Personal citizenship: *is used to indicate that there are rights/responsibilities to being a member of multiple communities.*

(a) Demonstrate a **responsive, valuing and tolerant** approach to diversity (local or global) **AND** individual differences

What could this look like in practice?	Example
Applicants must be able to: - Recognise and respect others' values and differences and express a positive attitude towards all individuals regardless of race, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, nationality, etc. - Display awareness of, and accommodate, language differences in cross-cultural communication. - Demonstrate, through conduct and communication with others, an appreciation and acceptance of all colleagues and clients, particularly with regards to responses to input received from these individuals/ responses to queries raised or input sought by these individuals. It is important to note that simply being exposed to diversity or individual differences and/ or displaying a <i>willingness</i> to understand and engage would not be sufficient to demonstrate this behaviour. This PVA is about how applicants approach and respond to diversity in relation to <i>specific</i> interactions and evidence must focus on what was done to accommodate / respect / value diversity or individual differences in the specific situation encountered.	• Promoting and creating an inclusive culture within the team/ department, being aware of cultural/ religious practices and accommodating individuals accordingly. This could include actively seeking information and clarity from colleagues/clients about differences that become apparent and responding to these differences with respect and tolerance. • When functioning as part of a multicultural team, respecting the diversity of the individual team members and encouraging inclusion (i.e., encouraging participation from all team members, demonstrating an inclusive approach when planning team events and meetings). • Being considerate of challenges that can arise in a global group or when reporting to group auditors globally, for example, misunderstandings that arise due to different languages and customs and responding appropriately. • By being respectful of different religious viewpoints and accommodating any associated required practices such as the need to attend Mosque on Fridays or by taking care when eating your own meals during times when others may be fasting. • Communicating with a supplier/ customer/ colleague/ client or other stakeholder whose home language is different to yours in a mutually understandable manner. • Working effectively with team members or clients whose work experience or education is different to yours – explaining matters in such a way that they can understand what you require/ask/say while being respectful of the gap in knowledge or education level.

II. CITIZENSHIP, VALUES AND ATTITUDES

II1 Personal citizenship: *is used to indicate that there are rights/responsibilities to being a member of multiple communities.*

(b) Describe the impact you have made on the community in which you live and work, through e.g. acts of philanthropy, social responsibility and environmental stewardship

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
This learning outcome demonstrates that an individual can impact the environment/community positively or negatively dependent on the actions taken. Applicants must identify how their individual actions contribute to and/or influence the community around them, their place of work and the environment. When submitting evidence for this learning outcome, applicants must: - Describe what action was taken i.e. what <i>they</i> did; and - Explain the impact (good and bad) of the action on others, the environment, etc. When documenting evidence in relation to participation in team/ group/ organisation-wide initiatives applicants should consider their specific contribution. Applicants can demonstrate this learning outcome through organisational or personal initiatives however they must remember that the evidence needs to be corroborated.	- Identifying and implementing practices that promote green initiatives and have a positive impact on the environment. - Involvement in community or societal upliftment projects. - Enterprise development through skills development projects and/ or mentoring, coaching or tutoring. - CSR projects, such as building projects or repairs to infrastructure. - Environmental stewardship projects, such as community clean-ups, investment in reduction of carbon footprint/ sequestration of carbon, waste reduction projects or recycling projects. - Considering/looking after the environment by: - Not printing unnecessary documents and rather making use of documents in electronic format. - Reducing waste and recycling. - Make use of public transport or lift clubs to office/ clients to reduce carbon monoxide damage to the environment. - Using water and electricity sparingly. - Considering the health of others and only smoking/ vaping in designated areas. - Supporting colleagues who are struggling with mental health or socio-economic factors.

II. CITIZENSHIP, VALUES AND ATTITUDES

II2 Corporate citizenship: *relates to the corporation's responsibilities/rights in society which has long been part of the field of business ethics*

(a) For a business decision, weigh up the short-term financial benefits of that decision against its long-term strategic and/or societal impact (sustainability)

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
When considering a business decision (by a client or by your organisation), evaluate the extent to which short term gain is measured against longer-term value creation. Sometimes seeking to maximise profit in the short term comes at the expense of longer-term value creation for the business. Being a responsible corporate citizen requires that the long- term sustainability and impact of the organisation is always considered in decision-making. This requires that the needs of society as a key stakeholder to the organisation's long-term success are taken into account. The role of the governing body of an organisation could be seen to be that of maximising the present value of all future outcomes to a decision. This requires that the needs of society / communities within which the organisation does business are considered along with the needs of all major stakeholders.	• When evaluating a client's business strategy when obtaining an understanding of the entity and performing risk assessment. Examples of matters that might be considered include: - The reasons for buying major assets, a change in the business model, unusual transactions outside the normal course of business. - Whether the client invests in SDGs? • When involved in any business decision relating to an organisation (own organisation, client, supplier etc.) identify the short-term and long-term consequences of that decision and evaluate the impact of that decision on the long-term sustainability of the organisation in terms of continued support from society and/ or communities that are affected by it. • Examples where applicants may be part of a team or process that does the following: - Considering whether to offer financing or discounts to individual customers. - Deciding whether to outsource and import or to rather source locally and/or support community upliftment and education. - Negotiating or signing contracts with suppliers and considering the impact on the supplier. - Performing a capital budget, considering the strategic and societal impact of the decision alongside the financial aspect of the decision. - Deciding whether to automate a process or complete it using manual labour. - Considering the short-term financial gain of a process versus long-term environmental impact. - Looking at strategic options - e.g., low profits on a particular deal/ transaction for securing a strategic long-term relationship. - Preparing a business case weighing up financial and societal measures and motivating how the project will achieve the required outcome(s).

II. CITIZENSHIP, VALUES AND ATTITUDES

II2 Corporate citizenship: *relates to the corporation's responsibilities/rights in society which has long been part of the field of business ethics*

(b) Consider the degree to which an organisation's (your organisation or a client) strategy and/or business model aligns with the 17 SDGs (the Sustainable Development Goals as published by the United Nations)

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs identified 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). <u>The 17 SDGs are:</u> 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and	• Applicants could demonstrate this when: - Preparing management accounts and reports (budget versus actual, ratio analysis, stakeholder analysis) that include information relating to SDGs. - Preparing information to be included in an integrated report. - Participating in tailoring/ broadening the organisation's measurements (KPIs). - Evaluating suppliers' and clients' strategies and business models as part of conducting business/ procuring services/ concluding deals. - Participating in CSR projects with beneficiaries of different races, cultures, languages, genders etc. - Contributing to projects, policies and discussions that promote diversity – e.g., balanced teams (no one left out/discriminated against, policy against racist/sexist comments, HIV policy, etc.). - Contributing to inclusive corporate branding messages. - Participating in investing/ funding decisions. • For example, when considering SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), applicants could consider and evaluate some of the following: - Implementation of policies to promote equal opportunities and employment equity in the organisation (could be done as part of considering compliance with Employment Equity legislation and regulations). - Approach to selection of suppliers, etc. (could be done part of considering compliance with BBEE legislation where relevant). - Steps undertaken to resolve any conflicts/ misunderstandings as a result of any differences, in a responsive, valuing and tolerant manner. - Involvement in organisations with beneficiaries of different races, cultures, languages, genders etc.

II. CITIZENSHIP, VALUES AND ATTITUDES

revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development In providing evidence, applicants should take care to reflect on the degree to which the organisation's strategy and/or business model aligns with the 17 SDGs. Simply selecting one or two SDGs and noting how the strategy or business model aligns is not sufficient.	as part of CSR (Corporate social responsibility) projects. - Policies and contributions to open discussions to promote diversity – e.g., balanced engagement teams (no one left out/discriminated against, policy against racists/sexist comments, HIV policy, etc. - Inclusive corporate branding messages.
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III. LIFELONG LEARNING VALUES AND ATTITUDES

III1 Self-development *refers to the planning and management of personal development and an appreciation of how personal strengths and weaknesses may impact work, learning and goal attainment.*

- (a) Demonstrate life-long learning by staying abreast of current trends and emerging issues **OR** by acquiring new knowledge, skills and experiences to remain relevant, **INCLUDING** in relation to digital developments

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Applicants must display a commitment to staying up to date on current developments and emerging issues including the digital aspects. Life-long learning is a self-initiated deliberate act, focused on improving knowledge, skills and competence (personal, professional and technical.) It requires the identification of gaps in knowledge and skills and then seeking to fill those gaps. Typically, these gaps are then filled by acquiring new knowledge. Applicants should actively consider the knowledge and skills required to be high functioning in their professional role. The knowledge and skills should be broad enough to upskill themselves in general terms and also specific to the industry, circumstances or challenges they face from time to time. Applicants should then show how they plan and find opportunities for learning. Reading, listening and observing are part of the building blocks of learning and applicants will have the opportunity to do all of these daily in their work. Using technology (digital acumen), in the current era is a skill that needs to be mastered to ensure life-long learning initiatives are achieved.	• Taking the lead in implementing updates and providing guidance on technical matters, where new technical updates are available. • Obtaining required knowledge/ understanding of a certain matter(s) by asking appropriate and probing questions. • Conducting further research where needed while performing client engagements (e.g., research on laws and regulations applicable to a client, relevant audit and accounting standards, etc.) • Do online training where the need is identified – e.g., to enhance Excel skills, be able to assist clients on Xero, improve business writing, etc. • Subscribe to websites that provide regular updates on emerging technology. • Subscribing to publications and news alerts to keep abreast of regulatory, industry, economic and digital trends Attend on-line webinars/ seminars about emerging technology. • Acquiring new knowledge, skills and experience on-the-job. • Investigating what is topical in the news whether it be fraudulent activity, cyber-crime, new innovations etc. and how this can impact on the organisation.

III. LIFELONG LEARNING VALUES AND ATTITUDES

III1 Self-development *refers to the planning and management of personal development and an appreciation of how personal strengths and weaknesses may impact work, learning and goal attainment.*

(b) Demonstrate **responsibility** for your own development needs and opportunities **AND** set and monitor **personal learning and development objectives**

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Applicants should demonstrate a positive attitude towards their training contracts and take responsibility for their development by seeking learning opportunities, as well as on-the-job or other experiences to address personal, professional and technical development needs. It is not enough to rely on their organisation to recommend or determine their development needs and provide opportunities. Applicants should take responsibility for their personal development needs by taking charge and being accountable, identifying and seeking opportunities for development and managing their own development plan, including self-reflection, assessment and monitoring achievement against objectives. The skills acquired through responding to identified development needs should be put into practice to ensure the applicants apply/ retain what has been learned. Line managers and mentors of applicants may provide deliberate opportunities for applicants to put the skills acquired into practice, however applicants have a responsibility to drive these initiatives, e.g., by identifying and/or requesting opportunities themselves. In documenting evidence for this learning outcome, the personal learning and development objective must be clear as well as how this was addressed and how progress against/ achievement of objectives was monitored.	• Actively participating in learning opportunities such as training courses and feedback sessions that align to development objectives. • Booking themselves on non-mandatory training courses (e.g., digital upskilling/ industry specific training) where they want to expand their knowledge in areas in which they are interested/ require development. • Actively seeking opportunities to work on engagements/ projects where they can demonstrate and get exposure to specific competencies. • Focusing on specific development points and plans that are communicated during assessments and seeking to improve those areas before the next assessment.

III. LIFELONG LEARNING VALUES AND ATTITUDES

III2 Adaptive mind-set and agility: *refers to taking initiative to improve performance and well-being by reviewing and reflecting on work performance.*

(a) Work in an agile way by adapting and responding to changing practices, management and leadership styles, cultures, roles and /or work contexts

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Agility reflects an ability to think quickly, to be mentally aware of circumstances, and to then respond appropriately. Applicants should be able to adapt to any changes in an effective manner that allows for productivity and achievement of objectives. For example, applicants may need to adapt to different leadership styles: • <i>Direct</i> – Direct leaders have high assertiveness and low expressiveness. They tend to lead by taking charge - also sometimes referred to as an “Autocratic style”. • <i>Spirited</i> – Spirited leaders have high assertiveness and high expressiveness. They tend to lead by inspiring others. • <i>Considerate</i> – Considerate leaders have low assertiveness and high expressiveness. They tend to lead by creating group harmony and encourage co-creation and participation. • <i>Systematic</i> – Systematic leaders have low assertiveness and low expressiveness. They tend to lead by thorough planning. Changes could also be in the form of adapting to a new work culture, role or context or changing practices, requirements or processes. In documenting evidence, it must be clear what changes applicants had to respond to and how they adapted and displayed agility. For example, what steps were taken to adapt?	• Working with new and different team members, managers or partners. Adapting to and accommodating different expectations, environments and styles of management or reporting. • Responding to unexpected changes in staff allocations. • Navigating the change from a junior role to a more senior role with increased responsibility. • Responding to changes in legislation or standards that require a change in the way things need to be done or approached. • Responding to changes in technology (hardware or software) that require the need to learn new and better ways of doing things. • Encountering new industries or roles with different transaction cycles, business practices and/or information systems that need to be learnt. • Adapting to changes in audit or accounting standards that require different procedures to be designed and performed. • Collaborating across different teams on a single project. • Leveraging multiple processes, resources, people, knowledge and skills to solve a problem/ complete a task/ achieve an objective. • Maintaining work quality when circumstances change.

