ACT EDUCATION

PROJECT WRITING GUIDE

Unit 3 of the Diploma in Treasury Management (AMCT)

1 Introduction

There are four elements to the assessment structure of the Diploma in Treasury Management (Diploma):

1. examinations for each of the three units - Units 1, 2, and 4A or 4B
2. a project for Unit 3.

To complete the qualification, a pass (i.e. 50%) must be achieved in each assessment element.

This document will provide support for you as you work through the project for Unit 3. In summary, the project will focus on treasury-related issues against a theme. You will be required to select an organisation, whether your own, or another, where you can investigate and recommend a supported solution, based on a provided theme and guided points you are required to cover. You will need to have some knowledge of the organisation, but this knowledge could be gained from publicly accessible resources, for example its website. You must not approach the organisation for information to support your project. The questions have been designed so you can answer them without the need for in-depth knowledge of the organisation. So, for example, you are permitted to make assumptions about the organisation based on what you know already.

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 within the project, as Appendix 1, and between 250 - 500 words and will provide the necessary information so assessors have a clear understanding of the context of your submission.

2 Planning your project

Explore the theme

Remember to consider the theme and the guided questions. Make sure that you are clear on what is required and choose an organisation that will help you meet the criteria.

Time

Remember that you are working to time constraints. 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 the time that you will need to read, analyse and present the material, and 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.

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.

3 Some helpful hints

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 your project. Students sometimes fill appendices with internal documents full of data that has not been discussed anywhere in the project, or if it has been mentioned it does not fully relate to the project.

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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 and AI summaries, where the authors and sources are unknown or unreliable.

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 7.

4 Specific project advice

Although it is not possible to articulate the exact structure and content of your project, the following gives you guidance on the key sections which would be expected in order to achieve the project requirements set out earlier in this guide. The structure will of course be dependent on the theme.

10.1 Introduction

The introduction is a key part of the project 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 project. Reference to your chosen organisation MUST be your Appendix 1 and answer the required questions provided in the brief.

10.2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding across the programme syllabus

This is essential. Demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the subject matter from across the syllabus is an important requirement. Remember, the project is an opportunity to showcase that you can apply the various tools, models, concepts and theories from the unit syllabus. Use each question provided in the assessment brief to structure this section.

10.3 Provide a clear recommendation

A crucial part of your project is to address the original guided points and to demonstrate these have been met. You may wish to restate these within your conclusions to demonstrate that they have been achieved.

Ensure your concluding paragraphs summarise the main points in your project. Your conclusion should not be making any new points but instead it should synthesise your project. 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).

10.4 Additional considerations

The project 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 7).

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 the stated questions?'.

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 project or from reliable and trusted secondary data sources, e.g. academic journal articles.

5 Structuring your project

You are responsible for determining the most appropriate structure for your project. All projects should include the following:

Cover Sheet	Showing your candidate information, stating the name of the organisation you have chosen, the theme you have selected and your anti-plagiarism declaration. You must also state the total word count, excluding the table of contents and all appendices.
Table of contents	Use section, sub-section and page numbering. Ensure this numbering coincides with the numbering within the project.
Introduction	The context of the study, why it is important and an outline of the problem or issue to be addressed. Outline your project objectives and approach.
Main body of text	Separate sections to correspond with each of the five questions in the assessment. Remember to ensure there is a logical flow to your work.
Conclusion	You must present a clear conclusion summarising how the project meets the 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.
References List	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 7 for information on referencing your work. Your supervisor will also provide guidance if you need help.

Appendices	Include your organisation background as Appendix 1 and results of any analysis, tables, data etc. that would otherwise clutter your project. Note that the main body of your project 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 **not** count towards word count.

6 Project word count

There is a prescribed word count limit which must be strictly adhered to, i.e. your project must be between 5,500 and 6,500 words. If you are above or below these limits your project will not be marked and you will be required to repurchase and resubmit in the next available window.

Please note the organisation background, which must be between 250 and 500 words. If you fail to include this, your project will not be marked.

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:

- reference list
- appendices.

7 Referencing your project

Any sources you refer to in your project 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 project 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.

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).

8 Verification and plagiarism

Submitting work that has been completed by someone else, including generative AI, 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. All submissions are subject to plagiarism and AI detections checks, via Turn It In. If a case of plagiarism or AI use 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 asked to sign a plagiarism statement confirming that, apart from properly referenced contributions from wider reading sources, your project is you 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 project.

2. 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.

9 Project checklist

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

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 your work is error-free
6. ensure your referencing follows the Harvard convention
7. ensure all tables, diagrams etc. are labelled and the source stated (both in-text and in your References List).

10 Project submission deadline

Your project must be submitted on or before the published deadline. Late submission is not accepted unless this is by prior agreement with the ACT. Projects 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 project by the published deadline, please contact a member of the Assessment team as soon as possible to discuss your options.

11 Submitting your project

You must submit your project into the ACT assessment system, Surpass. Guidance on the system and how to upload your project 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.

If you are unsuccessful, you have the option to start a new project, however you may submit the same project, 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 project, your new, updated project 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.

12 Confidentiality

All projects submitted are treated as confidential and are never published without the express permission of the project author. Projects 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 projects 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 project 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.

13 Conclusion

It is hoped that you find this guide of help. Above all, ensure you are familiar with the syllabus, content and the marking criteria.

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

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