



LEARNING  
ACADEMY

# ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN TREASURY MANAGEMENT

Dissertation and  
Presentation Guide

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## 1 Introduction

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There are three elements to the assessment structure of the Advanced Diploma in Treasury Management:

1. an examination covering both units (55% weighting towards the total mark awarded for the qualification)
2. dissertation (30% weighting)
3. presentation (15% weighting).

To complete the qualification, a pass (i.e. 50%) must be achieved in each assessment element. Whilst the examination carries the greatest weighting, the dissertation and presentation are key components demonstrating your ability to communicate and strategically influence, while performing a piece of structured analysis. It also reflects the commercial practicalities of working in a treasury management role. This guide will focus on both of these components.

In summary, the dissertation will focus on a treasury-related issue which you will select, investigate, and for which you will recommend a supported solution. For the presentation you will present a summary of your dissertation to a small panel comprised of treasury and assessment experts. The aim of these methods of assessment is to enable you to focus on subject matter that is important and interesting to you and may also be of relevance to your organisation. The subject matter must be in the field of treasury, risk, corporate finance or funding and, in particular, must be relevant to the content of the Advanced Diploma in Treasury Management syllabus.

You will be required to set out clearly the background and commercial context of the organisation (or sector) that you have chosen as the focus of your work. This background must be included as an appendix within the dissertation and will provide the necessary information so assessors have a clear understanding of the context of your submissions (both dissertation and presentation). Note, as with all appendices, this organisational background does **not** count towards the word count (see later).

## 2 Aims and learning outcomes

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You should refer to the Advanced Diploma in Treasury Management Programme Specification available in the study site and ensure you are familiar with both the overall programme aims and learning outcomes. The three assessment components span all of these aims and learning outcomes. To complete the programme, you are required to meet all of these requirements.

Specifically, the aim of the dissertation is to provide you with an opportunity to undertake critical analysis and evaluation relating to a treasury, risk, corporate finance or funding topic, of relevance to the programme syllabus. It is intended that the chosen topic will enable you to showcase your skills in data gathering and analysis and in identifying appropriate (and supported) recommendations. It will also demonstrate a high level of knowledge and understanding of the programme content and an ability to apply this in a highly practical way. A pass (i.e. 50% or more) must be achieved on the dissertation before you will be permitted to move on to the presentation element.

On passing the dissertation, students will be invited to present a summary to a panel. You must select the content that you believe to be the most relevant for a senior stakeholder audience. Your choice of content

and the form of the presentation itself must be compelling and highly professional. The presentation will comprise both a physically delivered component and a question and answer session.

### 3 Dissertation requirements

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Your dissertation must address the requirements set out below.

1. You will start the process by choosing an important treasury-related issue. For example, it might be something that is a particular issue for you in your role, or the organisation for which you work, or perhaps a challenge faced currently by the whole profession. It might help by looking at this as identifying a problem that needs to be resolved. In addition to identifying the issue you must also provide a clear rationale of its importance. Such a rationale is important justification of the choice of your dissertation topic.
2. The issue must clearly relate to the syllabus, covering at least 70%. If you are unable to ensure this, your topic for dissertation will be rejected at the proposal stage (see Section 5).
3. You will be required to set out relevant background and context in relation to the organisation or sector you have chosen. This must be included as an appendix within your dissertation submission.
4. When your proposal has been approved you can then set about gathering data and undertaking critical analysis and evaluation. At this level of qualification, you must demonstrate a high level of critical thinking.
5. You should develop a range of options (potential solutions) which must be evaluated, and from which you should make a clear and fully supported recommendation. Include consideration of any implementation implications, risks and issues for management, while also highlighting any changes that might be required to existing treasury practices, strategy and policy.
6. You should also consider any limitations with your work and any further research and analysis that might be required (this further research/analysis will not need to be submitted).
7. The word count limit for the dissertation is a minimum of 15,000 words and maximum of 20,000 words (see Section 12).

Your presentation must address the requirements below.

1. The process will commence when you have been notified that you have achieved a pass for your dissertation.
2. You will then be required to purchase your presentation, and once processed you will be given a selection of dates and times to choose from, of which you must only choose one. Please note this is on a first come first served basis. A confirmation email will follow, within a week, confirming your timeslot, the panellists and logistics for the presentation.
3. It is your responsibility to notify the ACT before the panel session in respect of any reasonable adjustments.
4. If you choose to present visually, your presentation must be in PowerPoint and must be submitted to the ACT no later than three days before your selected panel presentation date.
5. If you choose to present virtually, you will be required to present using Microsoft Teams.
6. Your presentation must last between 30 and 45 minutes. If you exceed the 45 minutes, you will be stopped. After the presentation there will be an additional 30 minutes for questions and answers, i.e. in total the time allocation is between 60 and 75 minutes. It is your responsibility to ensure you adhere to these timings. Your mark will be impacted for failing to manage time correctly.

7. The focus of the presentation is on your ability to effectively communicate an appropriate summary of your dissertation to key stakeholders (i.e. represented by the panel).
8. Your presentation must be professional, informative and compelling.

The marking grids below set out the criteria against which your dissertation and presentation will be assessed. Needless to say, it is imperative that you understand these and it is your responsibility to ensure that these criteria are satisfied fully by your submissions. In addition, ensure that you have read and understood the advice within this guide on structuring your dissertation and presentation. Further, ensure you are familiar with the dissertation requirements relating to referencing and word count policy. Correct referencing of your work is vital as you must state clearly any sources you have used, i.e. where you are including work that is not your own. Where work is not referenced correctly it could be considered as plagiarism and so might not be marked and you may be disqualified, further information is available in the ACT Plagiarism and Collusion policy, available on <https://learning.treasurers.org/assessment/policies>. Similarly, word count policy must be strictly adhered to in order to ensure consistency and equal treatment of all students.

