



INSTITUTE OF PROJECT PROFESSIONALS

Assessment Standards

Published standards for IPP qualifications



This document sets out the published assessment standards for IPP qualifications. Standards are published openly so that candidates know what is expected and employers know what each credential represents. The pass mark for each qualification is set before the assessment launches and does not change after candidates have sat it.

Issue 9 (10 August 2026): direct entry assessment moved to IPP-GOV-007, which publishes the recognition register and requires two named reviewers. Issue 8: the resit interval is 30 days for every qualification and every attempt, and paying the resit fee secures the sitting, not the date.

1. Assessment framework, all qualifications

IPP has twelve qualifications across four pathways, at three levels: Award, Foundation Certificate and Practitioner Certificate. The table below summarises the assessment for each qualification and the membership tier it opens. Full standards for the APME, FCPM and the three Planning qualifications are published below; standards for the remaining qualifications are published before each assessment launches.

Each qualification has a formal title, used on the certificate and in this framework, and a customer-facing name used on the platform and in the accreditation submissions. Both refer to the same qualification. The customer-facing names are Project Management Award, Project Management Foundation, Planning Award, Planning Foundation and Planning Practitioner, corresponding to the reference codes IPP-PM-A, IPP-PM-F, IPP-PL-A, IPP-PL-F and IPP-PL-P.

Qualification	Level	Format	Result	Opens
Award in Project Management Essentials (APME)	Award	30 questions, 60 min	67%	Associate (AIPP)
Award in Agile Essentials (AAE)	Award	30 questions, 60 min	67%	Associate (AIPP)
Award in Business Change Awareness (ABCA)	Award	30 questions, 60 min	67%	Associate (AIPP)
Award in Planning Essentials (APE)	Award	30 questions, 60 min	67%	Associate (AIPP)
Foundation Certificate in Project Management (FCPM)	Foundation	60 questions, 120 min	70%	Member (MIPP)
Foundation Certificate in Agile Project Management (FCAPM)	Foundation	60 questions, 120 min	70%	Member (MIPP)
Foundation Certificate in Business Change (FCBC)	Foundation	60 questions, 120 min	70%	Member (MIPP)
Foundation Certificate in Planning (FCP)	Foundation	60 questions, 120 min	70%	Member (MIPP)
Practitioner Certificate in Project Management (PCPM)	Practitioner	Written paper plus portfolio	Pass / Merit / Distinction	Fellow (FIPP)
Practitioner Certificate in Agile Project Management (PCAPM)	Practitioner	Written paper plus portfolio	Pass / Merit / Distinction	Fellow (FIPP)
Practitioner Certificate in Business Change (PCBC)	Practitioner	Written paper plus portfolio	Pass / Merit / Distinction	Fellow (FIPP)
Practitioner Certificate in Planning (PCP)	Practitioner	Written paper plus portfolio	Pass / Merit / Distinction	Fellow (FIPP)

Examination fees are £45 for the Award, £95 for the Foundation Certificate and £150 for the Practitioner Certificate. Each sitting is charged at the qualification fee, and each resit is charged at the same fee. A resit is available 30 days after an unsuccessful sitting, for every qualification and every attempt. Candidates may always wait longer than the minimum, and paying the resit fee does not shorten it.

The remaining Awareness-level qualification (AAE) and the Practitioner Certificates outside the Planning pathway are introduced in stages. Full standards for each are published before that assessment opens.

1.1 Studying with IPP is not a condition of certification

IPP both delivers courses and awards qualifications. To keep those two activities separate, no IPP qualification requires a candidate to have bought or completed IPP training. Where a section of this standard states that course topics must be completed before an assessment unlocks, that is the default path for candidates studying with IPP; it is not the only path.

A candidate who has not studied with IPP may apply for external candidate status for any Award or Foundation Certificate. The governance board assesses the application against the IPP Competency Framework using the same evidence standard as the experience route in the Membership Framework. Approval waives topic completion only. It does not waive the examination, the pass mark, or the fee, and the candidate sits the same paper assembled to the

same specification as everyone else.