III. LIFELONG LEARNING VALUES AND ATTITUDES

III3 Emotional Intelligence *refers to the establishment and sustaining of trusting relationships based on self-awareness, sensitivity to the situation, culture and people involved*

- a) Understand and manage your own emotions in positive ways to communicate effectively, empathise with others, overcome challenges and/or defuse conflict.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Emotional Intelligence develops with experience and through experiencing different environments. An emotion is a feeling such as happiness, sadness, love, fear, anger, disgust or hatred, which can be caused by the situation that someone is in or by the people one is with. When a person understands his/her emotions, that person will be able to better regulate/manage them by stopping and thinking before acting and judging. Emotions are natural, and we all experience them. However, we need to be able to manage these emotions we experience while in the professional workplace in a positive, constructive way that assists us in achieving our objectives rather than derails us. In documenting evidence applicants should describe: • What emotions they experienced in the specific context. • How they managed those emotions (for example, using breathing techniques, stepping away from the situation to gain perspective, communicating concerns etc.) • What this enabled them to do.	• Some emotional situations that applicants may encounter: - Receiving feedback especially when this is perceived as criticism. - Handling conflict. - When deciding on the course of action when an error or NOCLAR is identified at a client. - When assisting or giving feedback to subordinates. - Dealing with personal tragedy. • Applicants could demonstrate emotional awareness by: - Acknowledging and appreciating their own strengths and weaknesses, capitalising on their strengths and working on their weaknesses. - Observing how their emotions and perceptions influence their own behaviour and the behaviour of others. - Using their emotional awareness to encourage positive actions. - Regulating and managing their emotions to communicate constructively. • Applicants can demonstrate emotional intelligence by remaining calm when managing stakeholders where there is a lack of understanding, or the stakeholder ignores/ overrides the recommendations made.

3.2 Acumens

Z. BUSINESS ACUMEN

Z1 Business internal environment: *Using your understanding of the entity's internal operations to assist in the process of making strategic decisions and good judgements in a business or business division.*

(a) Consider how an organisation creates value through its business model **INCLUDING** specific reference to its use of the six capitals referred to in the King IV report (Financial, Manufactured, Intellectual, Human, Social and Relationship and Natural)

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
King IV defines a business model as being “an organisation’s system of transforming inputs through its business activities into outputs (products, services, by-products, and waste) and outcomes (internal and external consequences, both positive and negative and including the impact on the triple context – the economy, the environment, and society) that aim to fulfil the organisation’s strategic purposes and create value over the short, medium, and long term”. King IV references “inclusive capitalism”, arguing that value creation in a business takes account of not just financial capital (the more traditional thinking behind value creation for a business), but also manufactured capital, intellectual capital, human capital, social and relationship capital, and natural capital (the six capitals). King IV defines capitals as “stocks of value on which all organisations depend for their success as inputs to their business model, and which are increased, decreased or transformed through the organisation’s business activities and outputs”. The 6 capitals referred to in King IV are: • Financial capital - pool of funds available for use • Manufactured capital – physical/intangible assets such as land, equipment, software • Intellectual capital – knowledge-based intangibles • Human capital – people’s competencies, capabilities, experience and ability to innovate • Social and relationship capital – relationships, networks and the ability to share information • Natural capital – environmental resources that support the prosperity of an organisation. In documenting evidence applicants must refer to how the organisation creates value through its business model and how it uses the six capitals to do this.	• Applicants could obtain an understanding of the entity’s business model, during their “understanding of the entity” phase in planning an audit engagement including identifying how it creates value with reference to the six capitals. This could also include considerations of areas requiring improvement. • For the applicant’s business environment or department, this could include a stakeholder analysis, mapping business processes to assess how it creates value and serves their stakeholders; or conducting a sustainability analysis to determine the environmental, social and economic impact. • This learning outcome could also be demonstrated when: - Preparing budgets. - Allocating costs. - Conducting risk assessments. - Preparing information for or reviewing the integrated report. - Compiling weekly tracker reports looking at profit margins, growth trends etc. (turnover vs margin). - Analysing a department’s revenue streams to assess the effectiveness of the business model in creating value. - Any other context which requires consideration of how an organisation creates value. • Consider how a customer or supplier creates value through its business model with specific reference to its use of the six capitals. • In any of these situations, show how the six capitals are inter-related – e.g., when you train your staff, financial capital could decrease, but human capital increases.

Z. BUSINESS ACUMEN

Z2 Business external environment: *Using your understanding of the business' external environment, make quick, correct and/or focused strategic decisions and good judgements in a business or business division*

(a) Evaluate the influence of the external environment (political, economic, tax policy, social, technological, legal and environmental) **AND/OR** industry factors (competitive advantage and threats, industry trends, emerging technology/industry disruptors, market opportunities, stakeholder focus) on an organisation's strategy, business model or processes

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
While the previous learning outcome focused on the internal business environment, this learning outcome focuses on external factors affecting a business - i.e., how the external environment within which a business operates affects how the entity conducts its business. The external environment and industry factors can include both global and local influences. Just a few examples of local influences/factors that could affect a business include changes in legislation, stakeholder expectations, the regulatory environment or the availability or supply of key services or resources such as water and electricity. A few examples of global influences/factors that could affect a business include changes to the general level of the world economy, foreign competition, emerging trends or changes in foreign exchange fluctuations. The learning outcome requires that applicants "evaluate" the influence of these external factors. This implies a need to identify the factor and then argue how it has affected the entity's business model, strategy or processes. The impact of external factors could be felt across inputs (into the business activities of an organisation), business activities (that reflect what the organisation actually does to generate value) and the output/ outcomes produced as a result of those activities. In documenting evidence applicants should describe the evaluation performed and what they discovered – identifying the specific factors considered and showing the impact on an organisation's strategy, business model or processes.	- Evaluating the impact of external factors on the measure of audit risk during the planning and risk assessment phase of an assurance or review engagement. Applicants could show how they completed the evaluation and the impact of these identified factors on: - the entity's business model. - measures of business success (e.g. on profits) and value creation (e.g. on the resources available to an entity and how the entity is able to utilise those). - governance mechanisms. - internal business and / or risk management processes. - processes of decision making, reporting, and/ or compliance. - Evaluating the impact of external factors on the audit firm's strategy, business model or processes. For example, the impact of changes to the quality control system of the firm or IRBA requirements, on individual audit engagements or the impact of changes to tax legislation on compliance processes. - Evaluating the external environmental factors and the resulting impact on the key performance targets, budget allocations, reprioritisation of resources, strategy etc. - Preparing a strategy roadmap for a department taking into consideration the impact of external factors. - Analysing business unit or entity KPIs against external factors for example as a contribution to the integrated report. - Performance management audits, identifying whether KPIs and targets are in line with the organisation's mission/value. - Evaluating the impact of changes to regulatory requirements and tax legislation on compliance processes.

Z. BUSINESS ACUMEN

- Evaluating external factors such as load shedding, consequences thereof on the business and solutions that could be used to assist processes/ operations.
- Conducting SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to assess the organisation's competitive position and strategic fit within their specific industry.
- Contributing to the development of sustainability reports or impact assessments to communicate the organisation's progress towards SDG targets and its broader contribution to societal well-being.
- Analysing financial performance metrics in conjunction with social and environmental indicators to evaluate the organisation's long-term resilience and value creation potential in the face of evolving local and global influences.

Z. BUSINESS ACUMEN

Z3 Innovation and creativity: *Developing new concepts, innovative ways or new ideas promoting a business success or wide-spread use, using a questioning or inquisitive mind-set.*

(a) Identify the need to address a problem or situation from a fresh perspective and challenge existing paradigms and ways of doing business **AND/OR** describe an innovative solution you came up with to address a business problem **AND** how you implemented this solution

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
“Innovation”, in the context of this learning outcome, means new/different to what was done historically, although not necessarily something that no one has ever thought of before. This learning outcome challenges applicants to look for new ways of doing things that are more effective or efficient than what was done previously. A paradigm is a way of looking at something, a standard, perspective, or set of ideas. Applicants can demonstrate this learning outcome by doing one or both of the following: “<i>Identify the need to address a problem or situation from a fresh perspective and challenge existing paradigms and ways of doing business</i>” In this option, applicants would need to show how they identified a situation where a new approach was needed and how they brought a fresh perspective challenged the status quo. “<i>Describe an innovative solution you came up with to address a business problem AND how you implemented this solution</i>” This second part of the learning outcome is likely to be related to the first part but does not necessarily need to be done. In the first part of this learning outcome, applicants are asked to look for opportunities to change / improve things. You cannot describe an innovative solution without there being a problem that needs to be solved. It is important to note here that this 2nd option requires the applicant to also then describe how they implemented their solution to the problem, whether that be through something they did themselves or through referring the solution to someone else to take forward. In documenting evidence, it is suggested that applicants consider both of these options. Although not a requirement, it may be helpful if the two pieces of evidence address both options.	- Identifying and recommending controls which could be preventative in nature, rather than detective. - Considering changes in regulations, and redesigning processes to align to new requirements. - Considering changes in a client's business systems that require a change in audit approach. - Identifying manual processes which could be improved with the inclusion of an automated element or with the use of technology. - Including local vendors on projects, addressing SDGs whilst managing organisation's objectives. - Incorporating data validations in processes to reduce risk of error, minimise time spent, etc. - Reviewing Supply Chain Management or monitoring processes and making recommendations to deal with anomalies or deviations. - Applying fresh perspectives and innovative thinking to solve business problems, create efficiencies or drive business growth. - Refining or redesigning predictive analytical review during the fieldwork stage of an audit where the initial difference was larger than the acceptable difference. - Challenging the way audit evidence has been obtained historically and considering whether there might be better, more efficient ways of obtaining the necessary evidence. - Identifying ways of performing fieldwork that could be made more efficient or effective (for example, implementing more effective, systematic sampling workbooks, use of data analytics tools or new technologies or collaborating with colleagues differently to achieve efficiencies). - Finding ways to automate processes or procedures across multiple clients/ customers/ suppliers. By challenging existing processes and finding more efficient ways of working, contributing to time and cost savings.

Y. DECISION MAKING ACUMEN

Y1 Critical thinking: *Research, investigate, critically analyse, reflect and apply professional judgement to the evaluation of data and information from a variety of sources and perspectives.*

- (a) Use critical thinking to identify and question/challenge information or assumptions and potential bias behind received, discovered or researched information.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Critical thinking is the analysis of available facts, evidence, observations, and arguments in order to form a judgement by applying rational, skeptical, and unbiased analyses and evaluation. This requires that the applicant is able to interrogate underlying information or assumptions (either supplied or discovered) and understand/ evaluate the impact that this may have on the results. Where the information comes from or who provided it may present certain biases that need to be considered. We shouldn't simply accept information just because it comes from a certain person (who we think is reliable just because they have a certain qualification, for example) or just because it is computer-generated. Irrespective of the information or the purpose for which it is being obtained, applicants should challenge the reliability of that information, ensuring that they have not displayed bias in their acceptance of it	There are likely to be many instances where information will need to be challenged, such as: - When conducting research during planning to identify relevant factors (internal and external and quantitative and qualitative) that may have affected an entity. This research could involve obtaining information from multiple sources such as websites, discussions with entity staff, and through reviewing documentation (such as industry journals, internal reports or minutes of meetings). - When performing fieldwork on an engagement, not just taking verbal explanations at face value but considering whether they make sense and are in line with your expectations (and in the case of audit engagements, whether corroborating evidence is available). - When assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern on any type of engagement – the client's assessment should be evaluated and corroborated against e.g., cash flow forecasts, actual performance after yearend, etc. - When receiving explanations from a client staff member in terms of identified differences arising from the performance of substantive predictive analytical review procedures. - When auditing accounting estimates in terms of ISA 540: - Apply professional skepticism and judgement after requesting and obtaining information on management estimates. - Test the underlying assumptions for management bias, by comparing these to industry norms, historic estimates, and outcomes, etc. - Assess assumptions and outcomes of calculations, against the conclusion which would be drawn by a reasonably informed third party (documenting the findings in an audit working paper). - When conducting a financial statement analysis and coming across assumptions made by the company in preparing their financial statements: critically evaluate

Y. DECISION MAKING ACUMEN

these assumptions and question any potential bias or manipulation that may affect the accuracy or reliability of the financial information. By challenging the assumptions and potential biases, provide a more objective interpretation of the financial results.