## 4 Dissertation and Presentation marking grids

Your dissertation will be assessed using the following weighted criteria:

Criteria	Mark 0-49% Fail	Mark 50-59% Pass	Mark 60-69% Merit	Mark 70% and above Distinction
<b>Understanding and analysis of the issue selected 10%</b>	Limited understanding of the treasury issue selected. Aims lack focus. Discussion of the issue is superficial and descriptive with limited justification for its selection.	Sufficient evidence of understanding of the treasury issue selected. Aims are clearly stated. It has been explained fully and there is some justification for its selection.	Sound understanding of the treasury issue selected. Aims and measurement criteria are clear. The issue has been analysed and there is detailed justification for its selection.	Excellent understanding of the treasury issue selected. Aims and measurement criteria are clear and justified. The issue has been analysed fully and the justification for its selection is comprehensive.
<b>Knowledge, understanding and application of learning 20%</b>	Limited evidence of knowledge, understanding and application of learning from across the programme content. Limited appreciation of the use of concepts, tools and theories in a treasury context.	Good knowledge, understanding and application of learning from across the programme content. Appreciation of the use of concepts, tools and theories in a treasury context.	Sound knowledge, understanding and application of learning from across the programme content. Good level of appreciation of the use of concepts, tools and theories in a treasury context.	Excellent knowledge, understanding and application of learning from across the programme content. Thorough appreciation of the use of concepts, tools and theories in a treasury context.
<b>Methods of investigation, data gathering and depth of research 20%</b>	Limited or superficial research has been conducted from a narrow range of sources. Data gathered has limited relevance to the issue selected. Limited use of data to support recommendations and conclusions.	Adequate research has been conducted using a reasonable range of relevant sources. The data gathered relates to the issue selected. Some use of data to support recommendations and conclusions.	The research conducted is of a very good standard using a wide range of relevant sources. The data gathered relates strongly to the issue selected and has been used consistently to support recommendations and conclusions.	The research conducted is of an outstanding standard using an extensive range of highly relevant sources. The data gathered is topical and highly relevant to the issue selected and has been used extensively to support recommendations and conclusions.
<b>Critical evaluation and analysis 20%</b>	Limited evidence of critical evaluation and analysis. Overall, the content lacks depth of critical thinking and is largely descriptive.	Some but inconsistent evidence of critical evaluation and analysis. Generally, there is adequate evidence of critical thinking skills.	Content provides evidence of critical evaluation and analysis. There is generally a good level of critical thinking skills demonstrated.	Comprehensive evidence of critical evaluation and analysis throughout. High level of critical thinking skills consistently demonstrated.

<b>Solutions, recommendations, conclusions and implementation</b> <b>20%</b>	The solutions, recommendations and conclusions offer limited insight into the chosen topic area and are brief. There is a lack of justification and limited consideration of implementation issues. Has not fully satisfied the aims set for the dissertation.	The solutions, recommendations and conclusions relate to the chosen topic area and are reasonably detailed. There is adequate justification and consideration of implementation issues. Has satisfied the aims set for the dissertation.	The solutions, recommendations and conclusions are aligned to the chosen topic area and are thorough. There is detailed justification and consideration of implementation issues. Some consideration of issues from a practical perspective. Has fully satisfied the aims set for the dissertation.	The solutions, recommendations and conclusions are fully aligned to the chosen topic area and are comprehensive. There is extensive justification and consideration of implementation issues, which have been considered from a highly practical perspective. The aims set for the dissertation have been comprehensively met.
<b>Presentation</b> <b>10%</b>	Poor presentation and editing and no clear structure to the dissertation. The work is poorly referenced. Insufficient consideration as to use of word count.	Clear, professional and structured presentation with accurate editing. Referencing is generally of a good standard. Word count allocation has been considered.	Very clear, professional and well-structured presentation with accurate editing. Referencing is of a consistently high standard. Effective allocation of word count.	Presentation standard is outstanding. There is clarity throughout, a logical structure and the work is highly professional. There are no editing issues and the referencing is error-free throughout. Highly effective allocation of word count.

Your presentation will be assessed using the following weighted criteria:

Criteria	Mark 0-49% Fail	Mark 50-59% Pass	Mark 60-69% Merit	Mark 70% and above Distinction
<b>Choice of content 25%</b> (focus on 'Competency') <i>For example:            what you selected and why,            structure and positioning of the            content and linkage to the syllabus.</i>	Limited evidence of consideration of the choice of content, in terms of representing a summary of the dissertation and appropriateness for the audience and purpose.	Evidence of consideration of the choice of content, which represents an adequate summary of the key elements of the dissertation and is appropriate for the audience and purpose.	Strong evidence of consideration of the choice of content, which represents a good summary of the key elements of the dissertation and is highly appropriate for the audience and purpose.	Comprehensive evidence of consideration of the choice of content, which represents an excellent summary of the key elements of the dissertation and is entirely appropriate for the audience and purpose.
<b>Interaction 25%</b> (focus on 'Contact') <i>For example:            engagement with the audience            during the presentation and Q&amp;A,            and interaction with each panellist            individually and as a group.</i>	Limited attempt to engage with the audience, and little or no stakeholder management. Presentation content and style are not sufficiently informative and compelling. Interaction generally lacks professionalism and could be more appropriate for the audience and purpose.	Adequate level of engagement with the audience, and stakeholder management. Presentation content and style are generally informative and compelling. Interaction is professional and appropriate for the audience and purpose.	Good and consistent level of engagement with the audience. Good stakeholder management. Presentation content and style are consistently informative and compelling. Interaction is very professional and appropriate for the audience and purpose.	Outstanding and consistent level of engagement with the audience. Excellent stakeholder management. Presentation content and style are consistently highly informative and compelling and speaks to the needs of the audience. Interaction is highly professional and appropriate for the audience and purpose.