Completing IPP training confers no advantage in an IPP examination. Examination items are written and reviewed separately from course authoring, and no examination item is drawn from the practice banks used in the courses.

2. Award in Project Management Essentials (APME)

The APME is the entry-level Awareness qualification, taken by candidates who hold Candidate membership of the IPP. Passing the APME, with the required experience, makes the candidate eligible to apply for Associate (AIPP) membership.

2.1 Candidate eligibility

- Active Candidate membership of the IPP is required before sitting the APME.
- All 33 Award topics in Activate must be completed before the assessment unlocks.
- The assessment is delivered on demand via Activate. There is no booking window.

2.2 Format

Element	Standard
Number of questions	30
Question types	Multiple choice (single best answer). No negative marking.
Time allowed	60 minutes
Pass mark	67% (20 of 30 questions correct). Published in advance and does not change after the assessment launches.
Delivery	On demand via Activate. Browser-based. Single attempt per registration. Timer displayed throughout.
Fee	£45 per sitting.
Resit	Permitted after 30 days. Each resit is charged at £45. The candidate may choose to wait longer than the minimum.
Result	Pass or Fail. Score shown immediately on completion. Certificate issued digitally within 24 hours of a pass.

2.3 Test specification

Every paper is assembled to the counts below, drawn from the eight competency areas of the IPP Competency Framework (IPP-GOV-002). The counts describe the Award as it is taught: the Award is an awareness qualification and is weighted accordingly toward governance and the project lifecycle. Only counts are published. Earlier issues carried a percentage share alongside each count, which was redundant at best and, because equal counts cannot always be expressed as whole percentages that sum to a hundred, misleading at worst.

Competency area (IPP-GOV-002)	Items per paper
Governance and Lifecycle Management	9
Stakeholder Engagement and Communication	2
Leadership and People	4
Requirements, Scope and Benefits	5
Integrated Planning and Scheduling	2
Budget, Cost and Commercial	4
Risk, Issue and Change Control	2
Quality, Assurance and Closure	2
Total	30

These are counts on EVERY paper, not a weighting applied to the bank. Assembly is enforced at the point a paper is drawn, so a sitting cannot be short of an area. There is no tolerance: a tolerance of plus or minus two questions against an area carrying two would have permitted a paper with none.

At least 9 of the 30 questions on every paper are application questions as defined in Section 3.4.

2.4 On passing

- The candidate becomes eligible to apply for Associate (AIPP) membership, subject to the experience requirement set out in the Membership Framework.
- An IPP Award certificate is issued digitally with a unique verification code.
- The certificate is verifiable at ipp.pro/verify using the code.
- The pass result is recorded in the candidate's Activate profile, and the Calibrate profile is updated to show Award qualification status.

2A. Award in Planning Essentials (APE)

The APE is the entry-level qualification of the Planning pathway, taken by candidates who hold Candidate membership of the IPP. It follows the APME format exactly; only the content and area weightings are planning-specific. Passing the APE, with the required experience, makes the candidate eligible to apply for Associate (AIPP) membership.

2A.1 Candidate eligibility and format

- Active Candidate membership of the IPP, with all 33 Planning Award topics completed in Activate before the assessment unlocks.
- Format, delivery, pass mark, fee, resit and result standards are identical to the APME (Section 2.2): 30 multiple-choice questions, 60 minutes, 67% pass mark, £45 per sitting, on demand via Activate.

2A.2 Test specification

Every paper is assembled to the counts below. Previous issues grouped four areas into a single combined row; all eight are now stated separately, because a grouped row cannot be enforced at the point a paper is drawn. The concentration in Integrated Planning and Scheduling is what makes this a specialist qualification rather than a generalist one.

Competency area (IPP-GOV-002)	Items per paper
Governance and Lifecycle Management	4
Stakeholder Engagement and Communication	3
Leadership and People	2
Requirements, Scope and Benefits	1
Integrated Planning and Scheduling	13
Budget, Cost and Commercial	4
Risk, Issue and Change Control	2
Quality, Assurance and Closure	1
Total	30

These are counts on EVERY paper, not a weighting applied to the bank. Assembly is enforced at the point a paper is drawn, so a sitting cannot be short of an area. There is no tolerance: a tolerance of plus or minus two questions against an area carrying two would have permitted a paper with none.