- Investment decisions – during the due diligence review process not accepting information at face value or allow bias to influence their business decisions, obtained information and check for reasonability.
- Internal audit – interrogate information received, by questioning and challenging information, not allowing bias to influence business judgement and suggesting mitigating controls where necessary.
- Budgeting process – obtain an understanding (questioning and challenging of information) of the budget assumptions and understand the relationship to the business strategy. By varying the key assumptions, perform a sensitivity analysis on key budgets.
- Reconciliations – when completing/reviewing reconciliations identify, question and resolve reconciling items.
- When reviewing supporting documents for contracts, procurement etc. critically analyse and question information in an approach to safeguarding the integrity of business processes and ensuring high ethical standards.
- Conducting peer reviews or internal audits of research reports, data analyses, or strategic plans to identify potential flaws, biases, or oversights and suggest improvements or alternative approaches.
- Participating in cross-functional project teams or interdisciplinary research collaborations that encourage diverse perspectives, constructive feedback, and robust debate to enhance the quality and rigor of analysis.
- Seeking input from mentors, supervisors, or subject matter experts on research methodologies, analytical techniques and interpretation of findings

Y. DECISION MAKING ACUMEN

Y1 Critical thinking: *Research, investigate, critically analyse, reflect and apply professional judgement to the evaluation of data and information from a variety of sources and perspectives.*

(b) Use critical analysis and reasoning to uncover key and/or underlying issues, and/or identify connections or patterns across diverse situations

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Critical analysis is the detailed examination and evaluation of information, ideas or work. This typically involves breaking something down into its constituent parts or elements and then studying them diligently, highlighting both positive and negative aspects to then form a personal opinion on the whole. Critical analysis also includes employing logical thinking to uncover insights, see connections/ patterns and/or identify underlying issues. Applicants are expected to be able to apply critical analysis and reasoning across diverse situations which could include challenges or findings encountered during an audit or any other business challenge. While there may be some overlap with other decision-making learning outcomes, applicants should take care that the specifics of this learning outcome are adequately addressed in documenting evidence.	- For explanations received from a client regarding potential misstatements identified, consider: - Do they make sense? - Can they be verified? - Are they reliable? - Do they fully explain the problem? - In analysing populations to stratify for sampling purposes, consider: - Do all items share the same characteristics? - If not, how can we separate the population accordingly? - Do we need to extract anything? - When obtaining an understanding of a particular class of transactions as part of performing a substantive/predictive analytical review: - What are the key drivers of that account? - How do we include those drivers in the development of our expectations? - Where do we get reliable data from in support of those drivers? - When reviewing work performed by a subordinate: - Were all steps appropriately completed? - Are the conclusions valid and supported by the findings/ evidence - When reviewing a client calculation of the determination of an impairment adjustment. - Are the assumptions made appropriate? - Where has the information been obtained from, and how reliable is it? - Is the method used appropriate for the client circumstances? - Investment decisions - during the financial modelling process, data will be analysed to consider whether it is a viable investment, uncovering key issues and providing recommendations to ensure viability.

Y. DECISION MAKING ACUMEN

- Cash management – preparing and/or evaluating the cash flow forecast and working capital considering all assumptions. Interpreting the results of the forecast, being able to understand major movements and extraordinary items. Providing solutions with regards to funding needs, where necessary.
- Management reporting – obtaining financial information from various business units for consolidation purposes and evaluating the information using financial analysis, ratio analysis and/or trend analysis. Using this to identify any areas of concern and provide recommendations where necessary.
- Monthly reporting – identifying problematic issues with data and analysing the impact of these issues so as to ensure accurate and reliable information.
- Internal audit - analysing risks and identifying related control issues.
- Stock taking - analysing risks and identifying related control issues.
- When reviewing supporting documents for contracts, procurement etc. critically analysing and questioning information in an approach to safeguarding the integrity of business processes and ensuring high ethical standards.
- Conducting gap analyses or performance reviews of organisational processes, systems, or practices to identify inefficiencies, bottlenecks, or areas of non-compliance, and proposing targeted interventions to improve performance and enhance organisational effectiveness.

Y. DECISION MAKING ACUMEN

Y2 Integrated thinking: *Integrative thinking is a decision-making approach for complex problems based on finding new, creative solutions rather than merely choosing the best solution from a list of alternatives*

(a) Synthesise and make sense of ideas and information from a variety of sources to analyse and evaluate financial or non-financial information, create a design, formulate a plan, arrive at a viable solution to a problem, **OR** obtain a broader understanding of an issue, etc.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Synthesis and integration of information involves understanding a combination of components or elements to form a connected whole – the ability to see the bigger picture presented by the information obtained. A “variety of sources” reflects a diverse range of different origins or references from which information or data is gathered or obtained. It involves seeking information from multiple and varied sources to ensure a comprehensive and well-rounded understanding. Applicants will need to be able to apply this when: - Obtaining financial or non-financial information from various sources, e.g., documents, people, and/or the internet and will need to ensure that the information they obtain represents a broad holistic perspective that considers all angles. - Creating a design with a specific purpose or outcome in mind. This could involve conceptualising and outlining the structure, features, or characteristics of a product, system, or solution. - Formulating a plan, i.e. developing a well-thought-out and organised approach or strategy to achieve a particular goal or objective. This could involve identifying the steps, resources, and timelines necessary to accomplish the desired outcome. - Arriving at a viable solution to a problem i.e. a practical and feasible answer or resolution to a problem or challenge. A viable solution takes into account the constraints, limitations, and available resources, and is capable of effectively addressing the underlying issue. - Obtaining a broad understanding of an issue i.e. having a comprehensive and holistic comprehension of a particular topic, situation, or problem. This could involve considering multiple dimensions, perspectives, and factors that contribute to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding. In documenting evidence applicants should describe the information and ideas being synthesised, the sources from which these were obtained, how these are synthesised and what output this enabled them to produce.	- When obtaining an understanding of an entity during the planning phase of an engagement, conducting research to identify relevant factors (internal and external and financial and non-financial) that may have affected the entity. This research could involve obtaining information from multiple sources such as: - relevant websites, - discussions with relevant entity staff, and - through reviewing relevant documentation (such as industry journals, internal reports or minutes of meetings). - In the process of developing an audit approach and designing/deciding on the most appropriate response(s) to address an audit risk for a specific client, designing appropriate procedures to obtain the information necessary to facilitate the relevant decision-making (regarding the approach and procedures to follow), including: - Consideration of various factors, such as the control environment, governance model and specific risk considerations to determine the appropriate audit approach. - Use of audit/review findings from the previous year, changes in policies, procedures and processes in the current year and perform an analysis of how the circumstances have changed to identify what audit approach should be followed/determine what the impact on the audit approach will be. - If the control environment was not adequate in the previous year, but management implemented new controls to mitigate the risks of misstatement (or vice versa – i.e., where the control environment was adequate before, but is no longer deemed that way), identify this when completing the planning process and develop responses to the risks. - Considering the effectiveness of alternate mechanisms that can be used to obtain audit evidence.

Y. DECISION MAKING ACUMEN

- Cash management – prepare and/or evaluate the cash flow forecast and working capital considering all assumptions. Interpret the results of the cash flow forecast being able to understand major movements and extraordinary items and provide solutions with regards to funding needs where necessary.
- Management reporting –obtain financial information from various business units for consolidation purposes and evaluate the information using financial analysis, ratio analysis and/or trend analysis. Use this to identify any areas of concern and provide recommendations where necessary.
- Management reporting – obtain an understanding of a department or business through questioning a variety of stakeholders and based on this understanding, identify key financial and non-financial performance indicators.
- Budgets – consolidate information from various departments for budget purposes, interrogate whether information is in line with budget assumptions and make recommendations for cost control and cost efficiency.
- Financial Reporting – during evaluation or preparation of the integrated report, obtain and understand information from a variety of sources and ensure that the integrated report contains all relevant information for external stakeholders.
- External Reporting - synthesizing financial data, market trends, and customer feedback to develop strategic business plans and marketing strategies.
- Internal Audit and Tax - consolidate information from regulatory guidelines, financial statements, and internal controls to formulate compliance plans and risk mitigation strategies.
- Corporate Social Investment (CSI) and Marketing - integrate data from community needs assessments, market research, and stakeholder engagement to design impactful social responsibility initiatives and promotional campaigns.

Y. DECISION MAKING ACUMEN

Y3 Problem Solving: *Collate and compare information from multiple sources to correctly define a problem, assess alternative solutions against decision criteria and make the optimal decision.*

(a) Use a questioning mind-set during problem identification, analysis and resolution.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
As part of identifying, analysing and determining a solution for a problem/potential problem, interrogate the underlying information or assumptions (either supplied or discovered) for potential prejudice and understand / evaluate the impact that this may have on the suggested solution. A questioning mind-set proceeds from and is characterised by a feeling of doubt, uncertainty or scepticism, and/or being curious and alert to what is unknown in considering information. Remember this learning outcome is linked to a <i>problem</i>. In documenting evidence, applicants should identify the specific problem and ensure that the evidence documented addresses problem identification, analysis <i>and</i> resolution. While there may be some overlap with other decision-making learning outcomes, applicants should take care that the specifics of this learning outcome are adequately addressed in documenting evidence.	Applicants should provide evidence of problems that they identified and how they applied a questioning mindset in establishing: • Whether there really was a problem - by not jumping to conclusions before all the facts were considered, challenging things and not just accepting them at face-value, not making assumptions, etc. • How big or significant the problem really is. • How best to solve the problem – i.e., were alternative ways of resolving the problem considered and investigated before reaching a final solution and was the final solution critically evaluated to establish whether it is a workable solution. Applicants could demonstrate this learning outcome: • when following up and clearing discrepancies on reconciliations as part of the financial reporting process, • maintaining accurate debtors accounts or • allocating limited resources as part of the budgeting process. • questioning control mechanisms and audit procedures to identify potential loopholes or areas for improvement during internal audit engagements. A few examples of potential problems that applicants could come across on an audit engagement: • A change in a PI score. • Transactions that have been incorrectly accounted for. • Disclosures that were omitted from financial statements or incorrectly included. • Staffing issues. • Budget issues. • Missing information or scope limitations that arose. • Subsequent events identified that required adjustment. • Instances where conflicting evidence has been received. In each of the above examples of problems, applicants would need to demonstrate how they applied a questioning

Y. DECISION MAKING ACUMEN

mindset in understanding the problem, analysing the causes or consequences of the problem, and then in finding a solution to the problem.

For example, if there is a change in PI score, determine whether this has implications for the nature of the engagement. At the same time, be aware of / consider whether there was perhaps any voluntary election to be audited or reviewed or whether the client is perhaps exempt from the need to be audited or reviewed. Having considered these aspects, they should then determine the appropriate form of engagement and communicate this to the client.