<b>Leadership 25%</b> (focus on 'Competency') <i>For example:  demonstrating authority on the topic, authenticity in delivery, and how your content is underpinned by relevant research and wider reading resources.</i>	Limited attempt to take ownership of the chosen topic. Little to no facilitation. Insufficient use of influencing tools to gain buy-in from members of the panel. Poor management of Q&A session.	Takes ownership of the chosen topic and evidence of facilitation. Uses influencing tools to attempt to gain buy-in from panel members in respect of the issues addressed and the recommendations proposed. Q&A session managed adequately.	Clear ownership of the chosen topic. Good use of facilitation. Good use of a range of influencing tools to gain buy-in from panel members in respect of the issues addressed and the recommendations proposed. Good management of Q&A session.	High level of ownership of the chosen topic and excellent use of facilitation. Excellent use of a wide range of influencing tools to gain buy-in from panel members in respect of the issues addressed and the recommendations proposed. Excellent management of Q&A session.
<b>Presentation 25%</b> (focus on 'Contact') <i>For example:  how you communicate using both verbal and non-verbal communication skills and your personal impact. How you present the content, e.g. quality of slides and delivery style.</i>	Poorly presented, demonstrating a lack of confidence in the content and delivery. Poor time management.	Adequate standard of presentation. Confident in delivery and content. A logical relationship between slides and delivery, providing a clear and consistent communication message. A compelling presentation. Good time management.	Good standard of presentation with supporting materials. Slides, delivery and other media enhance the communication, the message of which is very clear. Very compelling and confident delivery. Very good time management.	A highly polished presentation using an appropriate range of supporting materials. Extremely clear communication with a very clear message. Highly compelling and confident delivery throughout. Excellent time management.

## 5 Dissertation support

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### *Dissertation workshop*

You will need to attend a two-hour live dissertation workshop webinar.

Before the webinar, take some time to think about dissertation topics. After the webinar, you will need to put together and submit a light proposal. A tutor will then arrange to discuss the light proposal with you via phone/skype etc and, with their support, turn your idea into a full proposal.

The live webinar workshop will include:

- an overview of the dissertation requirements
- ideas generation
- refining your ideas into a proposal
- what is expected in each section of the dissertation
- deciding upon appropriate methodology
- tips and techniques on how to approach the dissertation.

### *Dissertation proposal*

You cannot commence work on your dissertation until you have completed and submitted a full proposal.

After you discuss your light proposal, you are required to submit your full proposal within a maximum of three weeks. The dates and times to submit the light and full proposals will be published on the study site.

The proposal templates are available in the study site. The proposal should represent a clear summary of the issue you propose to tackle within your dissertation topic. Refer back to the marking grids, as you need to ensure that your choice of topic will enable you to meet all of the dimensions listed. Remember the academic level of this qualification. To pass, you will be required to demonstrate a high level of data gathering and analytical skills. Your topic must enable you to undertake detailed evaluation and to apply the various tools, concepts, models and theories you have studied throughout the programme. It should also enable you to undertake your own research. So, choice of topic is crucial in enabling you to produce a high-quality piece of work that will satisfy all of the criteria.

Once your full proposal has been submitted, you will be allocated a dissertation supervisor who will review your proposal and provide you with feedback via email, three weeks after submission. Your proposal will be either approved, rejected or returned for further clarification/revision. Your dissertation supervisor will make this clear to you when they respond, and any next steps will also be clarified. Note that resubmitting your proposal will take additional time and you will need to ensure this does not impact any deadlines for the dissertation submission. You are required to include your proposal and syllabus mapping to show at least 70% coverage, as an appendix within your final dissertation submission.

The project supervisor will arrange a telephone call with you, seven to fourteen days after you receive your feedback email.

## 6 Dissertation support – dissertation supervisor

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Researching and writing a dissertation can be a difficult task and you may require some extra support. The ACT has secured the services of experienced post-graduate dissertation supervisors. You will be allocated one of these supervisors who will support you throughout the dissertation process.

Your dissertation supervisor will be on hand during your studies and you can contact them at any point up to two weeks prior to your final submission deadline. You will be provided with their contact details once a supervisor has been allocated to you.

Throughout the dissertation process you can:

- send your supervisor drafts of content from your dissertation for review and feedback
- send them one full draft of the complete dissertation for them to review and provide feedback so you can enhance your work prior to final submission
- send your supervisor emails
- arrange to speak with your supervisor on the telephone or via Skype, as needed by mutually agreed appointment.

Your dissertation supervisor will answer your queries, provide advice, read and suggest improvements to draft versions of your dissertation. This will include advice on structure, theoretical content, technical matters and other issues such as referencing and use of supporting materials. Please note that they will not be able to guarantee any result, as the marking is completed independently against the marking criteria. Ensure you build in sufficient time into your planning schedule to make any changes the supervisor has suggested.