At least 9 of the 30 questions on every paper are application questions as defined in Section 3.4. On passing, Section 2.4 applies unchanged.

3. Foundation Certificate in Project Management (FCPM)

The FCPM is the primary Foundation qualification, and its full assessment standards are published here. The FCAPM and FCBC follow the same format and standards within their pathways. The FCP follows the same format with planning-specific standards, published at Section 3A.

3.1 Candidate eligibility

- Open to any candidate holding active Associate (AIPP) membership, with the Foundation topics completed in Activate.
- The examination fee is £95 per sitting, and each resit is charged at £95.
- A resit window of 30 days minimum applies after each unsuccessful sitting. The candidate may choose to wait longer.
- The assessment is delivered on demand via Activate. No exam centre is required.

3.2 Format

Element	Standard
Number of questions	60
Question types	Multiple choice (single best answer). No negative marking.
Time allowed	120 minutes
Application questions	Minimum 18 of the 60 questions. Application questions present a project situation and require the candidate to select the most appropriate response. They test judgement, not recall.
Pass mark	70% (42 of 60 questions correct). Published in advance and does not change after the assessment launches.
Delivery	On demand via Activate. Browser-based. Single attempt per registration. Timer displayed throughout.
Result	Pass or Fail. Score shown immediately on completion. Certificate issued digitally within 24 hours of a pass.
Resit	Permitted after 30 days. Each resit is charged at £95. The candidate may choose to wait longer than the minimum.

3.3 Test specification

Every paper is assembled to the counts below. Previous issues published percentages describing the question bank; this issue publishes counts describing the paper, because a percentage held about a bank cannot be enforced when a paper is drawn and a candidate sits a paper, not a bank. Area names follow the IPP Competency Framework (IPP-GOV-002) exactly.

Competency area (IPP-GOV-002)	Items per paper
Governance and Lifecycle Management	12
Stakeholder Engagement and Communication	6
Leadership and People	6
Requirements, Scope and Benefits	8
Integrated Planning and Scheduling	5
Budget, Cost and Commercial	7
Risk, Issue and Change Control	7
Quality, Assurance and Closure	9
Total	60

These are counts on EVERY paper, not a weighting applied to the bank. Assembly is enforced at the point a paper is drawn, so a sitting cannot be short of an area. There is no tolerance: a tolerance of plus or minus two questions against an area carrying two would have permitted a paper with none.

3.4 Question taxonomy

Every question carries exactly one taxonomy level. Earlier issues used the words Application and Scenario for the same level; Application is now the only term used.

Level	Minimum per paper	Description
Knowledge	no minimum	Tests accurate recall and understanding of concepts, definitions and processes. The candidate selects the correct answer from factual options.
Application	18 of 60 (30%)	Tests application of knowledge to a project situation. The candidate selects the most appropriate action or judgement. There is a clearly best answer, but reaching it requires reasoning rather than recall.

A question may additionally be flagged as a calculation question, where answering requires the candidate to perform a calculation or read a quantitative value. The calculation flag is independent of the taxonomy level: a calculation question set in a project situation is an application question that also calculates, and counts toward both minimums. Where a qualification publishes a calculation minimum, it is stated in that qualification's format section.

These minimums apply to the paper, not to the bank. A minimum stated about a bank cannot be met by a bank: papers drawn at random from a bank that is 30% application will fall below 30% on a substantial share of sittings. Assembly enforces the minimum on each paper.

3.5 Marking

- Each question carries one mark. No partial credit. No negative marking.
- Questions are marked automatically. There is no human marker review at Foundation level.
- The question bank is reviewed annually by the IPP governance board. Questions are retired and replaced if they underperform.
- If a question is found to be defective after candidates have sat it, the board reviews the affected sittings and may adjust results.
- A voided question is removed from the denominator, not counted wrong. A candidate whose paper carried a voided item is marked out of the remaining questions, so voiding an item can never lower a candidate's percentage. This is why the pass mark is published as a percentage rather than as a fixed number of correct answers.