Y. DECISION MAKING ACUMEN

Y3 Problem Solving: *Collate and compare information from multiple sources to correctly define a problem, assess alternative solutions against decision criteria and make the optimal decision.*

(b) Seek assistance from experts/specialists **OR** consult with others to obtain information, solve problems, maximise benefits from opportunities, expedite problem-solving, decision-making and/or reach conclusions

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Collaboration with more experienced colleagues creates efficiency in business processes and provides additional credibility to information and decisions. This learning outcome involves collaborating with others through collecting their input, ideas and information (using different information obtaining techniques) to achieve the best output. Applicants should be able to identify the need for use of an expert/ specialist (someone who is very knowledgeable or skillful in a particular subject/ area or who concentrates on a particular subject/ activity or field) or when it is necessary to obtain the opinions or guidance of others to help solve problems in the most effective manner. Experts and specialists may be internal or external to the organisation. In providing evidence applicants should indicate how seeking assistance from experts/specialists or consulting with others enabled them to obtain information, solve problems, maximise benefits from opportunities, expedite problem-solving, decision-making and/or reach conclusions, i.e. it is important to consider how the specific person consulted contributed to the achievement of the objectives.	There should be numerous opportunities for applicants to provide evidence of how they reached out to others for assistance. A few examples of this include: • Complex accounting treatment or disclosures. • Complex IT issues. • Designing appropriate procedures to respond to identified risk of material misstatement. • Situations where input from an actuary, analyst, valuator are required. • Calculations of provisions of reserves where engineers, mining specialists, legal experts, etc. may be required to provide input. • Tax advice from a tax specialist or department may be required for advanced tax calculations, tax planning or deal structuring or perhaps where SARS has disallowed expenses or has raised other queries. • Implementation of new accounting or auditing standards may require input from technical specialists, including the possibility of restatement of previous year's figures. • Obtaining legal advice regarding the disclosure of contingent liabilities in the AFS.

Y. DECISION MAKING ACUMEN

Y4 Judgement and decision-making: *The ability to make considered and effective decisions, come to sensible conclusions, perceive and distinguish relationships, understand situations, and form objective opinions.*

(a) Determine for alternative courses of action:

- i. likely outcome, **AND**
- ii. apparent effectiveness of addressing the root causes of problems, **AND**
- iii. feasibility of effective implementation, **AND**
- iv. stakeholder support for effective implementation, **AND**
- v. ranking in relation to the other identified courses of action

AND then, having done this, select the most appropriate course of action.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
When considering alternative solutions/ courses of action, applicants will need to demonstrate how they approached this reflecting on each step in the learning outcome: i. Determine the likely outcome of each possible solution/ course of action. ii. Consider the degree to which the suggested solutions/ courses of action will adequately address / resolve the problem (consider the effectiveness and root causes). iii. Consider the practicality / feasibility of pursuing each possible solution / course of action in the context of the business environment. This could include considering resource constraints (such as available staff, required knowledge, and cost, for example). iv. Consider stakeholder support required for the implementation and/ or the extent to which there is stakeholder support for each proposed solution. Decision-making often affects multiple stakeholders, and effective decision-making should be done through consultation, and in collaboration with these stakeholders. Applicants should identify the stakeholders affected by the proposed solution and consider the extent to which they are likely to support it or where further support is required. v. Having done the above, present the possible solutions/ appropriate courses in order of preference. Applicants must be able to recommend the most appropriate solution/ course of action based on their assessment and be able to give alternate preferences should their first recommendation not be desirable.	Applicants could demonstrate this learning outcome when: • Evaluating alternate solutions to problems within the context of new industry developments, value chain of the business industry and impact of such solutions in the value creation process (six capitals). • Assessing the rationale and validity of proposed solutions during the budgeting process while considering the limited resources on hand and sustainable value creation process. • Addressing repeat audit findings, evaluate the validity and appropriateness of suggested solutions, considering the practicality of implementation and preventing recurrence of further findings. • Internal Audit – identify findings and what the likely outcome would be of a control not being in place, suggest a mitigating control, report on the finding and the mitigating control. • Payment process – check that all invoices are processed correctly and ensure that all back-up documents are in place. What would the outcome be if this is not in place? Ensure a solution is put in place. Evidence could be provided for this learning outcome directly or could be an extension to evidence already provided in other learning outcomes, for example, a particular problem may have been identified using a questioning mindset.

Y. DECISION MAKING ACUMEN

Y5 Professional skepticism: *Having a questioning mind, being alert to anything that may indicate misstatement due to error or fraud, critically assessing audit evidence.*

(a) Apply a diligent and impartial mind-set when making decisions, making enquiries or questioning others.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Perform tasks (making decisions, making enquiries or questioning others) in a manner that demonstrates an unbiased and objective mind-set, being alert to conditions which may indicate possible misstatement or misrepresentation. While there may be some overlap with other decision-making learning outcomes, applicants should take care that the specifics of this learning outcome are adequately addressed in documenting evidence (e.g. consider the difference between a diligent and impartial mind-set versus a questioning mind-set.)	- Investment decisions - during the due diligence review process not accepting information at face value or allowing bias to influence their business decisions. Applicants should question information provided and check for reasonability. - Internal Audit – questioning and challenging all information that is received and not allowing bias to influence their business judgement. - Budgeting process – obtaining an understanding of the budget assumptions and relationship to the business strategy by questioning and challenging information received. Varying the key assumptions to perform a sensitivity analysis on key budgets. - Fixed assets register and fixed asset roll – when analyses are done discrepancies and/or errors could be found during the processing phase etc. Understand what happened, question those involved using the correct tone etc. to solve the issues and be able to correct the errors. - Tax – applicants could conduct thorough research and analysis of tax issues, ensuring impartiality and accuracy in tax compliance. Examples of professional scepticism include considering what can go wrong during the audit, performing audit procedures to obtain sufficient appropriate evidence rather than merely obtaining the readily available evidence to corroborate management's assertions and critically evaluating all findings, regardless of whether it agrees or disagrees with management's assertions. - In an external audit environment applying professional scepticism requires a proper understanding of the client's business as well as the task at hand. Applicants could demonstrate this learning outcome when making enquiries and questioning clients, challenging responses received and verifying them against other sources of evidence.

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

X1 Communication Skills: *Effectively convey information and ideas to individuals and groups in a variety of situations in a focused way using verbal and non-verbal techniques and skills*

a) Apply effective listening, interviewing **AND/OR** discussion techniques to obtain and clarify relevant information.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Applying listening, interviewing and discussion techniques to communicate effectively can be demonstrated in a variety of roles and contexts. Communication could be between applicants and various stakeholders within or external to the organisation. <i>Effective listening</i> could include active listening techniques such as being empathetic, expressing interest, keeping an open mind to what is being said, not interrupting unnecessarily, giving the speaker your full attention, paraphrasing and clarifying information to ensure understanding. <i>Effective interviewing</i> could include asking appropriate questions, probing for information and testing assumptions during the interview. <i>Effective discussion</i> techniques could include contributing to a focused concise discussion, adding value to the discussion, keeping an open mind (deferring judgement) and showing interest in the discussion. Effectiveness is measured by the quality of information obtained and clarified and how much follow up is required after the face. This learning outcome allows a number of options. In documenting evidence applicants should reflect on the specific listening, interviewing and/or discussion techniques they used, how this was effective and what specific information was obtained/clarified.	• This learning outcome can be displayed by applicants across a variety of contexts, for example: - When obtaining information from a client or colleague, performing a walk-through, participating in deal structuring, etc. - While participating in meetings such as planning meetings, assessment meetings, check-in meetings on engagements, meetings with clients, etc. - When receiving instructions regarding a task to be performed. - While participating in training in any form (face to face or online). - When engaging with the SARS call centre to clarify assessments, ask technical questions, follow up on administrative delays etc. • Evidence could include: - Showing interest in the content being imparted and encouraging the speaker to relay the information being requested. - Actively listening by giving the speaker their full attention, not interrupting the speaker or just listening to respond, and paraphrasing back to show that they heard and understood what was said. - Taking notes (mentally or in writing) about what is being said and then confirming / clarifying their understanding of what was said with the speaker. - Asking questions in such a manner that they receive all the information needed to perform the work. - When leading a meeting, not speaking the whole time, but rather facilitating the meeting to give everyone an opportunity to speak.

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

X1 Communication Skills: *Effectively convey information and ideas to individuals and groups in a variety of situations in a focused way using verbal and non-verbal techniques and skills*

b) Communicate verbally using clear and concise messaging that is professional, appropriate to the audience and situation, **AND** consider cultural and language differences (**where necessary**).

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Applicants are reminded to consider each element of this learning outcome in documenting evidence, i.e. how was the verbal communication clear and concise? What made it professional and appropriate to the audience and situation? What, if any, cultural and language differences needed to be considered and how was this addressed? When communicating verbally, applicants will need to demonstrate how they: - Clearly impart the knowledge they want to in a manner that is understandable taking into account who they are speaking to and the nature of the information they are sharing. - Use appropriate language and tone depending on the person/ group they are speaking to. Communication may need to be adapted, for example, when speaking to a subordinate, peer, manager, director, client or supplier. - Consider the cultural background and language of the receiver of the information and, if necessary, adjust the manner of communication or message accordingly.	- Applicants could demonstrate verbal communication with internal and/or external stakeholders in a variety of circumstances such as: - Confirmation of their understanding and interpretation of information obtained. - Presenting and defending views/ideas in a calm, focused and polite manner, and not using hyperbole or exaggeration. - Explaining work performed to a senior or manager in a calm, focused and polite manner. - Explaining work to be performed / giving an instruction to a subordinate in such a way that that they understand what is required from them. - Participating in or leading internal and external meetings / conversations / training sessions. - Delivering a verbal presentation or addressing a group. - Applicants could demonstrate their knowledge/ understanding of language differences in cross cultural communication by: - Speaking in a common language that is understood by everyone present. - Adjusting the manner of communication to address specific cultural expectations. - Communicating in plain English and avoiding unnecessary jargon to make the message more understandable for individuals who don't have English as a first language. - Seeking/ providing clarity if the verbal/ written exchange does not lead to immediate understanding. - Applicants could ensure clear and concise messaging by : - Getting to the point. Clearly and concisely positioning the information, such as key terms, conditions, risks or findings. - Carefully considering the audience and their objectives.

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

- Ensuring that content is factual and that information has been reviewed for accuracy.
- Confidently conveying the message.
- Answering questions in a manner that conveys understanding of the matter being communicated.
- When working remotely, verbal communication could be enhanced by:
 - Keeping your camera on to build rapport and improve presence.
 - Ensuring your technology has been tested and you can confidently troubleshoot technical issues.
 - Having camera (eye) contact.
 - Ensuring your background and physical space are not distracting in the video.

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

X1 Communication Skills: *Effectively convey information and ideas to individuals and groups in a variety of situations in a focused way using verbal and non-verbal techniques and skills*

c) Communicate in writing using clear and concise messaging that is professional, appropriate to the audience and situation, considers any legal, ethical, regulatory and business requirements (**where appropriate**), **AND** considers cultural and language differences (**where necessary**)

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
The need to communicate effectively in writing will be prevalent throughout work performed by applicants. Written communication will need to be: • Understandable to the person reading it. • Sufficiently concise (gets to the point). • Appropriate to the receiver (e.g. professional, legal or informal). Applicants may need to apply professional judgement in the manner in which cross cultural communication is managed (level of technical exchange required, impact which language difference may have on the understanding of the key elements of the exchange etc.) and adjust their approach accordingly (e.g., where written communication may be preferable to verbal communication to facilitate better understanding). Applicants are reminded to consider each element of this learning outcome in documenting evidence, i.e. how was the written communication clear and concise? How was it professional and appropriate to the audience and situation? What, if any, legal, ethical, regulatory and business requirements were considered? What, if any, cultural and language differences were considered? When drafting written correspondence, such as emails or reports, the applicant should adhere to organisational guidelines and standards, consider legal and regulatory requirements, and ensure clarity and accuracy of content. Please also note that documenting evidence for this submission also reflects the ability to demonstrate this learning outcome.	• Preparing working papers or similar documentation that record what they have done in a logical manner and format. • Drafting reports, letters and memoranda in a presentable format that is understandable, grammatically correct, courteous, etc. • Drafting tax opinions, objections, appeals, payment allocation requests and provide supporting documentation to SARS. • Preparing company, directors and shareholder resolutions as part of secretarial services offered. • Drafting tax opinions, objections, appeals, payment allocation requests and providing supporting documentation to SARS for the clients in their portfolio. • Presenting information (formal and informal) to internal and external stakeholders e.g., financial results, proposed journal entries, journals for uncorrected misstatements (ensuring that such journal descriptions are clear and understandable). • Corresponding appropriately via email with clients, team members, supervisors, managers, partners and other stakeholders taking into account the level of formality, logical layout, not too long, spelling and grammar, etc. • Communicating informally in writing on platforms such as MS Teams, WhatsApp, etc. (e.g., posting a question/comment in the chat function on MS Teams or Zoom during a meeting or training session in such a way that it is clear what is being asked/what is meant by the comment).