## 7 Planning your dissertation

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### *Choosing your dissertation topic*

The choice of dissertation is your responsibility, although guidance is available from your supervisor. It is important that you choose a topic that will enable you to meet all of the marking criteria. In addition, you should choose an area in which you have an interest. It should be something in which you are confident of your abilities to undertake critical analysis and evaluation. It might be something which is linked to your current or recent work experience or perhaps your future career aspirations. Based on experience, the best topics to work on take the form of an issue, challenge or problem to resolve. The current situation can then be explored, and potential solutions identified and evaluated. A clear (and supported) recommendation can then be made and implementation issues considered.

### *Identifying the topic*

You will find the dissertation experience more enjoyable and fulfilling if you can choose a topic that is both interesting to you and represents a challenge. If this is the case, then your levels of motivation will be high and will sustain you through any challenges you might encounter. Identifying potential topics might include thinking about particular issues you have experienced at work. These might be issues faced by the whole profession, perhaps due to regulatory change. You might have read about upcoming changes, for example in The Treasurer magazine or other academic journals, that could/do have an impact on treasury strategy and policy.

### *Explore the topic*

Remember to consider the marking criteria. Do not choose the first thing that comes to mind or something you think is 'easy'. You need to be able to demonstrate data gathering skills, so you need a topic that will enable you to achieve this. Reading academic journals will give you an idea about topics that are already under scrutiny and where there might already be access to data. At this level of qualification, the focus is on 'depth' of analysis and evaluation. So, do not select a topic that is too broad. You need to have clarity of focus and to achieve this it is better to select a topic that will enable you to explore deeply.

### *Time*

In selecting your topic, remember that you are working to time constraints. So, whilst ambition is good, do not be over-ambitious. Ensure that you will have enough time to demonstrate, through your written work, that you have completed the task required. You need to factor in not only the time that you will need to read, analyse and present the material, but also the sometimes considerable period it may take simply to obtain the necessary data and incorporate any changes suggested by your supervisor. Ensure you factor in enough time to submit a draft for your supervisor to review and comment upon. You need to allow time to make any final changes prior to submission. Further, do not under-estimate how much time it can take proof-reading and ensuring your work is referenced correctly and all diagrams, tables etc are labelled. Submitting an accurately edited and highly professional document is important.

If you are thinking about basing your dissertation on something that is ongoing at work, ensure that you have access to data to fit with the timetable for submitting your dissertation. The main point regarding timings is not to under-estimate the time this piece of work will take you and do not fall into the trap of leaving things to the last minute.

### *Access to data and other resources*

Some dissertations run into difficulties because it is simply not possible to obtain the material required to carry out the work. So, once you have thought of a potential topic do consider whether it is 'researchable' and ensure that your proposed research style includes both primary and secondary data sources. Your topic should be grounded in existing documented best practice or relevant academic theory. As already mentioned above, the topic will need to offer sufficient depth to allow you to showcase your academic skills of data gathering and analysis, from a range of sources. A key part of the assessment is your ability to analyse and evaluate your own findings. If your topic choice does not have enough depth (e.g. there is very little written on the topic and there are no alternative viewpoints), you are in danger of producing a purely descriptive piece of work that will not meet the assessment criteria.

## **8 Some helpful hints**

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Be selective when you use internal documents from your own organisation and other data sources (e.g. company websites) as these are often designed for a purpose other than the research topic of your dissertation. Students sometimes fill appendices with internal documents full of data that has not been discussed anywhere in the dissertation, or if it has been mentioned it does not fully relate to the topic chosen.

A best practice general principle is to use a balance of both primary and secondary data. Be careful to only use secondary data sources that you know to be reliable, ideally where the author is stated and is known to be trusted. This is why using textbooks and academic journals is recommended, especially

the latter as these articles are peer reviewed and can therefore be assumed to be more reliable. In particular, avoid using encyclopaedic online resources, where the authors are unknown.

Always ensure that you cite appropriate references from wider reading sources to support and reinforce the points you are making. This can be extremely useful practice to justify points you are making or perhaps to offer an alternative or contradictory view, where your own data supports it. Guidance on referencing is provided in Section 14.

## 9 Completing your dissertation proposal

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As already mentioned, you begin your dissertation by completing a proposal. This is a description and summary of your dissertation topic along with the dissertation plan. Your dissertation supervisor will give you feedback on your proposal. You must wait for this feedback before you start working on the dissertation, just in case it is not accepted.

The dissertation proposal stage is mandatory. Whilst the proposal itself is unmarked, it is important and must be included in your final submission as an appendix. It gives you the opportunity to start to crystallise your ideas and get written feedback from your dissertation supervisor. If you do not submit the proposal within the deadline you will delay the start of your dissertation and hence its final submission.

We will now look at each of the sections in the dissertation proposal in more detail.

### 9.1 Section One

#### **1. Proposed title**

The dissertation title should be representative of the topic area and the issue you are seeking to address. It should be succinct, i.e. not too long. It is worth noting that the title at the proposal stage should be seen as provisional, and that as you write up your dissertation you may find that you need to revise or rewrite the title.

#### **2. A brief summary of your dissertation topic**

Include here the topic, theme or issue in treasury, risk, corporate finance and/or funding you want to explore in your dissertation. It needs to be something that you can explore deeply and on which you can develop different solutions from which you will recommend and justify one. Consider also why the topic is important and why it warrants examination. This section should be between 300-400 words.