3.6 Appeals

A candidate may appeal a Fail result within 20 working days of receiving it.

- Step 1: the candidate submits a written appeal to governance@ipp.pro stating the grounds.
- Step 2: the board reviews whether an administrative error occurred or whether a question was ambiguous. An appeal is not a re-mark of correctly recorded answers.
- Step 3: a written response is issued within 15 working days. If the appeal is upheld, the result is amended and the fee refunded.
- The appeal fee is £25, refunded if the appeal is upheld.

3.7 On passing

- An IPP Foundation Certificate is issued digitally with a unique verification code.
- The certificate is verifiable at ipp.pro/verify using the code.
- The candidate becomes eligible to apply for Member (MIPP) membership, subject to the experience requirement set out in the Membership Framework.
- The Calibrate profile is updated to show Foundation qualification status.

3A. Foundation Certificate in Planning (FCP)

The FCP is the Foundation qualification of the Planning pathway. It follows the FCPM format, delivery and integrity standards exactly, with planning-specific area weightings and a published minimum of calculation questions. Eligibility, marking, appeals and on-passing follow Sections 3.1 and 3.5 to 3.7 unchanged, with all 49 Planning Foundation topics completed in Activate before the assessment unlocks.

3A.1 Format

Element	Standard
Number of questions	60
Question types	Multiple choice (single best answer). No negative marking.
Time allowed	120 minutes
Application questions	Minimum 18 of the 60 questions, presenting a planning situation and requiring the most appropriate response. They test judgement, not recall.
Calculation questions	Exactly 12 of the 60 questions require calculation or quantitative reading: float, critical path arithmetic, earned value, three-point estimates, variance. A fixed count rather than a minimum, so that every candidate's paper carries the same quantitative demand.
Pass mark	70% (42 of 60 questions correct). Published in advance and does not change after the assessment launches.
Delivery	On demand via Activate. Browser-based. Single attempt per registration. Timer displayed throughout.
Result	Pass or Fail. Score shown immediately on completion. Certificate issued digitally within 24 hours of a pass.
Resit	Permitted after 30 days. Each resit is charged at £95. The candidate may choose to wait longer than the minimum.

3A.2 Test specification

Every paper is assembled to the counts below. All eight areas are stated separately; previous issues grouped four into one row, which cannot be enforced at the point a paper is drawn.

Competency area (IPP-GOV-002)	Items per paper
Governance and Lifecycle Management	8
Stakeholder Engagement and Communication	2
Leadership and People	2
Requirements, Scope and Benefits	3
Integrated Planning and Scheduling	22
Budget, Cost and Commercial	10
Risk, Issue and Change Control	10
Quality, Assurance and Closure	3
Total	60

These are counts on EVERY paper, not a weighting applied to the bank. Assembly is enforced at the point a paper is drawn, so a sitting cannot be short of an area. There is no tolerance: a tolerance of plus or minus two questions against an area carrying two would have permitted a paper with none.

The FCP question taxonomy follows Section 3.4: at least 18 of the 60 questions on every paper are application questions. In addition, exactly 12 of the 60 are calculation questions as set out in Section 3A.1. A calculation question set in a planning situation counts toward both, being an application question that also calculates.

4. Practitioner and Fellowship standards

Full standards for the Practitioner Certificates outside the Planning pathway are published before those assessments launch; the outlines below set the standard each will meet. The PCP full standard is published at Section 4.1A.

4.1 Practitioner Certificate (PCPM, PCAPM, PCBC)

Element	Standard
Written paper	Two scenario-based questions. 90 minutes. Delivered online with an online invigilator. Responses assessed against a published marking scheme.
Evidence portfolio	Calibrate portfolio covering at least 6 of 8 competency areas. Minimum Competent in all submitted areas. Evidence must relate to real project work.
Marking	Two IPP assessors independently. Moderated by a third if assessors disagree. Results within 15 working days.
Entry requirement	Foundation Certificate or recognised equivalent. Active Member (MIPP) membership. Minimum 12 months further project experience.
Fee	£150 per sitting. Each resit is charged at £150.
Outcomes	Pass, Merit, Distinction, or Fail. Criteria published in the marking scheme.