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

X2 Management & Leadership skills: *Work with others and manage and lead teams*

(a) Proactively influence others to deliver high quality work that supports organisational goals through role-modelling of appropriate behaviour, providing training, advice, support and/or mentorship; and/or by transferring knowledge, skills and experience

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
This can be applied widely, and “others” could include subordinates, peers, clients, suppliers etc. This learning outcome is specifically in the context of taking ownership of a desired outcome and influencing others to work towards achieving that outcome. In documenting evidence, it should be clear what actions were taken to proactively influence and the impact on others in delivering high quality work that supports organisational goals.	• Motivating subordinates or peers who may be struggling, leading from the front (setting the tone) and/or being a mentor in relation to work and / or studies, etc. • Supporting, guiding, advising and providing opportunities for team members or junior staff on both professional and technical aspects and allowing them to then grow and expand in their roles. • Coaching / assisting / supervising subordinates. • Reviewing the work of more junior team members and giving performance feedback in a balanced and equitable way. • Checking in with other members on the team regularly to determine whether they are on track with regards to their budgets and whether they need assistance. • Providing training on difficult or new processes to peers or subordinates. • Meeting with subordinates before an assignment starts to discuss any development needs that could be addressed during the engagement and then working with those individuals to encourage them to work towards these. • When leading a team, create a pleasant working environment with weekly check-in and motivational sessions being set up for staff. • Engaging with each of the team members to better understand them as individuals to identify what best motivates them and what difficulties there are that may stifle their learning. • When managing a project: - Outlining the goals and scope of project in a way that inspires others to deliver. - Setting KPIs together, outlining how performance will be measured against standards - Managing time, milestone completion, feedback, queries, quality assessment etc. - Providing feedback, recognising achievements and encouraging improvement.

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

X2 Management & Leadership skills: *Work with others and manage and lead teams*

b) Oversee team members' progress **AND/OR** performance in the context of tasks, plans, projects or operational activities

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
The learning outcome refers to the ability to effectively manage and monitor the work of individuals within a team while working on various tasks, plans, projects, or day-to-day operations. It involves taking on a leadership role to ensure that team members are making progress, meeting their responsibilities, and performing at their best to achieve common goals. Applicants can supervise / manage a team and assess the progress of individuals within that team with respect to the achievement of their goals.	In a leadership role, applicants could demonstrate this learning outcome by: • Developing milestones for the project, communicating them to the team and obtaining buy-in. • Outlining the different deliverables within the milestones and assigning roles and responsibilities. • Communicating with team members in advance of set deliverables to see to what extent they are on track to achieve them. • Holding team members accountable for meeting set expectations including deadlines/ deliverables and budgets. • Helping to resolve issues that have the potential to cause delays or budget overruns. • Working with individuals in a team to monitor the degree to which they are meeting expectations regarding deadlines, budgets and deliverables. • Creating a calendar progress meeting plan for feedback and tracking to take place and/ or using a digital tool to track progress. • Following up progress with delegated tasks at regular intervals, for example, requesting regular updates on progress and monitoring these against expectations. • Communicating with team members in advance of set deliverables to see to what extent they are on track to achieve them. • Reviewing the work of less experienced team members, assessing the accuracy and completeness of their work, providing constructive feedback on areas for improvement, and offering guidance on how to enhance their performance. • Performing post-deliverable de-brief sessions where performance is measured against expectations and feedback.

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

X2 Management & Leadership skills: *Work with others and manage and lead teams*

c) Display effective delegation skills

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
This learning outcome focuses on the ability to delegate tasks to others to achieve required outcomes. Just telling someone to do something or just giving someone work to do is not evidence of effective delegation skills. For delegation to be effective, the person delegating the task(s) could: • Identify what tasks could be delegated and to whom they could be delegated, taking cognisance of the expertise and skills required to perform the tasks – i.e., assessing their skill and will levels to determine whether the work you want to give them is appropriate. • Clearly explain what is required (this might include training where necessary) and ensure that the person to whom the task(s) was delegated understands exactly what is required of them including the objectives, scope and expectations regarding output. • Set expectations of when the delegated task(s) must be completed. • Note that delegation is not an abdication of responsibility and therefore holding those to whom they delegated the tasks accountable by: - Following up with team members on their progress in terms of the task(s) delegated to them and assist when the team member needs guidance to complete the delegated work to the required standard; and - Taking the necessary steps (which might include communication with a more senior person/manager/partner) to ensure that the delegated work gets done timeously and to mitigate any risks that arise. • Give performance feedback in a balanced way pointing out 'what you did well' in addition to pointing out 'what you could improve/ do differently'.	• Tasking a junior member of the engagement/ project team with administrative/ logistical activities such as making sure the engagement team has the necessary equipment such as internet dongles and extension cords and following up to ensure that the team member attends to the required tasks timeously. • Assigning components of an engagement/ project to other team members by identifying the right people for the right job and delegating work to the correct levels and then: - following up on the progress of delegated tasks with other team members/ holding team meetings to assess progress with delegated tasks. - ensuring that the team works together to meet the defined deliverables. - reporting back on the status of the job to the supervisor/manager/partner. • In a leadership role/project leader role, applicants could demonstrate effective delegation by: - Defining goals and objectives for individuals and the team. - Defining the deliverables. - Creating and maintaining organisational alignment. - Clearly defining team roles and responsibilities. - Communicating the strategy for initiation and execution. - Carefully budgeting and scheduling. - Identifying and communicating priorities and milestones. - Establishing accountability and responsibility. - Creating a communication plan. - Monitoring and measuring progress against milestones and deliverables. - Providing ongoing feedback regarding progress and quality.

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

X2 Management & Leadership skills: *Work with others and manage and lead teams*

d) Manage conflict between individuals **AND/OR** across teams by:

- (i) Recognising constructive versus destructive conflict and managing that conflict; **AND/OR**
- (ii) Assuming shared responsibility for the outcome of conflict; **AND/OR**
- (iii) Valuing individual contributions by team members; **AND/OR**
- (iv) Providing constructive feedback (both downward and/or upward)

What could this look like in practice?

Conflict can arise in many ways, for example, between colleagues or engagement team members, when engaging with stakeholders, between junior and senior staff and/or between auditors and clients.

Conflict may arise when there is disagreement between affected parties about something important, but this does not have to be destructive or aggressive.

Constructive conflict can be a healthy team dynamic which allows positive disagreement and promotes creativity, growth, and better solutions through diverse perspectives and open dialogue.

Destructive conflict is harmful disagreement which damages relationships and impedes progress reflected in negative communication and lack of teamwork.

Constructive feedback is about providing specific, helpful information, aimed at improving performance, skills, or behaviours in a positive and supportive manner.

There are various models about how best to manage conflict with one of the most popular models suggesting 5 alternative strategies to deal with conflict:

1. Avoidance (no resolution is obtained).
2. Play to win (at all costs – only one side wins).
3. Accommodation (agree to disagree - usually to preserve harmony but often with unresolved issues remaining).
4. Compromise (each party gives up something to reach a solution but neither party ultimately feels satisfied).
5. Collaboration (working together to find a win-win solution).

The optimal strategy will vary depending on the circumstances although the optimum strategy is usually to achieve an outcome that is a win-win for both parties.

In documenting evidence, applicants should clearly describe and conflict and consider each of the elements of the learning outcome.

Examples

- Examples of conflict situations which applicants might encounter and for which evidence of demonstrating this learning outcome could be submitted include:
 - Rating differences during performance reviews.
 - Disagreement / differences of opinion about the correct accounting treatment for a transaction.
 - Disagreement / differences of opinion about the most appropriate audit procedure/ process or approach to a task.
 - Disagreement relating to timesheet entries (rejected time), approval of overtime, leave, etc.
 - Disagreements / differences of opinion relating to the number of hours needed to complete an engagement.
- Applicants could also demonstrate this learning outcome when participating in forums in which contentious issues are discussed.
- To address the various aspects of this learning outcome:
 - Show an understanding of the differing points of view being expressed (through applying active listening skills) and then apply the appropriate conflict resolution strategy to achieve the desired outcome. Conflict should be resolved in such a way that both parties feel satisfied with the outcome.
 - Recognise when conflict occurs/ is occurring and would then take the initiative to attempt to work with parties to resolve it.
 - Assist with conflict resolution, for example, between members within the team or between team members and the client.

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

X2 Management & Leadership skills: *Work with others and manage and lead teams*

(e) While leading **OR** managing others, treat them respectfully, courteously and equitably

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
This is applicable widely. "Others" could be colleagues, subordinates, clients, suppliers, etc. There will be many instances where applicants are required to lead or manage others. Even though in a more senior position, the applicant still needs to be respectful, courteous (polite) and equitable (fair) in their interactions. When in more senior positions with associated greater responsibilities and pressures, it may become more difficult to do this. Applicants are reminded to consider each element of this learning outcome in documenting evidence: How did you lead/ manage respectfully? How did you lead/ manage courteously? How did you lead/ manage equitably? The applicant should cover the specific behaviours that made these interactions respectful/ courteous/ equitable.	• Treating subordinates with respect, courtesy and equity in all their interactions with them, especially where things don't go according to plan. • Providing constructive, positive feedback in a respectful and equitable (fair) manner. • Being respectful, courteous and equitable (fair) when having difficult conversations with colleagues/ supervisors/ managers and partners regarding work completed or performance assessments. • Dealing respectfully and courteously with stakeholders or client staff who have different levels of education and understanding. This may require keeping the peace while standing their ground. • Interacting courteously with clients with respect to outstanding information requested, items to be reported in the management letter, or misstatements being questioned, with respect and courtesy. • Equitable allocation of work within the team that does not reflect favouritism. • Maintaining composure when speaking to Regulator/SARS call centre staff on urgent matters. • Being respectful and courteous when delivering training and responding to questions. • Collecting debt in a respectful, courteous manner.

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

X3 People skills: *People skills are patterns of behaviour and behavioral interactions. Among people, it is an umbrella term for skills under three related set of abilities: personal effectiveness, interaction skills, and intercession skills*

a) Display personal influence **AND/OR** negotiation skills to persuade others and/or build consensus

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
This learning outcome essentially revolves around the ability of the applicant to sway others' thoughts, opinions, decisions or actions through their approach, skills, knowledge, and persuasive abilities and / or to negotiate with others to reach mutually beneficial agreements or solutions in situations involving conflicting interests or goals. The outcome of this could be to - Build consensus, i.e. promote agreement and shared understanding among a group by engaging participants, facilitating open communication, and seeking common ground to reach a collective decision or solution. - Persuade others through effective communication and reasoning, encouraging them to adopt a specific viewpoint or take desired action. While there are many approaches to negotiation tactics, there are five common steps that most effective negotiations follow to achieve a successful outcome: 1. Prepare 2. Exchange information 3. Clarify 4. Bargain and problem-solve 5. Conclude and implement It is important to note that this learning outcome can only be demonstrated where someone is not in agreement with a proposed course of action or opinion. If others agreed with you or were happy to go along with the proposed action, there would be no need for persuasion or negotiation. In documenting evidence, it is therefore important to first outline the "disagreement" and then show how you influenced, negotiated and/or persuaded the individual/ group to change/ open their mind(s) and/or, the consensus you built.	- Convincing a colleague, manager or anyone else to take a course of action when they were initially reluctant to see your point of view. - Convincing a client to process a correcting journal entry they initially disagreed with processing. - Suggesting a different course of action or ideas and convincing others to support this. - Successfully advertising an event and getting people to attend who were initially reluctant to do so. - Building consensus (where there are different viewpoints) around a possible preferred plan of action to address a lack of audit evidence, scope limitation or difference of opinion. - Negotiating timelines and deadlines for work that must be completed (with clients and supervisors/managers/partners). This would need to involve persuading them to agree to your suggested timeframes that are different to what they originally envisaged. - When requesting information from a client, negotiating which information is needed by which date to complete the engagement, where a client was initially reluctant to provide this information. - Persuading the partner(s)/HR/training officer to send subordinates and/ or other staff on a training course. - Persuading others to participate in office team sporting events/CSR projects when their skills are required and where they initially don't want to participate. - Persuading others to support their idea in a group situation e.g., when planning a function. This would require a demonstration of what the other person's initial viewpoint was and how you managed to change that. - Negotiating sponsorship for an event or publication where there was initial reluctance to support it. - Steps that could be taken to demonstrate the learning outcome include: - Obtaining an understanding of team members' behaviours, beliefs and personalities to

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

understand their way of approaching and solving problems and use this insight to obtain buy-in for decisions proposed.