#### **3. Dissertation aims**

These should establish clearly what you are aiming to achieve through your dissertation. You should revisit these at the end of your dissertation to determine whether the aims have been achieved. You may find it necessary to refine these aims as you work through your dissertation.

#### **4. Demonstrate that your dissertation relates to concepts and issues of relevance to the programme**

You must demonstrate that you have thought carefully about the content of the programme. Your dissertation topic must be relevant to subject matter comprised within the programme specification.

## 9.2 Section Two

### ***Dissertation plan***

This section asks you to provide a detailed plan for your dissertation. Using bullet points outline the main sections of your dissertation and what key points/areas will be included. You should note within your plan any key dependencies that exist and how you will deal with these should, for example, information not be available. At this stage of the process we do not expect highly detailed points to be made. The purpose of this is, prior to you actually starting the write-up, to enable your supervisor to highlight areas which are either missing, or not required.

## 9.3 Submission

You submit your dissertation proposal online, via Surpass, our online assessment system. More information will be provided to you, explaining how to submit your dissertation proposal, closer to the submission deadline.

## 9.4 Compulsory phone call

A compulsory phone call will take place between you and your supervisor in order to clarify feedback on your proposal and arrange draft dissertation submission dates. You are required to indicate your availability for this phone call. The exact timing of this phone call will be agreed between you and your supervisor but will take place seven to fourteen days after you receive feedback.

# 10 Specific dissertation advice

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Although it is not possible to articulate the exact structure and content of your dissertation, the following gives you guidance on the key sections which would be expected in order to achieve the dissertation requirements set out earlier in this guide. The structure will of course be dependent on your choice of topic. Do remember the marking criteria as your final submission must satisfy these. Remember also that the dissertation is a highly practical piece of work but must also evidence knowledge and understanding of academic theory and tools.

## 10.1 Introduction

The introduction is a key part of the dissertation and must set the tone and context of your work. You should ensure that sufficient detail is given to enable the reader to understand what you are setting out to achieve and to also engage them in your chosen topic. Remember to include an appendix, which you should refer to in your introduction, setting out the background and context to your organisation or sector (to which your dissertation relates).

## 10.2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding across the programme syllabus

This is essential. Dissertations which do not satisfy this will automatically be rejected at the proposal stage. Demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the subject matter from across the programme syllabus is an important requirement. Remember, the dissertation is an opportunity to showcase that you can apply the various tools, models, concepts and theories from the programme.

## 10.3 Analyse and critically evaluate the treasury topic

The dissertation is an opportunity to demonstrate advanced skills in critical thinking. Whilst your dissertation will require some initial description of context or process to outline the background to your topic, it has to be followed by an in-depth critical analysis and evaluation of the topic.

A simple reproduction of the facts or a description of an event does not demonstrate your ability to analyse and evaluate information, or your ability to construct an argument supported with evidence. This means that you need to draw on a wide range of analysis in order to support your position.

Depending on your topic, it may be appropriate to present differing viewpoints and evaluate arguments one against another, and, if appropriate, address counter-arguments to these. What is important is a

focused, well-argued case for the view you present or the conclusion you have reached.

#### **10.4 Conduct data gathering and analysis**

Having outlined the topic in detail you must then move into investigation mode. Gather data of relevance to your topic from a range of different sources. This could be internally from within your organisation or externally. You should try to seek to gather a balance of primary and secondary data. In other words, use data that is already available but ‘fill in the gaps’ to achieve your aims by gathering your own more specifically focused data. Depending on your topic you may wish to conduct a review of existing/current academic writing and research on the topic (i.e. a literature review). Remember that where you are citing the work of others within your dissertation this must be correctly referenced (see Section 14).

You must bear in mind that when approaching third parties to obtain data you must explain clearly and fully the purpose of your research, i.e. to obtain information to support your dissertation for the ACT’s Advanced Diploma in Treasury Management, and you should stress that this research is entirely for your own purposes (and not for ACT’s purposes) and that the ACT accepts no responsibility or liability for the research or the resulting dissertation.

You may not use any ACT logos on any materials you supply as part of your information-gathering exercise and you must not say or suggest that your research is being undertaken with or on behalf of the ACT. The ACT will not provide references or non-disclosure assurances to any third parties you contact as part of your research.

You must ensure that you protect appropriately all confidential and commercially sensitive information you obtain, and it will be your responsibility to secure all necessary permissions, consents and licences, as applicable, to enable you to use any materials in your dissertation.

#### **10.5 Identify potential solutions and provide a clear recommendation**

A crucial part of your dissertation is to address the original aims which you set yourself and to demonstrate these have been met. You may wish to restate these aims within your conclusions to demonstrate that they have been achieved.

You should identify and justify all potential solutions and then give clear and well-justified recommendations to support your chosen solution. These recommendations should be formed from the detailed analysis you have conducted throughout the dissertation.

Following the recommendation you have made, you must also consider how this could be practically implemented within your chosen organisation or the treasury profession (as appropriate). This might include, for example, changes to the treasury policy, staff training, implications for bank relationships, a timetable of activities.

Ensure your concluding paragraphs summarise the main points in your dissertation. Your conclusion should not be making any new points but instead it should synthesise your findings. Better conclusions will also acknowledge any gaps in your findings or limitations in your research method and indicate further work that might usefully be undertaken (although you are not expected to undertake this further work).

### 10.6 Additional considerations

The dissertation should be written and presented in an appropriate professional manner, e.g. with regard to style, grammar, spelling, paragraphing etc., including the use of the Harvard convention for referencing (see Section 14).