Passing a Practitioner Certificate, with the required experience, makes the candidate eligible to apply for Fellow (FIPP) membership.

4.1A Practitioner Certificate in Planning (PCP)

The PCP is the Practitioner qualification of the Planning pathway. It is assessed by a written paper and an evidence portfolio; both are required.

Element	Standard
Written paper	A single integrated case study. 3 hours. The candidate analyses a schedule situation, makes the judgement calls (impact, risk, recovery) and writes the advice to the project. Delivered online with an online invigilator per Section 6.2. Assessed against a published marking scheme.
Evidence portfolio	Calibrate portfolio covering at least 6 of 8 competency areas at minimum Competent, and including three mandated planning items: a quantified schedule risk assessment the candidate ran, a change impact assessment, and evidence of developing another planner. Evidence must relate to real project work, verified by the candidate's reviewer or sponsor.
Marking	Two IPP assessors independently. Moderated by a third if assessors disagree. Results within 15 working days.
Pass threshold	55% on the written paper and a satisfactory portfolio. Merit and Distinction criteria are published in the marking scheme before launch.
Entry requirement	Foundation Certificate in Planning or recognised equivalent. Active Member (MIPP) membership. All 33 Practitioner topics completed in Activate. Minimum 12 months further experience.
Fee and resit	£150 per sitting; each paper resit £150, permitted after 30 days. A satisfactory portfolio carries forward and is not resubmitted.
Outcomes	Pass, Merit, Distinction, or Fail.

Passing the PCP, with the required experience, makes the candidate eligible to apply for Fellow (FIPP) membership through the Fellowship assessment in Section 4.2.

4.2 Fellowship (FIPP) assessment

Fellowship is assessed through a professional discussion and an evidence portfolio rather than a taught examination. It recognises sustained senior practice and contribution to the profession. Fellowship is conferred directly on a successful assessment; there is no separate Advanced Certificate.

Element	Standard
Professional discussion	A 60-minute structured discussion with two IPP assessors, based on a pre-submitted case study of a complex project or programme led by the candidate.
Reflective statement	1,500 words. The candidate reflects on their development as a leader, covering a career decision, a failure, and a contribution to the profession.
Evidence portfolio	Full Calibrate portfolio across all 8 areas. Minimum Proficient in at least 4 areas, and Expert in at least 2.
CPD log	A current CPD log evidencing continuing professional development.
Entry requirement	Practitioner Certificate or equivalent. Active Member (MIPP). Minimum 10 years in the profession with senior or strategic delivery experience. Endorsement from one existing IPP Fellow.
Outcome	Panel decision: Pass or Fail. The candidate receives written feedback regardless of outcome.

5. Direct entry to Associate (AIPP)

Not every Associate joins through the Candidate tier. A professional who already holds relevant qualifications or experience may apply for direct entry to Associate (AIPP) without first taking the Award.

5.1 Qualifying routes

A candidate who meets one or more of the following may apply for direct entry to Associate:

- A degree in project management, programme management, or a closely related discipline from a recognised institution.
- A Foundation-level qualification from a body on the IPP recognition register, for example APM PFQ, PRINCE2 Foundation, or equivalent. The register is published in IPP-GOV-007 section 4 and states which qualifications are accepted and at what grade.
- A minimum of two years documented project management experience at a practising level, assessed through the experience route set out in the Membership Framework.

5.2 How it works

The candidate applies via the direct entry page on ipp.pro and submits evidence of their qualifying credential or experience. The evidence is assessed against the IPP Competency Framework under IPP-GOV-007, which owns the evidence requirements, the recognition register and the decision, and which requires two named reviewers rather than one. On approval, the candidate may apply for Associate (AIPP) membership in the same way as any other applicant. Candidate membership is not required at any point. The routes themselves are set out in the Membership Framework.

5A. Direct entry to Member (MIPP)

Not every Member joins by taking the Foundation Certificate. A professional who already holds Foundation-standard qualifications together with substantial practising experience may apply for direct entry to Member (MIPP) without first taking the Foundation. Direct entry to Member sits a level above direct entry to Associate: where Associate recognises Award-level (L3) standing, Member requires evidence at Foundation level (L4), together with the five years of practising experience the Member tier requires.