- Using personal strengths to guide others towards the desired outcomes by clearly articulating thought processes followed and ensuring that the process is backed by logical arguments.
- Appreciating the reasons for differences between team members and using this to build towards a common understanding.

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

X4 Relationship-building skills: *Build authentic relationships and effective collaboration across a wide range of teams and stakeholders*

(a) Identify **AND** apply strategies to proactively build relationships that extend professional networks, alliances and/or cross-functional business partnerships

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
This could apply to any professional working relationships and networks. Work can only be conducted by building relationships with those whom we interact – clients, suppliers, colleagues, subordinates and senior staff. We are very seldom adequately equipped to be able to do everything ourselves. We operate as part of a wider team of experts, and it is important that we develop these networks of experts to draw on when we need them. This learning outcome means recognising and implementing intentional approaches to create and nurture connections with individuals, groups, and organisations beyond the applicant's immediate circle. These strategies involve taking active steps to expand professional networks and form alliances with others in a deliberate and purposeful manner. The aim is to foster collaborative relationships, share knowledge, resources, and opportunities, and ultimately contribute to personal and collective growth, innovation, and success. These strategic relationships that we seek to develop benefit both parties. Networks should be developed both within the organisation and outside. Display of this learning outcome requires three elements: 1. The identification of a strategy to build a relationship. This involves deciding on what needs to be done and how it should be done. 2. Applying the identified strategy. This involves following through on the strategy to achieve its desired objectives. How was the strategy implemented/ applied? What specific steps were taken to build the relationship? 3. A resultant extension to the applicant's network. Applied strategies that do not extend their network would not demonstrate this learning outcome. In documenting evidence applicants should take care to address these three elements and identify the specific relationships built.	• Evidence could include strategies such as: - Building, and maintaining a LinkedIn profile and connecting with specific individuals you may be able to draw on in the future, or who might approach you in the future. - Identify external stakeholders and build trust, rapport, and relationships via collaboration. - Participate in networking events, corporate sport leagues, CSI initiatives, conferences or recruitment drives and use the opportunity to actively network. - Participate in workplace/inter-office/inter-firm forums to consider matters of mutual concern/relevance. - Extend your network and build trust by contributing technical content to periodicals and newsletters made available to peers and clients. - Volunteering to run training for internal and/or external stakeholders. Evidence should show the application of the identified strategies, including detail about how this was applied in building a <i>specific</i> relationship or relationships. For example, at a networking event, who did you specifically target? What did you do to build the relationship with that individual/ group? How did this specifically extend your network, alliances and/or cross-functional business partnerships? • Applicants could identify key partnerships and apply appropriate strategies to strengthen their relationships. Strategies could include: - Being flexible. - Communicating clearly and regularly. - Gaining trust through delivering on promises made. - Staying consistent with messaging. - Meeting up with stakeholders. - Using data management/communication platforms to allow stakeholders to provide input.

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

X5 Teamwork: *Interrelated abilities that let you work effectively in an organised group. Teamwork happens when people cooperate and use their individual skills to achieve common goals.*

(a) Work effectively with others as a resourceful and trustworthy team member through sharing knowledge, cooperating and / or collaborating to achieve team goals

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Part of being a professional is that applicants need to be able to work and support their teams by: • Working effectively with others – being able to get along with others and being there to assist others to achieve common team goals. • Delivering on promises and building trust. • Sharing information and collaborating with others to achieve team goals, including imparting information to other team members and facilitating cooperation (working together) and collaboration between all individuals within a team, so that each member may function independently to achieve their individual allocated tasks, with the aim of achieving a team goal. This learning outcome can be demonstrated in a variety of contexts, including outside of the formal working environment for example, when participating in a corporate social event such as action netball, action cricket or the in-house team building functions, <i>provided the evidence can be corroborated.</i>	• Applicants could demonstrate this learning outcome by: - Creating or actively participating in information sharing sessions. - Bringing know-how to team projects for the benefit of others. - Collaborating with colleagues from different backgrounds. - Actively cooperating on tasks, offering to lead aspects of projects, attending team meetings, providing input without being asked and helping others within the team. - Participating in cross-functional and cross-disciplinary projects. • Applicants could reflect on how they: - Communicated honestly with team members about abilities, progress on work, issues, etc. - Delivered high quality work in a timely manner. - Were solution driven being resourceful in a proactive manner. - Contributed to a positive work culture. - Worked overtime during tight deadlines to ensure the deliverable is achieved within regulatory, legislative or predetermined requirements. - Shared knowledge/ ideas.

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

X6 Self-management: *Plan and manage personal development and appreciate how personal strengths and weaknesses may impact work, learning and goal attainment*

- a) Display self-management skills to work independently **AND** manage time and work pressure, being cognisant of the impact of this on others

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Working independently entails applicants being able to work on their own without continued supervision/ input of their manager, while still delivering work of the required quality and including appropriate content. Some tasks require applicants to work independently, whether or not they are working as part of a team. This would include sections of a project or an audit which they have to complete individually and perhaps even without input from peers, colleagues, or seniors. In almost all assignments there will be a requirement to complete it within a stipulated time frame (the deadline) and within stipulated time constraints (such as budgeted hours). Applicants need to manage their time in such a way that the deadline is met without exceeding the budgeted hours to be spent. Applicants need to demonstrate an understanding that the work they are allocated has a knock-on effect for the team. If they miss their deadlines, this impacts on others who in turn may then not be able to meet their deadlines. Managing work pressure can involve working with diligence and persistence, which may entail that applicants push through and commit to achieving a deliverable. Self-management is displayed through the efficient planning and prioritising of tasks to achieve goals, meet deadlines, and managing time and related stresses/pressure whilst effectively and timeously communicating with colleagues to keep them updated as to your progress. Working hard to achieve work targets while maintaining a balance with personal goals and commitments. Applicants must be able to: - prioritise more urgent and important tasks, - plan for those that are important but can be done later, - delegate where required (involve others at the right time when the situation calls for it), - remain motivated and avoid being distracted. - deliver the required outputs on time.	Applicants could demonstrate how they: - Are able to work independently and manage the tasks assigned to them. - Are able to work without supervision, maintaining the quality of work produced and remaining reliable and transparent in activities and accountable for outcomes. - Are self-driven and motivated to complete tasks without procrastinating (i.e. not waiting until the latest possible time to complete tasks, especially when unsupervised) and deliver high quality outputs, maximising the use of resources. - Apply the Eisenhower Matrix (Urgent-Important Matrix) when allocated multiple tasks to self-manage and deliver within specified timelines. - Adhere to project deadlines and ensure that the planning and all sub-tasks are completed and submitted within the given deadline. - Provide feedback on work progress towards achieving project goals to line managers. - Have an understanding of the impact of their work on others and manage any challenges (including proactively communicating any issues) that could impact on delivery. - Clearly identify tasks allocated to them and communicate effectively on timelines, including articulating delays, providing solutions and reprioritising where necessary. - Ensure the resource management system (e.g., the control of budgeted and actual hours) is kept accurate and up to date for the team. - Identify and manage any tasks allocated to shared service centers or outsourced to experts including managing the related budgets, deadlines and outcomes. - Complete and/or manage the budget. Identify any client or other delays in a timeous manner and adjust the plan/budget in order to deliver an optimal outcome. - Set milestones/ targets for themselves for client

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

engagements as well as for internal processes (such as assessment).

- Schedule progress meetings with seniors to keep them advised.
- Monitor actual time spent on a job vs budgeted time per section and communicating any concerns identified to their immediate senior timeously.
- Complete work within allocated time limits, without supervision, and while meeting the stated objectives without receiving lots of review queries (and not waiting until the latest possible moment to complete a task, especially when unsupervised).
- Complete the assigned work in time and to the appropriate quality levels, despite obstacles or challenges being encountered.
- Avoid interruptions, managing work expectations and coping with the influx of emails/calls/notifications, including minimising the use of social media or other distractions during working hours where this does not relate to the task being completed.

X: RELATIONAL ACUMEN

X7 Managing Others: *Refers to working with others and managing and leading teams*

a) Develop, organise and prioritise tasks (recognising their resource constraints) and manage progress so as to achieve professional commitments/outcomes

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
While the previous learning outcome relates to the management of one's own time in the context of allocated work, this learning outcome focuses on the applicant's ability to manage others. This learning outcome is associated with a more senior role where applicants are given responsibility for assignments that involve the use of multiple resources (including staff, time, and technology for example). Applicants will need to keep the end objectives in mind and run the project in such a way that these objectives are met. The learning outcome addresses both the initial planning process to ensure the objectives are met and the subsequent management of the project to respond to matters arising during its execution in a way that ensures the objectives are still met.	Applicants will get the opportunity to demonstrate this learning outcome when they assume responsibility for running engagements/ projects of any kind. They can demonstrate this through: • Determining or suggesting staff allocations necessary for the engagement (number and levels of experience). • Setting time budgets for engagement staff that are realistic. • Setting time frames within which allocated sections of work need to be completed in order for the end deadlines to be met. • Attending to administrative matters (such as travel logistics, accommodation, necessary software and hardware) that need to be arranged for the assignment to be completed. • Preparing documented project plans / budgets that reflect this. Applicants need to demonstrate their ability to manage the assignment in terms of the plans established above. They should demonstrate an ability to respond to changes in circumstances that require the original plan to be amended in such a way that the original outcomes are still achieved. These instances could include circumstances such as: • Staff who become ill. • Unavailability of expected information. • Tasks taking longer (or shorter) than originally expected.

W: DIGITAL ACUMEN

W1 Computational thinking: *Computational thinking is a set of problem-solving methods that involve expressing problems and their solutions in ways that a computer could also execute.*

(a) Decompose a problem into smaller sub-problems **AND** then find patterns (similarities, shared characteristics) among the sub-problems **AND** determine relevant characteristics **AND/OR** discard irrelevant characteristics

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
This can be applied in any context where a problem can be decomposed into smaller sub-components. Finding solutions to problems often starts with being able to analyse the situation and break the problem down into contributing elements or aspects, which can then each be addressed as part of the overall solution. Finding patterns (similarities, shared characteristics) and determining relevant characteristics and/or discarding irrelevant characteristics can be applied in sorting, filtering and analysis of any information/data or in forming technical opinions where information is selected or disregarded based on its relevancy to the problem faced. This acumen may therefore be demonstrated together with other acumens related to problem-solving or data-analytics considering: - the constituent elements that form part of the problem and how best to then address them. - patterns/similarities/shared characteristics are relevant/could be useful. - relevant characteristics to be separated from irrelevant characteristics? Applicants are reminded that this is a digital acumen, so even though the learning outcome could be applied in the analysis of any problem, the evidence does need to show the ability to do this when using technology.	- Extracting financial reporting data from the system and searching/filtering for specific information such as debtors that exceed credit terms. - Reconciling detailed information to trial balances, valuation reports and actuarial models. - Importing the client's trial balance into CaseWare (or other audit software) and determining: - Lines that should not be imported – totals, items with no balances, etc. - Account numbers (making sure of appropriate format) - Account descriptions - Balance to import – whether current year or prior year, debit or credit, etc. - Preparing a population prior to extracting a sample: - Do transactions share the same characteristics - Is there any need to stratify the population prior to selection - Is there any need to exclude any transactions (tested elsewhere or not relevant to the objective of the test) - Converting the general ledger received from the client to a more user-friendly format where users can navigate it through filters or pivot tables: - Format of account numbers – how many characters, etc. - Fields required (e.g., account number, account name, date, transaction number, description, amount, etc.) - Contra entries to be excluded or included - Any amalgamations required to suit reporting formats - Searching/filtering for unusual journal entries: - Differentiating between weekdays, weekends, and public holidays - Format of journal numbers

W: DIGITAL ACUMEN

- Users who are authorised to process journals as well as those not authorised to process journals.
- When evaluating inventory controls, determining relevant characteristics of the inventory items and discarding irrelevant characteristics. For example, identifying inventory items that are most likely to be stolen or misappropriated, based on factors such as value, size, or ease of concealment. In contrast, characteristics such as colour or brand might be irrelevant to assessing the risk of inventory theft. By determining the relevant characteristics and discarding the irrelevant characteristics, focus the audit procedures on the areas of highest risk and maximise the efficiency of the audit.
- When analysing a company's payroll data, determining relevant characteristics of the employees and discarding irrelevant characteristics. For example, identifying employees who are most likely to be paid inappropriately, based on factors such as job title, salary level, or hours worked. In contrast, characteristics such as gender or age might be irrelevant to identifying payroll irregularities. By determining the relevant characteristics and discarding the irrelevant characteristics, focus the audit procedures on the areas of highest risk and reduce the risk of bias or discrimination.