You should use clearly numbered sections and sub-sections, if applicable. These should also be included in a Table of Contents. The structure should have a logical and professional flow.

Avoid unnecessary content and any descriptive material. It is good practice to continually ask yourself 'does my work meet the requirements of my stated aims and will it satisfy the marking criteria?'.

You must avoid making general statements that are not substantiated. All points made, including recommendations, must be supported fully by data, either primary data that you have specifically gathered for the dissertation or from reliable and trusted secondary data sources, e.g. academic journal articles.

## 11 Structuring your dissertation

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You are responsible for determining the most appropriate structure for your dissertation. This is a key element of the 'presentation' section in the assessment criteria. Your dissertation supervisor can advise you on structure if you need help. All dissertations should include the following:

<b>Title page</b>	Showing the title of the dissertation.
<b>Abstract</b>	A short (c200 words) summary encapsulating the focus and importance of your dissertation.
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	This is optional. A list of people you wish to thank for their help.
<b>Table of contents</b>	Use section, sub-section and page numbering. Ensure this numbering coincides with the numbering within the dissertation.
<b>Introduction</b>	The context of the study, why it is important and an outline of the problem or issue to be addressed. Outline your dissertation objectives and approach. Include your dissertation aims.



<b>Main body of text</b>	You will need to decide on the best way to structure this. You may use a number of different sections. Remember to ensure there is a logical flow to your work. You will need to include your research (primary and secondary) and the solutions you have identified and evaluated. You will also need to include your recommendation and ensure this is justified fully. Consider all implementation and other related issues, including key dependencies. You should also consider any further research and investigation that ought to be conducted (you do not need to conduct this further work).
<b>Conclusion</b>	You must present a clear conclusion summarising how the dissertation meets your stated aims and objectives. Do not introduce any new information or research which has not previously been covered in the main body of the text.
<b>References List</b>	You must ensure your work is correctly referenced , using the Harvard convention. The References List must include all in-text citations. The References List must be in author surname alphabetical order and must state the source in full. The in-text citation must adhere strictly to the Harvard convention. See Section 14 for information on referencing your work. Your supervisor will also provide guidance if you need help.
<b>Appendices</b>	Include results of any analysis, tables, data etc. that would otherwise clutter your dissertation. Note that the main body of your dissertation must be independent of the appendices; key information should be contained within the main body of text. The reader should only have to refer to the appendices for additional supporting information and to check calculations. Appendices do <b>not</b> count towards word count.

Your dissertation structure will be influenced by your chosen topic. Ensure your topic will enable you to satisfy all the marking criteria fully. Dissertations generally follow a typical 'flow', for example:

1. identify the problem (choose the topic)
2. set the dissertation aims
3. review existing data
4. determine the data 'gaps'
5. undertake further data gathering
6. analyse the data
7. develop solutions
8. recommend the best solution
9. consider implementation issues
10. identify limitations and future investigation
11. conclusions.

## 12 Dissertation word count

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There is a prescribed word count limit which must be strictly adhered to, i.e. your dissertation must be between 15,000 and 20,000 words. Your dissertation must be within this range to be marked. If you are above or below these limits your dissertation will not be marked and you will be required to repurchase and resubmit in the next available window.

The word count limit does include:

- headings, sub-headings and Table of Contents
- tables, diagrams etc used in the main body of the submission.

The word limit does not include:

- the abstract and acknowledgements
- reference list
- appendices.

If in doubt, further guidance on word count will be provided by your dissertation supervisor.

## 13 Information sources to use

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When researching your dissertation topic, a useful start point is to review the existing literature based on the topic, for example journal articles and text books. In addition, you may also want to undertake some primary data collection of your own such as a small-scale survey using questionnaires or interviews.

Remember to research widely using a range of different sources. These may corroborate each other, or you may find they take different views or support differing interpretations. Considering different schools of thought is an essential part of the analytical process of critical thinking.

You may also use internal company documents such as reports or analysis; just reference these in the same way you would any other source material. Do ensure such reports are relevant to the dissertation aims.

If you do undertake some primary research such as interviews or questionnaires, you should consider your research methodology. To this end, you are advised to consult a recognised research techniques text on how to undertake this correctly. The text(s) you use for this purpose must be included in the References List. There are many text books on this area and you are of course free to choose one which is most suited to you, based on your existing knowledge in the area. The following is a useful text book on the area of undertaking research in a business context:

Wilson, J. (2014) *Essentials of Business Research: A Guide to Doing Your Research Project*. London: Sage.

## 14 Referencing your dissertation

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Any sources you refer to in your dissertation must be referenced correctly, to acknowledge the source, to avoid plagiarism and to make it clear to the reader precisely which source has been used. The latter is important because the assessor marking your work will need to be able to locate these sources easily.

Using such sources, especially where they are known to be reliable, is an important part of a dissertation because they can help to make arguments stronger.

References are used where you are crediting someone else, be it a quote, idea, method, etc., to demonstrate that you have read widely. Such material can either be summarised in your own words or quoted *verbatim*. Be careful to not over-use such references, especially *verbatim* quotes as your submission needs to be your own work.

You must reference your work using the Harvard convention. As a general rule this means that in-text citations must signify the author surname only and the year of publication. Where there are two authors state both surnames (and the year of publication). Where there are three or more authors state only the first author surname followed by *et al* (to signify there are three or more authors) and the year of publication. You must state the sources in full in the References list, which must be presented in author surname alphabetical order.

Where you directly quote from a publication, indicate that you have done so by using quotation marks. Note that you must include the page number of the source where you use *verbatim* quotes. Where page numbers are not stated (for example where it is from an online source) you should state the paragraph number.