5A.1 Qualifying standard

An applicant for direct entry to Member must satisfy both a knowledge standard and an experience standard. Meeting one standard alone does not confer eligibility.

Knowledge standard, evidenced by one of:

- A strong degree in project management, programme management, or a closely related discipline, at bachelor's level or above, from a recognised institution.
- A Foundation-level (L4) qualification on the IPP recognition register at Member, for example APM PMQ, PRINCE2 Practitioner, or equivalent, assessed against the IPP Foundation competency framework. The register is published in IPP-GOV-007 section 4.

Experience standard:

- A minimum of five years documented project management experience at a practising level, assessed through the experience route set out in the Membership Framework.

The application is assessed as a whole against the IPP Competency Framework under IPP-GOV-007. Member direct entry requires both the knowledge standard and the experience standard, reflecting the Foundation-pass-plus-five-years requirement for the tier. A strong qualification does not shorten the five years and long service does not supply the knowledge standard.

5A.2 How it works

The applicant applies via the direct entry page on ipp.pro, selects Member, and submits evidence of their qualifying credential and their experience. The evidence is assessed under IPP-GOV-007 by two named reviewers. On approval, the applicant may apply for Member (MIPP) membership in the same way as any other applicant, and is not charged until approved. Neither Candidate nor Associate membership is required at any point. The routes themselves are set out in the Membership Framework.

5A.3 No direct entry to Fellow

There is no direct entry to Fellow (FIPP). Fellowship is conferred only through the Fellowship assessment in Section 4.2, which requires existing Member standing, a professional discussion, a reflective statement, and a portfolio. A professional entering from outside the IPP joins at Associate or Member and progresses to Fellow through that assessment.

6. Exam integrity

IPP assessments are designed so that a pass reflects genuine competence. The integrity controls that apply depend on the assessment format.

6.1 Online multiple-choice assessments (Award and Foundation Certificates)

The Award and Foundation Certificate assessments, including the APE and FCP, are delivered online as multiple-choice papers, on demand via Activate. Each is taken under the candidate's authenticated IPP account, as a single timed attempt per registration, with questions drawn at random from a bank kept separate from the practice bank. Live proctoring is not currently used for these assessments. The governance board keeps this position under review and may introduce identity verification or proctoring for these assessments in future; any such change, including any effect on the immediate display of results, will be published as a change to this standard before it applies to any sitting.

6.2 Practitioner written assessment

The Practitioner Certificates are assessed by a written paper rather than a multiple-choice test. The written paper is delivered online with an online invigilator, alongside the evidence portfolio and assessor marking set out in Section 4. Candidates sitting the written paper require a working webcam, microphone and a stable internet connection, and must sit it in a private space free from interruption. Identity is verified at the start of the sitting.

6.3 Practice exam thresholds

Practice exams (mock assessments) unlock after a candidate has completed approximately four-fifths of the course: 25 of the 33 APME Award topics, 60 of the 75 FCPM Foundation topics,

25 of the 33 APE Award topics, and 40 of the 49 FCP Foundation topics. Every practice exam draws from a separate bank to the real assessment, so no real exam question is ever surfaced in practice.

7. Assessment quality

This section sets out how IPP examination items are written, reviewed, monitored and retired, and how pass marks are set. It is published so that the quality of an IPP assessment can be judged on its process rather than taken on trust.

7.1 Item development

- Every item is written to a named cell of the test specification: a competency area and a taxonomy level. Items are not written to a topic and sorted afterwards.
- Every item records the competency element it assesses, so an item can be traced to the framework and to the syllabus topic that teaches it.
- Item writers are practitioners with current experience at or above the level of the qualification. Course authors do not write examination items for the course they authored.
- Construction standards are enforced mechanically before an item enters the bank: answer position is spread evenly, the correct option is not systematically the longest, option lengths are consistent, and filler options are not permitted.

7.2 Item review

Every item passes three reviews before it is used in a scored assessment. Each is recorded against the item with the reviewer named.