W: DIGITAL ACUMEN

W1 Computational thinking: *Computational thinking is a set of problem-solving methods that involve expressing problems and their solutions in ways that a computer could also execute.*

(b) Write an algorithm to solve a problem, using any programming language (such as Microsoft VBA, Python)
OR evaluate the appropriateness of a presented algorithm to solve a problem.

What could this look like in practice?

In mathematics and computer science, an algorithm is a finite sequence of well-defined instructions, typically used to solve a class of specific problems or to perform a computation.

The algorithm should be appropriate in the circumstances and should actually solve a problem. **Therefore, applicants must demonstrate that they understand what they are trying to achieve with the algorithm, and what value or impact it has on the desired procedure.**

The learning outcome offers two options. Applicants can:

1. Write an algorithm themselves OR
2. They can evaluate an existing algorithm that someone else has written / designed.

In both instances, applicants would need to demonstrate some level of coding ability. For the second option, it is not sufficient to evaluate whether the output of the algorithm is appropriate. The algorithm itself should be evaluated.

Please note that this learning outcome is not the same "Use spreadsheet software in an accounting/business context (e.g., working papers; data analytics using advanced techniques, and knowledge of effective utilization (including short cut keys, macros, pivot tables and other advanced excel functions)." **Using the advanced functions in Excel does not show that you can write an algorithm.**

Excel is spreadsheet software used for data analysis and calculations, while VBA is a programming language used to extend Excel's functionality and automate tasks. The reference to Microsoft VBA indicates that you could use this programming language to write/ evaluate the code to automate a procedure or solve a problem.

Applicants are not limited to Python or Microsoft VBA. Any programming language can be considered in addressing this learning outcome and the most appropriate one would depend on the action that is required, for example, HTML to update the basic structure and content of a webpage or SQL to process information from a database.

Examples

- Use Microsoft VBA to write an algorithm to eliminate or select data with a specific characteristic (e.g., date ranges, rand amounts, locations, reference numbers etc.) and use the specific data selected to then perform a procedure. Note that this is not the same as simply applying a filter in Excel or using a predefined function.
- Use SQL coding to pull data from the system for financial reporting purposes.
- Examples of scenarios where algorithms could be used (or evaluated) include:
 - Extracting specific information from a population for further testing (such as monetary unit or systematic sampling selections).
 - Identifying outliers within a population (items falling outside of predetermined ranges or field characteristics) as potential risks (such as the analysis of journal entries for those that present unusual characteristics).
 - Automating calculations that use standard inputs.
 - Automating the formatting the general ledger data.
 - Organising data
 - Finding specific information within a dataset.

W: DIGITAL ACUMEN

W2 Data knowledge and strategy: *Understanding the types of financial and non-financial information available within an entity, identifying possible relationships between data sets, requesting the required data (including normalisation (clean-up) thereof), understanding the security and privacy risks associated with the use, storage and transfer of data, and understanding the importance of the implementation of sufficient data protection policies and controls. Advanced data management should be performed by expert data scientists and/or IT experts*

(a) Evaluate data strategies or policies that deal with data protection, privacy, intellectual property rights, legal and regulatory requirements, **AND/OR** ethical issues in data management, data storage, or data transfer.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
An entity's data strategy should ensure that data is treated as an asset and that data resources can be used, shared and transferred easily, efficiently, safely, and consistently across multiple projects or applications, as required. A data strategy should establish common methods, practices, and processes to manage, manipulate and share data across the entity in a consistent way. This should include establishing and implementing controls, policies and procedures to identify, assess and address risks associated with the transfer of data. Data transferred from one location to another can include automated transfers of data (uploading information from one computer to another location, for example) and manual transfers (via devices like flash drives, for example). Data strategy should ensure compliance with relevant data privacy legislation such as GDPR and POPIA and should ensure that data is used in an ethical manner, respecting the rights of individuals and organisations to privacy. Applicants would need to first establish how a company manages, stores and transfers its data and would then evaluate the extent to which these strategies / policies adequately address aspects such as: • Protection (unauthorised access) • Privacy (unauthorised access to personal or private data of individuals) • Regulation / legislation (such as POPIA or GDPR requirements, where applicable) • Intellectual property rights (such as patents, copyrights, trademarks, and trade secrets.) • Ethics (use of data for the right purposes, respecting the rights of stakeholders to that data)	• In any situation where data is transferred, applicants would need to: - Obtain an understanding of the type and nature of data being transferred, processed and stored by an entity. - Consider aspects such as the nature of the information, how sensitive the information is, where it is being stored and how secure that location is, and whether there are any legal responsibilities associated with that information (such as POPIA for example). - Evaluate the degree to which policies mitigate risks such as unauthorised access to that data / unauthorised viewing of information (especially sensitive or confidential information); protection of confidential information; non-compliance with legal requirements around the storage and use of certain information (e.g., POPIA / GDPR requirements); loss of / unauthorised deletion of / changes to / corruption of the data; theft of data; or hardware/software failure. • In evaluating data strategies or policies, consider the degree to which the entity has adequate controls in place to address identified risks associated with the processing and storage of data. Examples of controls that they might expect to find incorporated into policies could include unique usernames and passwords; making use of tables of user rights; making use of OTPs and other security measures; physical access controls to data storage locations; system logs and notification reports; adequate back-up protocols; appropriate anti-virus/firewalls; appropriate encryption of software and files where necessary; or validation checks reconciling sent information to received information. • Develop data retention policies, implement encryption protocols, and conduct privacy impact assessments to safeguard sensitive information and mitigate ethical

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risks associated with data handling.

- The Auditing Standards require that auditors obtain an understanding of the entity's information processing activities, including its data and information, the resources to be used in such activities and the policies that define, for significant classes of transactions, account balances and disclosures:
 - How information flows through the entity's information system.
 - The accounting records, specific accounts in the financial statements and other supporting records relating to the flow of information in the information system.
 - The financial reporting process used to prepare the entity's financial statements, including disclosures.
 - The entity's resources, including the IT environment, relevant to the above.

Obtain the necessary understanding of a client's data strategies or policies when obtaining this understanding during the planning process.

Further guidance around IT exists in the Auditing Standards.

W: DIGITAL ACUMEN

W3 Data analytics: *Performing basic data modelling or where necessary requesting advanced data modelling by experts, and then interpreting the results, concluding and reporting/presenting/communicating as applicable. The W2 competency comprises both a technical computer skill and the ability to apply the underlying technical competency*

(a) Use processes of inspection, extraction, transformation, loading, modelling, and interpreting data (through the use of data analytic software tools such as ACL, IDEA, PowerBI, or advanced Excel™ functions) to solve a defined business or audit problem

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
With the world becoming more data intensive, a key skill is the ability of the applicants to be able to make sense of large volumes of data. It is important to remember that the purpose of data analysis and data modelling is to find solutions to challenges experienced that assist in the decision-making process. Therefore, once applicants have completed the analysis and fully understood the problem/challenge being faced, the next logical step would be to interpret and/or evaluate the results of the analysis to solve a defined business or engagement problem and suggest and/or evaluate further steps to be taken. The "defined business or audit problem" should be clear from the evidence. Data inspection is the act of closely (carefully or critically) examining data, documents or systems and includes: • Understanding the elements of a specific business process by documenting the workflow. • Defining the problem to be solved and determining clear measurement priorities. • Identification of data sources appropriate to solving the defined problem, and • Understanding the nature, distribution and limitations of the identified data, and that of the population to be tested. Extraction is the process of selectively retrieving specific data or information from a larger source or dataset and includes: • Identification of inherent complexities of data extraction (e.g., compatibility of systems; using multiple sources; validity of source data; legal and regulatory challenges, and other process inhibitors). • Extraction of the required data from the identified data sources; and • Coordination of the use of technology and platforms to enhance extraction of relevant information and data. Transformation is the process of changing, converting, or structuring data from its original format into a new format	• Data modelling can be applied in various aspects of a business. It could be as simple as a forecast production volume module, to an expected credit loss module, to an impairment assessment or valuation (note the possible ability to demonstrate this learning outcome while auditing accounting estimates). • Examples of where applicants could provide evidence of how they use data analytic tools include when: - Performing substantive tests of detail to generate exception reports highlighting outliers in populations. - Performing CAATs for any audit purposes where the use of these CAATs incorporates an analysis of data, e.g., Excel Filters and Pivot tables, ACL, IDEA etc. - Developing expectations for predictive analytical reviews through extracting relevant data to model expectations. - Performing preliminary analytical review procedures to analyse ratios, relationships, and trends. • When documenting evidence, ensure that it is evident that they are able to interpret and/or evaluate the results of the analysis to solve a defined business problem or engagement problem. For example: identify the need to determine the impairment value of inventory at hand and apply this acumen as follows: - Inspection – inspecting the raw data entered into the organisations stock system to determine how the system processes the information to reach the end value that is displayed on the reports. This could include a walk-through of a transaction from start to finish to determine if reliance could be placed on the information. - Extraction - understanding how the stock system works to determine how to extract the required information, including understanding in what format the information will be extracted and whether this is compatible with the firm software,

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that is more suitable for analysis, reporting, or other specific purposes and includes:

- Identification of the effort (time and resources) needed to transform and prepare data for analysis by considering standardization of fields and records; de-duplication of records; and verification of anomalies; and
- Sorting data into logical order and data types such as text, numbers, alphanumeric form, video, or audio.

Loading is the process of transferring or importing prepared data from various sources into a data storage system, such as a database or data warehouse and includes:

- Evaluation of storage and processing capabilities for the purpose of loading a full dataset; and
- Using statistical modelling techniques to reduce the data set down to a valid, yet manageable size.

Once these phases have been completed, **modelling** (the process of creating mathematical or computational representations of real-world situations based on data) can be done using appropriate software tools.

In documenting evidence Applicants would need to show how they can demonstrate each of the five processes in the learning outcome, even if this is across different sets of evidence.

if it's accurate from what the input was into the system etc.

- Transformation – understanding the reporting functionality of the stock system and transforming the underlying data into the format required.
- Loading – downloading the information in csv format for reporting purposes.
- Modelling data – use PowerBI to display graphs for the movement of inventory during the year together with industry norms.

W: DIGITAL ACUMEN

W4 Automation: refers to the technology by which a process or procedure is performed with minimal human assistance

(a) Identify opportunities to automate **AND/OR** modernise processes **AND** evaluate the benefits and risks associated with this.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Applicants need to appreciate the continuous development of technology and be alert to emerging technology that can be adopted within the organisation or by clients to improve operations and align business processes to best and modern business practices. This learning outcome requires applicants to be able to identify processes that <i>could</i> potentially be automated or modernized using technology. It is important to remember that applicants need to then also be able to identify the benefits and risks associated with this. It is important to note here that applicants do not need to implement or use automation in order to achieve proficiency in this learning outcome. The focus is on the ability to identify opportunities to implement or use automation and to evaluate the benefits and risks associated with automating/ modernising the process. It is important for applicants to include their evaluation (reasons for and against) in support of their decision about whether the identified possible automation could be useful or not in specific circumstances. In doing this, applicants should consider benefits associated with possible automation such as improved efficiency, cost-saving, reduced risk of error, or reduced risk of theft, for example. Applicants should also consider the risks associated with the identified automation such as unfamiliarity with complex systems, costs associated with training or upskilling staff, inappropriate implementation of these systems, increased complexity associated with tailoring or changing these systems, or increased reliance/ dependence on systems that are outside the control of the organisation.	• There are many examples of processes that applicants might identify as lending themselves to automation and modernisation such as: - Machine learning, data-mining techniques for customer data (e.g. purchase trends, commonly purchased products etc.) to enhance customer experience with a view of improving a service or product offering and customer experience (e.g. through suggested products, discounts announcements on commonly purchased products etc.). - Programming in the production process to use past data, current trends and industry best practices to solve production or service offering problems as well as improving the production/ service offered. - Tools such as Power BI, Excel (macros, VBA etc.) to automate routine tasks e.g. routine data collection, processing, creating a basic working paper or schedule, analysis, real time dashboards creation, etc. - Power Automate to enhance efficiency and productivity through automation of data collection, sharing, routine tasks alerts/reminders, etc. - Customer chat bots to attend to general customer queries on company websites, social media support lines etc. - Cloud-based accounting solutions (e.g., Xero Accounting). - Automated Banking Applications. - Customised interfaces between external applications and the accounting software. - Automated updating of inventory/asset registers e.g., using Hand-held barcode scanners. - Biometric systems that generate payroll information based on attendance. - Cognitive computing (programming computers to emulate human thinking, making use of AI (artificial intelligence) and other underlying technologies such as machine learning, deep

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learning, natural language processing, or speech recognition), including:

- Automated help bots on websites to deal with large volumes of customer enquiries.
- Automated voice response systems to call centers or companies that rely on telephonic interactions with customers.