Referencing examples are below, but if you require more help you should speak with your dissertation supervisor.

### **Books**

#### *Single author*

In text reference – Chapman (2006). For a *verbatim* quote from page 120 - Chapman (2006, 120)

In the References List

Chapman, R. J. (2006) *Simple tools and techniques for enterprise risk management*. Chichester: Wiley & Sons.

#### *Two authors*

In text reference – Moles and Terry (1997). For *verbatim* quote from page 99 – Moles and Terry (1997, 99)

In the References List

Moles, P. and Terry, N. (1997) *The Handbook of International Financial Terms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

#### *More than two authors*

In text reference – Radebaugh *et al* (2006). For a *verbatim* quote from page 225 – Radebaugh *et al* (2006, 225)

In the References List

Radebaugh, L., Gray, S. and Black, E. (2006) *International Accounting and Multinational Enterprises*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

### **Journal articles**

In text referencing is that same as for books. In the References List:-

Bremmer, I. and Zakaria, F. (2006) Hedging Political Risk in China. *Harvard Business Review*. Nov 2006, Vol. 84, Issue 11, pp 22-25.

Can also be simplified as

Bremmer, I. and Zakaria, F. (2006) Hedging Political Risk in China. *Harvard Business Review*. 84(11): 22-55.

### **Online journal articles**

Strocher, D. (2005) Why treasury needs a strategic change of focus. *Corporate Finance*. June, Issue 243. (Online at <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=20&hid=13&sid=c0c7b7b1-8ffc-4f76-8952-b8904b82c365%40sessionmgr2> ) Accessed on 20 March 2019.

### **Newspapers**

Willman, J. (2007) Whitehall rules lack proper analysis. *The Financial Times*, 11 July, p 4.

### **Online newspapers**

Wearden, G. (2007) 'Rio Tinto trumps rival's hostile bid for Alcan' *The Guardian*, 12 July. (Online at <http://business.guardian.co.uk/story/0,,2124408,00.html>) Accessed on 12 July 2007.

### **Reports**

Deloitte. (2016) *Global CPO Survey*. Available from <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/operations/articles/cpo-survey.html> [Last accessed 30 January 2019].

### **Conference papers**

ACT (2007) Expanding the Horizons of Cash Management. *ACT Cash Management Conference*, London, Feb. (Online at <http://www.treasurers.org/technical/resources/barclaysreport.pdf>) Accessed 20 June 2018.

These are just a few examples. You may be familiar with referencing from previous studies. If not, undertake your own research online (remembering that the ACT uses the Harvard convention).

## **15 Verification and plagiarism**

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Submitting work that has been completed by someone else and quoting from other sources without correctly referencing that contribution are examples of plagiarism and are regarded as cheating. Similarly, paying for work from other sources and submitting it as your own is also cheating. If a case of plagiarism is suspected, this is a serious offence and the disciplinary procedure set out later will be followed.

Note that although you are encouraged to collaborate with others during your studies, submitted work copied from or written jointly with others is not acceptable. Your submission must be entirely your own work. In addition:

1. you will be expected to specify any advice or help received (other than assistance provided by your Supervisor); you may consult colleagues and others, and you should briefly acknowledge any such help
2. you will be asked to sign a plagiarism statement confirming that, apart from properly referenced contributions from wider reading sources, your dissertation is your own work and that it has not been submitted previously for any other assessed course. This statement is on the front cover and needs to be submitted as the front page of your dissertation.

3. if the ACT has any reason to doubt that the work is your own, you will be required to submit independent evidence to confirm that it is your work.

We recommend that you read the ACT Policy on Plagiarism and Collusion to ensure you do not breach any of the rules, as in such a case you may be investigated and disqualified.

## 16 Dissertation checklist

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To meet the requirements and achieve a pass level for your dissertation:

1. ensure you have fully utilised the available word count
2. ensure your work meets the stated assessment criteria
3. ensure your work is detailed, i.e. comprises analysis and evaluation
4. use data and wider reading to support points made
5. ensure you have achieved the aims you set
6. ensure your work is error-free
7. ensure your referencing follows the Harvard convention
8. ensure all tables, diagrams etc. are labelled and the source stated (both in-text and in your References List).

## 17 Dissertation submission deadline

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Your dissertation must be submitted on or before the published deadline. Late submission is not accepted unless this is by prior agreement with the ACT. Dissertations not submitted by the deadline, without prior agreement, will be classified as absent.

If you feel you are not in a position to complete your dissertation by the published deadline, please contact a member of the Assessment team as soon as possible to discuss your options.

## 18 Submitting your dissertation

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You must submit your dissertation into the ACT assessment system, Surpass. Guidance on the system and how to upload your dissertation will be made available to you prior to the submission date. The date and time to submit is published in the timetable and in the study site.

You will be notified of your result within five to six weeks of your submission. You will also receive written feedback relating to your performance.

If you are unsuccessful, you have the option to start a new dissertation, however you may submit the same dissertation, as long as you have addressed the areas of concern. If you receive an Unclassified Fail or a Fail, your work will be marked afresh, without any comparison to the original submission. If you received a Marginal Fail grade you will be required to submit the original dissertation, your new, updated dissertation with the changes highlighted, as well as a summary sheet identifying what you have changed, to support the marking process. The markers will then compare your previous submission to the new one and mark accordingly.

If you are unsuccessful and require continued support from a dissertation supervisor, contact your Programme Manager to arrange this. You will continue to receive support from a supervisor, but in some instances, it may be necessary to allocate you to a new supervisor.