Review	Performed by	Tests
Technical	Assessment lead	Construction, single unambiguous key, plausible distractors, no clueing.
Content	Subject matter expert independent of the item writer	Accuracy, currency, correct level, correct area and element.
Fairness	Reviewer independent of both	Language accessible to a candidate outside the writer's sector or region; no cultural, regional or demographic assumption unrelated to the competence being assessed.

7.3 Pilot items

New items are seeded into live papers unscored before they count toward any candidate's result. A pilot item is presented indistinguishably from a scored item, does not contribute to the candidate's mark, and is additional to the counts published in the test specification. Pilot items are promoted to the scored bank only after their statistics fall within the bounds in Section 7.4.

7.4 Item statistics and action thresholds

Statistics are computed from live sittings for every scored item and reviewed at each governance board meeting. An item is reviewed once it has been served at least 100 times; below that its statistics are reported but not acted on, because a figure from a small sample is not evidence.

Statistic	Acceptable range	Action outside the range
Facility (p-value)	0.60 to 0.90	Below 0.60: reviewed for ambiguity, mis-keying or content not taught. Above 0.90: retained only if the point is one every certified professional must know.
Discrimination (point-biserial)	above 0.15	Between 0 and 0.15: revised. Negative: withdrawn immediately, because the item rewards the weaker candidate.
Distractor performance	every distractor chosen by some candidates	A distractor chosen by nobody is replaced; it is not functioning as an option.
Form reliability (KR-20)	above 0.70	Below 0.70: the specification and the bank are reviewed together, not individual items.

A withdrawn item is marked withdrawn, never deleted. Sitzings that used it remain readable, and any candidate whose result depended on a withdrawn item has that sitting re-marked with the item voided rather than counted wrong.

7.5 Standard setting and the pass mark

Pass marks are set by a modified Angoff standard-setting study, by a panel of at least eight subject matter experts representing different sectors and organisation sizes. The panel first agrees a written definition of the minimally competent candidate for the qualification. Each panellist then estimates independently, for every item, the proportion of minimally competent candidates who would answer it correctly. Items with the widest disagreement are discussed and re-rated in a second round. The pass mark is the mean of the final round.

- A study is run before a qualification's first sitting, and again at any syllabus revision that changes the specification.
- The panel composition, the competence definition, the raw ratings, the aggregation and the board's decision are recorded and retained.
- The board may depart from the panel's figure, but must record why. A pass mark is never chosen first and justified afterwards.
- Once published, a pass mark does not change for any candidate who has already sat the assessment.

7.6 Item exposure and retirement

- Every item carries a served count. Assembly draws the least-served eligible items first, so no item becomes the one every candidate sees.
- A candidate resitting is served items they have not previously seen wherever the bank allows. Items are reused for that candidate only when unseen stock in a specification cell is exhausted, and the shortfall is recorded.
- Items are retired on evidence of exposure, on failing Section 7.4, or on the content they assess being superseded. Retirement is recorded with a reason.

7.7 Bank size and coverage

A bank is sufficient when a candidate can sit three times without meeting a question twice. That is a stronger requirement than holding three papers' worth of items, and the difference is set out below because stating it loosely is how a bank passes a check it should fail.

- Every syllabus topic is represented by at least three examination items.

- For every competency area, the bank holds at least three times that area's per-paper count in items that are NOT flagged as calculation questions.
- Where a qualification publishes a calculation count, the bank holds at least three times that count in calculation items.

The second rule is stated on non-calculation stock rather than on total stock because assembly places the calculation count first and then holds the remaining calculation items back, so an area is filled from the items the area pass can actually reach. An area holding thirty-seven items against a three-sitting requirement of thirty looks comfortable, but if eleven of them are calculation items it holds twenty-six of the kind the area needs, and the third sitting has to repeat. Both rules are asserted mechanically, and satisfying them was verified by simulating eighteen thousand sittings per qualification before this issue was published.

- Bank size, coverage and specification compliance are asserted automatically whenever the banks change. A bank that cannot satisfy the published specification fails the check and is not deployed.

A paper samples the learning outcomes of a qualification; it does not exhaust them. Coverage of the full outcome set is achieved across sittings, not within one.