W: DIGITAL ACUMEN

W5 New developments and protocols (e.g., artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, Internet of Things etc.)

(a) Identify opportunities to use new developments and protocols to address accounting and business problems, limitations, risks, etc.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Applicants must be able to identify opportunities to address accounting and business problems, limitations, or risks through the use of emerging technology. Limitations could include potential drawbacks or weaknesses associated with a particular technology or process. In the context of accounting and auditing, limitations might include the potential for errors or biases in data analysis algorithms, or the risk of data breaches or cyberattacks associated with cloud-based computing or other emerging technologies. Although there is some overlap with the previous learning outcome, this learning outcome is broader and focused on the use of new developments and protocols. New developments are emerging technologies or methodologies that have recently been developed and are not yet widely adopted or understood. Examples of new developments in the context of accounting and auditing might include blockchain, artificial intelligence, or robotic process automation. Protocols are a set of rules or guidelines that govern the way in which a particular technology or process is used. In the context of accounting and auditing, protocols might include standards for data security or internal controls, or procedures for conducting audit tests and evaluations.	Examples of new developments and protocols which could be considered by applicants in addressing accounting and business problems, risks and limitations include: • Connected appliances. • Smart security systems. • Wearable health monitors to monitor employee well-being. • Smart factory equipment to reduce capturing errors. • Wireless trackers for inventory or PPE. • Biometric cybersecurity scanners to implement data and software security over accounting packages and data. • Blockchain in procurement processes and financial strategies to ensure immediate payments and procurement security. • Electrification of vehicle fleets. • Use of large language models such as Chat GPT to improve efficiency in data searches. • Big data when making inputs to business plans, proposed solutions and business strategies to ensure meaningful and relevant data is used in the strategic direction of the business. • Smart contracts with key business partners in the supply chain management process to ensure minimal human intervention and reduce turnaround times. • Programme interfaces and internet of things in the business operations to enhance data integrity. • Data integration tools such as data federation to combine information from multiple sources into one (e.g. information from CIPC, SARS, Stock exchange markets etc.) to enhance accurate information processing.

W: DIGITAL ACUMEN

W6 User competencies: *Use technology ethically as an enabler to optimise decision making and to promote business efficiencies and controls.*

(a) Apply word processing software skills in a manner relevant to an accounting/business context, to enhance communication (e.g., letters, memorandums, reports, working papers, and other written correspondence), so as to meet all legal, ethical, regulatory and business requirements.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Applicants must be able to use applicable software applications (Word, Pages, Adobe InDesign, etc.) to prepare formal documents and/ or correspondence. Whilst doing this, applicants must be able to apply the necessary legal, compliance, regulatory etc. frameworks to these documents so that they meet the required standards. Applicants must have the ability to also focus on the presentation of these documents and/ or reports to ensure that they are presented in a professional manner that is easily understandable. Applicants are reminded that this is a digital acumen learning outcome so it must be clear how the <i>software</i> was <i>used</i>, not only what was produced.	• Use of word processing software applications to prepare working papers that are neat, logical and well-structured to present information in a manner that is easily reviewed and meets the appropriate quality requirements of the firm. • Use of word processing software applications to prepare an audit completion report and Report to those charged with governance (ISA 265), and ensure the reports comply with the requirements of ISA 265. • Preparation of engagement letters and/ or representation letters and ensure the letter complies with the legal and regulatory framework. • Preparation of structured business-related documents and/ or reports, e.g.: memorandums, minutes, proposals, engagement reports, formal research documents, etc. • Preparation of annual reports. • Drafting working papers during an internal audit engagement. • Preparing regulatory reports. • Preparing legal documentation.

W: DIGITAL ACUMEN

W6 User competencies: *Use technology ethically as an enabler to optimise decision making and to promote business efficiencies and controls.*

(b) Apply visualisation techniques and tools (e.g., dashboards or presentation software) in an accounting/business context

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
This learning outcome requires that applicants must be able to apply visualisation techniques and tools. This requires that they are able to present information in a visual format that makes it more digestible or more easily understood. Examples of these techniques and tools include: • The use of dashboards (which incorporate the use of visuals such as graphs or charts that automatically change when information affecting them is changed) or • The use of presentation software application programmes like Microsoft PowerPoint or Apple Keynote to prepare business related presentations or present information. It is important to note that applicants are not restricted to any particular visualisation techniques or tools in demonstrating this learning outcome. Applicants are reminded that this is a digital acumen learning outcome so it must be clear how the <i>software</i> was <i>used</i>, not only what was produced.	• Applicants could provide evidence of how they: - Identified the correct and appropriate data from a data set and presented that information within a dashboard or information summary document. - Used information to present infographic type visualisations that represented the original data set (such as showing changes in employee demographics over time in an integrated report). - Used colour to highlight important information within a data set (e.g., using yellow on black or blue) – the use of conditional formatting within MS Excel, for example. - Built a Dashboard using Excel/ Powerbase to extract and present key drivers such as sales, stock levels, breakages, average delivery time, number of deliveries. - Prepared a business-related presentation using presentation software (PowerPoint, Keynote etc.) and met the business requirements for the presentation. Output could include presentations relating to training, proposals, business reports, ration analysis, budgeting and forecasting, thought leadership, marketing or recruitment. - Created interactive presentations to educate colleagues on financial concepts, accounting processes, or software usage. Incorporate quizzes, simulations, and real-life examples to enhance learning and retention • Presentations could incorporate charts, graphs and tables to present data visually.

W: DIGITAL ACUMEN

W6 User competencies: *Use technology ethically as an enabler to optimise decision making and to promote business efficiencies and controls.*

(c) Use spreadsheet software in an accounting/business context (e.g., working papers; data analytics using advanced techniques, and knowledge of effective utilization (including short cut keys, macros, pivot tables and other advanced excel functions)).

What could this look like in practice?

Applicants must be able to use spreadsheet applications and software like Microsoft Excel or Apple Numbers within the accounting/ business context incorporating advanced/more complex application tools like short-cuts, macros, pivot tables, VLOOKUP, HLOOKUP, XLOOKUP etc.

Applicants are reminded that this is a digital acumen learning outcome so it must be clear how the *software* was *used*, not only what was produced.

Examples

- Use spreadsheet application software to prepare engagement working papers documenting audit findings.
- Use functions and formulae in the spreadsheet software in presenting data.
- Use macros to create spreadsheet data worksheets.
- Use tables and pivot tables to present and dissect data to make it more understandable.
- Preparing management accounts, Fixed Asset Registers, AFS, amortisation schedules, tax calculations, ratio analysis, building standard templates, etc.
- Create financial models and perform calculations.
- Develop budgets, compare actual and projected figures.
- It should be noted that to demonstrate advanced proficiency in this outcome, applicants will need to display an ability to use complex features / functions available within the spreadsheet software such as mentioned above.

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W6 User competencies: *Use technology ethically as an enabler to optimise decision making and to promote business efficiencies and controls.*

(d) Communicate and collaborate with others using a wide range of digital devices, technologies and platforms.

What could this look like in practice?	Examples
Applicants must be able to use various digital platforms to communicate and collaborate with others, for example, when communicating, in meetings, during project management or to share files. Devices, technologies and platforms could include, but are not limited to: • Phones, tablets, or computers • Email • Text-based chats • Social media • On-line learning/ meeting platforms (such as MS Teams, Google Meet or Zoom) • Communication software such as MS SharePoint, Adobe, or Dropbox • Project management and productivity platforms such as Trello or Slack Applicants should note that they are required to demonstrate proficiency across a wide range of devices, technologies and platforms. Evidence must therefore be presented that covers a suitable range and should not be limited to just one or two forms of communication using just one or two platforms on just one or two devices, for example. One item of evidence can however cover a single device, technology or platform with cumulative evidence reflecting the variety. Applicants are reminded that this is a digital acumen learning outcome so it must be clear how the <i>software/ application</i> was used, to communicate and collaborate.	• Use of email applications such as Gmail or MS Outlook to communicate clearly with others. • Use of social media platforms or applications (such as WhatsApp or Instagram) to share ideas or communicate with colleagues. • Use of online meeting software application programmes like GoTo Meeting, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, Webex, U Meeting etc. to hold or participate effectively in online virtual meetings, and / or training sessions. • Use of specific functions of online meeting platforms. e.g., polls, break-out rooms etc. to ensure the best engagement and user retention of information. • Use of online project management software to manage and collaborate on projects, e.g., applications like Microsoft Project/ Planner, Teamwork, Basecamp, ProofHub, Zoho Projects, Trello, Slack etc. • Sharing information using file-sharing software such as SharePoint, Adobe or DropBox.

W: DIGITAL ACUMEN

W6 User competencies: *Use technology ethically as an enabler to optimise decision making and to promote business efficiencies and controls.*

(e) Apply cybersecurity processes, tools **AND/OR** techniques to secure and safeguard information technology resources such as organisational IT infrastructure, laptops (and other portable devices), software, cloud (and other) storage, **AND/OR** data

What could this look like in practice?

This learning outcome relates to the protection and preservation of the organisation's information technology assets through measures that prevent harm, loss or unauthorised access. It relates to creating a secure environment to prevent risks from materialising, including implementation of precautions, protocols and practices. It includes measures to ensure confidentiality, integrity and availability of data and systems. However, the focus of this learning outcome is on **user-level** cyber security rather than organisational level cyber security (which is highly specialised and not required of a professional accountant) and so applicants should focus on what they are doing in their personal capacities using their personal devices (e.g. computers, notebooks, tablets, or phones) to minimise cyber risk.

Applicants must be able to identify cyber risks associated with their personal use of technology and apply appropriate processes, tools and techniques to mitigate those risks.

Applicants must be able to incorporate the appropriate measures to safeguard IT resources and data as part of their day-to-day work.

As cybersecurity requires ongoing awareness and application it may be tempting to fall into how this is applied in general/ daily. In documenting evidence applicants must still show how the processes, tools and techniques were applied in a specific situation or when completing a specific task, not only in general.

Examples

- Securing and safeguarding information by password protecting spread sheets, changing passwords regularly, keeping computer screens locked when not at desk, keeping anti-virus and spyware up to date, reporting and deleting phishing emails and only accessing secure websites.
- Complying with IT policies and procedures.
- Backing-up data on laptops (including smart sync for CaseWare files).
- Ensuring that personal data of clients or colleagues is not placed on public sites, shared with others that should not have access to it, etc. (POPI).
- Not opening emails/messages from unknown senders and alerting their IT department where they are suspicious of incoming emails.
- Utilising data transfer software (e.g., Dropbox, CaseWare Cloud, TeamViewer) and cloud computing and applying safeguards appropriate to the situation in order to safeguard IT resources and information.
- Changing passwords regularly and avoiding shared passwords.
- Securing IT infrastructure in circumstances where this is not automatically done by internal controls etc. (e.g., safeguarding of laptop and data devices when working at a client/remotely).
- Using approved resources and software on laptops.
- Scanning removable storage devices for viruses/threats including own devices received back from clients/colleagues/friends/family members/etc.
- Securing and safeguarding storage devices and information on it by, for example, not leaving it lying around for others to take /access, password protecting it, etc.