## 19 The presentation

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The presentation is an important part of the assessment approach. No new information should be presented. It is an opportunity for you to decide which content from your dissertation is the most important. There is a skill in producing a highly professional synopsis of a substantial piece of work for dissemination to key stakeholders. You will have a limited amount of time (between 30 and 45 minutes for the presentation itself plus an additional 30 minutes for questions and answers). Part of the assessment criteria relates to how well you are able to manage this time.

As with all presentations, consider the needs of the audience who will not have read your dissertation and have a diverse range of skills and knowledge. First and foremost, you need to convince the panel as to the quality of your work and the standard of the presentation itself. You should consider the panel members as key stakeholders. You need to demonstrate your communication, leadership and influencing skills. Here you can consider what you will learn on the face-to-face weekend in terms of leadership skills, and ensure you apply those learnings.

The panel is expecting a high-quality professional presentation, that is interesting, informative and engaging. If you choose to present visually, the presentation itself must be in PowerPoint, but you may use any media of your choice to support the communication. Ensure you submit your PowerPoint slides and any other requirements to ACT at least three days in advance, noting that any unique requirements might not be able to be met by ACT. You can assume that ACT will be able to provide a screen through which your presentation can be displayed. The screen will have audio and visual capability.

## 20 Presentation submission

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At the same time as you receive your dissertation results, and if you have passed the dissertation, you will receive your invitation to your presentation. You will be given a selection of dates and times to choose from, of which you must only choose one. Please note this is on a first come first served basis. A confirmation email will follow, within a week, confirming your timeslot, the panellists and logistics for the presentation. If you have any issues with attending your presentation, you will need to contact the ACT Assessment team as soon as possible.

Currently, all presentations are delivered virtually. We suggest joining the meeting in advance of the start time to ensure you can share your screen without issue, and are ready to meet the panel when they join the call. If we return to in-person presentations, we will provide access to a screen on which you can present, and we suggest arriving at least 15 minutes before your allocated time to ensure you have time to set up and prepare the room to meet your needs.

Results from the presentation will be issued one week after it has taken place. You will receive an email confirming the outcome of the presentation, along with feedback on your presentation.

If you have failed the presentation you will need to repurchase and rebook for the presentation in the next available session.

If you have passed all elements of the Advanced Diploma in Treasury Management, you will be issued with a certificate of completion, awarding you the Advanced Diploma in Treasury Management. Your name and company will be published on our Celebrating Success webpage, within three weeks of completing the Advanced Diploma in Treasury Management. You will also be issued with digital credentials which you can share on all social media platforms in order to celebrate your achievement.

## 21 Presentation checklist

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To meet the requirements and achieve a pass level for your presentation:

1. ensure you have captured the key elements from your dissertation
2. do not add any new information – the presentation is a summary of the dissertation
3. the presentation must be informative, interesting and engaging
4. you must maintain the interest of panel members and communicate to them in a language they understand – not all of them will be practitioners!
5. you must manage your stakeholders and facilitate the presentation
6. plan how you intend to utilise the time available and how you will ensure you keep within the time limits
7. be prepared to answer questions from the panel
8. ensure you are confident in your presentation and the message you are communicating
9. practice to ensure you have the right ‘flow’ and so you are confident of your timings
10. ensure the ACT is aware of your technology and any other requirements
11. on the day, ensure you arrive in good time
12. ensure your work meets the stated assessment criteria.

## 22 Confidentiality

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All dissertations and presentations submitted are treated as confidential and are never published without the express permission of the dissertation author. Dissertations and presentations will be accessed only by the relevant authorised ACT representatives who have all signed a confidentiality agreement. The confidentiality agreement states that the contents of dissertations and presentations are confidential and will not be made available to any other party other than the signatories for an indefinite period. Once the marking process has been completed, the ACT will store the only electronic copy of each dissertation on the ACT’s server.

You should think carefully about including within your work any internal information about your organisation that is ‘commercially sensitive’. Whilst ACT will take steps to ensure confidentiality and can provide assurance in terms of compliance with legislation relating to the maintenance and treatment of data, you should think carefully before including any highly sensitive information within your work.

## 23 Conclusion

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It is hoped that you find this guide of help. Above all, ensure you are familiar with the programme aims, content and the marking criteria. It is the aim that across the three assessments all learning outcomes and syllabus content will be assessed.

Remember that there is support available to you both from the ACT Assessment team and from your dissertation supervisor, when you are ready to commence your dissertation.

Good luck with your studies and we hope that you will find the programme challenging, enlightening and enjoyable, in equal measure.



# ACT

## Competency Framework

### GLOBAL TREASURY STANDARDS



## ABOUT THE ACT

The ACT is the only international chartered body to set the benchmark for treasury excellence. Our competency framework sets the standards for the skills, knowledge and behaviours treasurers, or those working with treasurers, need at each stage of their career. Achievement of these standards is measured and recognised by our globally delivered suite of qualifications.

The ACT Competency Framework defines the key responsibilities, skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to be effective when working in or with the treasury profession. It was developed in consultation with practitioners from treasury, financial services and learning and development. To help you identify which competencies are relevant to you, we've mapped them to 4 job levels: tactical, operational, managerial and strategic.

**The content of this qualification introduces the skills required to operate at a strategic level.**



### Strategic Level

Managerial Level

Operational Level

Tactical Level

[treasurers.org/competencyframework](https://treasurers.org/competencyframework)

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